

THE ROLE OF ENGLISH IN DISSEMINATING ISLAMIC MESSAGES THROUGH ISLAMIC HISTORY BOOKS IN ISLAMIC EDUCATION

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Abstract: *The use of international languages to convey religious knowledge beyond local and regional contexts has become increasingly necessary as Islamic education continues to expand globally. In this process, English has emerged as a particularly influential medium due to its status as a global lingua franca in education, academia, and cross-cultural communication. As Islamic educational institutions and resources seek to reach broader and more diverse audiences, English plays a crucial role in facilitating access to Islamic teachings for both Muslim and non-Muslim learners worldwide. This study examines how English contributes to the dissemination of Islamic teachings within Islamic education, with particular emphasis on Islamic history textbooks written or translated into English. Employing a qualitative research methodology, the study analyzes selected English-language Islamic history textbooks alongside relevant scholarly literature on language, religion, and education. The analysis focuses on how English is used to present historical narratives, convey theological concepts, and adapt Islamic teachings to contemporary educational contexts. The findings indicate that English functions not merely as a translation medium but also as a powerful tool for contextualization, reinterpretation, and intercultural communication. English-language Islamic history textbooks enable readers from diverse linguistic backgrounds to engage with Islamic history and values, while also situating Islamic civilization within broader global historical and academic frameworks. Furthermore, these texts contribute to the promotion of intercultural understanding by clarifying cultural practices and addressing common misconceptions about Islam. The study concludes that integrating English into Islamic historical narratives enhances the accessibility, relevance, and global reach of Islamic teachings while maintaining their theological credibility. As such, English plays a significant role in strengthening the position of Islamic education within international scholarly discourse.*

Keywords: *Islamic Education, Islamic History Books, The Spread Of Islamic Teachings, English As A Universal Language, And Intercultural Communication*

Introduction

The dissemination of Islamic teachings has historically relied on a rich diversity of languages, shaped by regional, cultural, and historical contexts. Classical Arabic has long served as the primary language of Islamic scripture and scholarship, particularly for the Qur'an, Hadith, and foundational theological texts. Alongside Arabic, other languages such as Persian, Urdu, Malay, Turkish, and various regional vernaculars have played significant roles in transmitting Islamic knowledge to local communities. These languages enabled Islamic teachings to be understood, internalized, and practiced within specific cultural settings, ensuring the continuity of Islamic education across generations.

In the contemporary era of globalization, however, the linguistic landscape of education and knowledge dissemination has undergone profound transformation. English has emerged as the dominant international language of academia, media, diplomacy, and global communication. It functions as a shared linguistic platform that connects individuals from diverse cultural and religious backgrounds. As a result, English has increasingly been adopted as a medium for conveying religious knowledge, including Islamic teachings, to audiences beyond traditional linguistic boundaries.

Within the context of Islamic education, the growing use of English reflects both necessity and opportunity. For Muslim communities living in non-Arabic-speaking regions—particularly in Western countries and minority-Muslim contexts—English often serves as the primary or secondary language of education. Moreover, English allows Islamic teachings to reach non-Muslim audiences who seek to understand Islam through historical, cultural, or academic perspectives. Consequently, English has become an important medium for presenting Islamic knowledge in ways that are accessible, structured, and aligned with global academic discourse. Islamic history books play a crucial role in this process. They do not merely recount historical events but also convey moral lessons, ethical values, spiritual reflections, and collective identity derived from Islamic civilization. Through narratives of prophets, scholars, leaders, and communities, Islamic history texts transmit key Islamic principles such as justice, perseverance, compassion, and faith. When these texts are written or translated into English, they gain wider circulation and become accessible to a global readership, including students, educators, and researchers across diverse educational settings.

Despite the increasing availability of English-language Islamic history books, scholarly discussion on their pedagogical and ideological contribution to the dissemination of Islamic teachings remains limited. Much existing research focuses on theology, translation accuracy, or general religious education, while fewer studies explore how English specifically functions as a medium for shaping the understanding of Islamic history and values in educational contexts. This gap highlights the need for systematic inquiry into how English-mediated Islamic history texts contribute to Islamic education on a global scale. Therefore, this study aims to examine the role of English in disseminating Islamic teachings through Islamic history books used in educational institutions. By analyzing how historical narratives are presented, adapted, and contextualized in English, the study seeks to illuminate the broader implications of language choice for Islamic education in an increasingly interconnected world.

2. Literature Review

Previous research on the relationship between language and religion emphasizes the central role of language as a carrier of cultural identity, belief systems, and moral values. Language does not merely function as a neutral tool for communication; rather, it actively shapes meaning, interpretation, and engagement with religious content. Crystal (2019) argues that English, as a global lingua franca, enables the widespread circulation of knowledge across national and cultural boundaries, positioning it as a powerful medium in contemporary education and religious discourse.

In the field of Islamic education, language choice has been identified as a critical factor influencing learners' comprehension, engagement, and sense of connection with religious content. Rahman (2020) highlights that students' access to Islamic knowledge is often mediated by the language in which it is presented, particularly in non-Arabic-speaking contexts. When Islamic teachings are conveyed in a familiar or widely used language, learners are more likely to engage critically and reflectively with the material. Studies on Islamic history education further demonstrate the importance of historical narratives in shaping religious identity and moral

understanding. Ahmed (2018) emphasizes that Islamic history texts serve not only as records of past events but also as instructional tools that communicate ethical values and collective memory. Through historical storytelling, learners develop a deeper understanding of Islamic civilization and its contributions to global history.

Translation and authorship in English have significantly expanded the reach of Islamic historical texts. Saeed (2021) notes that translating Islamic writings into English increases readership, facilitates interfaith dialogue, and supports academic engagement with Islamic studies. English-language Islamic history books often adopt scholarly conventions familiar to international readers, such as chronological organization, critical analysis, and contextual explanations, making them more accessible to diverse audiences.

However, scholars have also raised concerns regarding the challenges associated with translating and writing Islamic content in English. Hassan (2019) cautions that translation processes may lead to oversimplification, loss of nuanced meanings, or misrepresentation of theological concepts if not handled carefully. Cultural and contextual differences between source and target languages can affect how Islamic teachings are interpreted, particularly when complex religious terminology is rendered into English. While these studies provide valuable insights into language, translation, and Islamic education, limited attention has been given specifically to Islamic history books as educational tools mediated through English. This study builds upon existing scholarship by focusing on how English functions not only as a language of translation but also as a pedagogical medium that shapes the dissemination of Islamic teachings within historical narratives.

3. Method

This study employs a qualitative descriptive research design to explore how English contributes to the dissemination of Islamic teachings through Islamic history books. A qualitative approach was chosen because it allows for in-depth analysis of textual content, meaning construction, and contextual interpretation within educational materials. Data were collected through document analysis of selected Islamic history books that were either originally written in English or translated from other languages into English. These texts are commonly used in Islamic educational institutions, including universities, madrasas, and Islamic schools. In addition to textbooks, supporting academic sources such as peer-reviewed journal articles, books, and conference papers related to language, Islamic education, and religious communication were reviewed to enrich the analysis.

The analysis focused on identifying recurring themes related to language use, cultural adaptation, presentation of Islamic values, and educational objectives. A thematic analysis technique was applied to examine how English is utilized to explain historical events, moral lessons, and theological concepts. Attention was given to narrative style, terminology choice, contextual explanations, and pedagogical framing within the texts. Through this analytical process, the study sought to interpret how English mediates the transmission of Islamic teachings and how this mediation supports or challenges educational goals in Islamic history instruction.

4. Results and Discussion

4.1 Results

The qualitative analysis of Islamic history books written or translated into English revealed three dominant and interrelated findings concerning the role of English in disseminating Islamic teachings within educational contexts. The first major finding indicates that the use of English substantially enhances the accessibility of Islamic history texts for a global audience. English-language materials enable learners from non-Arabic-speaking backgrounds, particularly those in

minority-Muslim societies, to access Islamic historical knowledge without facing significant linguistic obstacles. In many educational settings, students possess limited proficiency in Arabic or other traditional Islamic languages, which may restrict their engagement with classical Islamic sources. English, therefore, functions as a gateway that allows wider participation in Islamic education by making historical narratives more readable, structured, and comprehensible. As a result, Islamic history is no longer confined to specific linguistic communities but becomes available to a broader international readership, including both Muslim and non-Muslim learners.

The second finding highlights the role of English in facilitating the contextualization of Islamic teachings through historical narratives. The analysis demonstrates that authors of English-language Islamic history books frequently connect historical events, figures, and moral lessons to contemporary global issues. Topics such as social justice, leadership ethics, community responsibility, and governance are often framed in ways that resonate with modern societal challenges. By using English, authors are able to situate Islamic history within present-day discourses that are familiar to global audiences, particularly those educated in Western or international academic traditions. This contextual approach enables learners to perceive Islamic history as a dynamic and relevant source of guidance rather than a distant or purely historical subject.

The third finding reveals that English-language Islamic history books contribute significantly to intercultural understanding. These texts tend to adopt an academic and inclusive tone, carefully explaining cultural practices, historical contexts, and religious concepts that may be unfamiliar to non-Muslim readers. In doing so, they address common misconceptions about Islam and present Islamic civilization as an integral part of world history. By situating Islamic historical narratives alongside global historical developments, English-language texts encourage dialogue, mutual respect, and cross-cultural awareness. This function is particularly important in pluralistic educational environments, where Islamic education interacts with diverse belief systems and cultural perspectives.

4.2 Discussion

The findings of this study suggest that English serves a role far beyond that of a simple translation medium in Islamic history education. Rather, it operates as a communicative and pedagogical bridge that connects Islamic heritage with a global audience. Through English, Islamic history books are able to transcend geographical, linguistic, and cultural boundaries, allowing Islamic teachings to be presented in a form that aligns with contemporary educational norms and academic discourse.

The use of English enables authors to explain complex historical events and theological concepts in a manner that is accessible to readers with varied educational backgrounds. By employing familiar academic structures—such as chronological narration, thematic analysis, and contextual explanations—English-language texts make Islamic history more approachable for international learners. This supports the broader objectives of Islamic education, which emphasize not only the transmission of knowledge but also the development of ethical awareness, critical thinking, and global engagement. Moreover, the contextualization of Islamic teachings through English reinforces the relevance of Islamic history in modern life. By linking historical experiences of Muslim societies to current global issues, English-language texts help learners draw meaningful connections between the past and the present. This approach encourages reflective learning, where students are invited to consider how Islamic values such as justice, compassion, and accountability can inform contemporary social and ethical challenges.

However, the study also identifies several challenges associated with the use of English as a medium for Islamic teachings. One major concern involves maintaining doctrinal accuracy while

ensuring clarity for readers who may lack prior knowledge of Islamic theology. Islamic concepts often carry deep linguistic, cultural, and spiritual meanings that may not have direct equivalents in English. If these concepts are oversimplified or inadequately explained, there is a risk of misinterpretation or distortion of Islamic teachings. Another challenge relates to cultural sensitivity. English-language Islamic history books must carefully navigate differences in worldview, historical interpretation, and academic traditions. Without sufficient contextual explanation, readers may misunderstand certain practices or events due to preconceived cultural assumptions. These challenges underscore the importance of scholarly competence and ethical responsibility in the production of English-language Islamic educational materials.

The findings therefore highlight the need for educators, translators, and authors who possess strong expertise in both Islamic studies and the English language. Such dual competence ensures that Islamic history books remain faithful to their religious foundations while effectively communicating with a global audience. When handled with academic rigor and cultural awareness, the use of English enhances the educational value of Islamic history texts and supports the broader mission of disseminating Islamic teachings worldwide.

5. Conclusion

This study concludes that Islamic history books written or translated into English play a crucial and increasingly influential role in the dissemination of Islamic teachings within contemporary Islamic education. In an era characterized by globalization, mobility, and multicultural interaction, English functions as a strategic medium that allows Islamic historical knowledge to transcend linguistic and geographical boundaries. Through English, Islamic history becomes accessible not only to Arabic-speaking audiences but also to Muslim learners in non-Arabic-speaking regions and to non-Muslim readers who seek academic or cultural understanding of Islam. As a result, English significantly broadens participation in Islamic education and contributes to a more inclusive transmission of Islamic knowledge.

The findings further indicate that the use of English enhances accessibility by reducing linguistic barriers that often limit engagement with traditional Islamic sources. English-language Islamic history books present historical narratives in structured, explanatory, and reader-friendly formats, enabling learners with diverse linguistic backgrounds to comprehend complex historical events and moral teachings. This accessibility supports the pedagogical goals of Islamic education by ensuring that essential Islamic values—such as justice, ethical leadership, social responsibility, and spiritual reflection—are conveyed effectively to a global audience.

In addition, English plays a pivotal role in promoting cross-cultural communication and intercultural understanding. English-language Islamic history texts often adopt an academic and inclusive tone, providing contextual explanations that help readers situate Islamic civilization within broader world history. By addressing common misconceptions and highlighting Islam's contributions to global intellectual and cultural development, these texts foster dialogue and mutual understanding between Muslim and non-Muslim communities. In this sense, English not only functions as a language of instruction but also as a medium of cultural mediation that supports peaceful coexistence and scholarly exchange. The study also demonstrates that English expands the global reach of Islamic historical discourse by positioning Islamic history within international academic frameworks. Through English, Islamic historical narratives are able to engage with contemporary global issues and educational standards, making them relevant to modern learners. This relevance strengthens the role of Islamic history as a living discipline that informs present-day ethical, social, and educational discussions rather than remaining confined to the past.

Nevertheless, the study acknowledges that challenges persist in the use of English for disseminating Islamic teachings. Issues related to translation accuracy, loss of contextual meaning, and cultural sensitivity require careful scholarly attention. Islamic concepts often carry deep theological and cultural significance that may not have direct equivalents in English, increasing the risk of oversimplification or misinterpretation. However, when English is employed with academic rigor, cultural awareness, and strong grounding in Islamic scholarship, these challenges can be effectively managed. The findings suggest that the advantages of using English—particularly in terms of accessibility, engagement, and global communication—ultimately outweigh its limitations.

In light of these conclusions, future research is encouraged to explore comparative studies involving other international languages, such as French, Spanish, or Malay, to examine how different linguistic mediums influence the dissemination of Islamic teachings. Additionally, empirical studies focusing on learners' perceptions, comprehension levels, and educational experiences with English-language Islamic history texts would provide valuable insights into the effectiveness of such materials in real classroom contexts. Further investigation into teachers' perspectives and pedagogical strategies may also enrich understanding of how English-mediated Islamic education can be optimized.

Overall, this study contributes to a growing body of scholarship that recognizes language as a central factor in Islamic education. By highlighting the role of English in shaping access to and understanding of Islamic history, the study underscores the importance of thoughtful language choice in preserving Islamic heritage while engaging meaningfully with a globalized world.

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