



THE ROLE OF ENGLISH IN SPREADING ISLAM RAHMATAN LIL 'ALAMIN VALUES: MILLENNIALS' VOICES

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ABSTRACT

The rapid development of Islam in the world cannot be separated from the role of the international language. Islam, a *Rahmatan lil 'Alamin religion*, has a negative stigma in the international world. Millennials are young people who are very attached to information technology. Therefore, this paper aims to examine the voice of millennials more deeply toward the role of English in the spread of Islam *Rahmatan lil 'Alamin* values full of affection and peace. This study is qualitative research with a phenomenological approach. The data were collected by conducting semi-structured interviews. The results showed that millennials' voices toward the role of language are: ease of communication, medium of communication, and ease the information access. Then, millennials' voices toward the role of English in the spread of Islam *Rahmatan lil 'Alamin* values are: ease the convey Islam *Rahmatan lil 'Alamin* values through various fields, expand the reach of areas and targets in the spread of the values, ease in obtaining information about the spread of the values which can be accessed on the internet, supports efforts to straighten out the negative stigma directed at Islam and ease capturing messages about the values from various sources. The research implications suggest that leveraging English as a medium can significantly enhance the dissemination of Islam's values of compassion and peace among global audiences, particularly through digital platforms, thereby fostering greater understanding and reducing negative stereotypes associated with Islam.

Keywords: *English, Islam, millennial, rahmatan lil 'alamin, voices.*

ABSTRAK

Pesatnya perkembangan Islam di dunia tidak lepas dari peran bahasa internasional. Islam sebagai agama *Rahmatan lil 'Alamin* telah mendapat stigma negatif di dunia internasional. Generasi milenial adalah anak muda yang sangat lekat dengan teknologi informasi. Oleh karena itu, tulisan ini bertujuan untuk mengkaji lebih dalam persepsi generasi milenial terhadap peran bahasa Inggris dalam penyebaran nilai-nilai *Islam Rahmatan lil 'Alamin* yang penuh kasih sayang dan kedamaian. Ini adalah penelitian kualitatif dengan pendekatan fenomenologi. Pengumpulan data dilaksanakan dengan melakukan wawancara semi terstruktur. Hasil penelitian menunjukkan bahwa pandangan milenial terhadap peran bahasa adalah: memudahkan komunikasi, sebagai media komunikasi, dan memudahkan akses informasi. Kemudian, persepsi milenial terhadap peran bahasa Inggris dalam penyebaran nilai-nilai Islam *Rahmatan lil 'Alamin* adalah: mempermudah dalam menyampaikan nilai-nilai Islam *Rahmatan lil 'Alamin* melalui berbagai bidang, memperluas jangkauan daerah dan sasaran dalam penyebaran nilai-nilai tersebut, mempermudah dalam memperoleh informasi tentang penyebaran nilai-nilai tersebut yang dapat diakses di internet, mendukung upaya meluruskan stigma negatif yang ditujukan pada Islam, dan

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mempermudah dalam menangkap pesan tentang nilai-nilai tersebut dari berbagai sumber. Implikasi penelitian menunjukkan bahwa memanfaatkan bahasa Inggris sebagai media dapat secara signifikan meningkatkan penyebaran nilai-nilai Islam tentang kasih sayang dan perdamaian di kalangan audiens global, khususnya melalui platform digital, sehingga mendorong pemahaman yang lebih besar dan mengurangi stereotip negatif yang terkait dengan Islam.

Kata Kunci: *Bahasa Inggris, Islam, millennial, rahmatan lil 'alamin, persepsi.*

INTRODUCTION

In an increasingly globalized world, the role of language in shaping and spreading cultural and religious values cannot be underestimated (Parajuli, 2021; Riley, 2007). Language is not only a means of communication but also a carrier of culture and ideology (Parajuli, 2021; Seargeant, 2008). English, as the dominant global lingua franca, plays an important role in the spread of various ideologies, including religious teachings (Evans, 2014). Its widespread use makes it an effective tool for sharing and promoting ideas, values, and beliefs across various cultural and geographic boundaries (Pennycook, n.d.).

Islam, as one of the world's major religions, advocates the principle of "*Rahmatan lil 'Alamin*" (mercy for all nature). This principle is central to Islamic teachings and emphasizes universal values of compassion, justice, and peace (Adha & Prawironegoro, 2024; Jabali, 2011; Mohamed & Ofteringer, 2015). It reflects the core message of Islam, which is to bring compassion and kindness to all mankind, transcending geographical, cultural, and ethnic boundaries. However, global perceptions of Islam are often influenced by stereotypes and negative portrayals, which obscure fundamental values of compassion and compassion (Ahmed & Matthes, 2016; Sultan, 2016; Yusof et al., 2013).

The intersection between English proficiency and the spread of these values is a unique and significant area of study. As the second most widely spoken language in the world, English has the potential to bridge cultural gaps and facilitate a deeper understanding of Islamic principles (DeCapua & Wintergerst, 2016; Pennycook, 2017). This is especially relevant in the context of millennials, who are often at the forefront of cultural and ideological exchanges. Millennials, born and raised in the digital age, are uniquely positioned to leverage their English proficiency to interact with a global audience (Okros, 2019; Sierra, 2021).

Millennials are the most connected and digitally advanced generation, leveraging various digital platforms and social media to communicate and share ideas (Sierra, 2021). They use blogs, social media posts, videos, podcasts, and other forms of digital content to reach a broad and diverse audience. This dynamic interaction highlights the potential of the English language as a bridge for cross-cultural communication and the spread of universal values inherent in Islam. By articulating Islamic values of compassion and justice in English, millennials contribute to a broader and inclusive narrative that transcends cultural and linguistic boundaries.

Although English has the potential to be a means of spreading the inclusive and compassionate values of Islam, there is a stark gap in the representation and understanding of these values among the global public. The contemporary media

landscape often highlights negative stereotypes and misunderstood understandings of Islam, which obscure its core principles of mercy and compassion (Sultan, 2016; Yusof et al., 2013). This has led to the spread of misperception and lack of understanding of the true essence of Islam *Rahmatan lil 'Alamin*.

Millennials, who are the most connected and digitally sophisticated generation, are faced with the challenge of navigating and defying these narratives. They are constantly exposed to information, both positive and negative, and must filter it to find and spread the true values of their religion. However, research on how effectively millennials use English to convey the true essence of Islam *Rahmatan lil 'Alamin* is still limited. Existing research bodies often focus on defensive or reactive strategies rather than the proactive dissemination of Islamic values.

This research aims to explore how millennials, as key communicators in the digital era, use English to articulate and spread the values of Islam *Rahmatan lil 'Alamin*. By examining their voices, strategies, and the platforms they use, the study aims to identify effective methods to increase the visibility and understanding of these values globally. The research will focus on the proactive strategies used by millennials to spread the teachings of Islam that are loving, just, and peaceful to a wider audience.

The study will also consider the role of educational institutions, social media, and community initiatives in supporting these efforts. Educational institutions can play an important role in equipping millennials with the skills and knowledge necessary to effectively communicate their values. Social media platforms, with their wide reach and influence, can be a powerful tool for spreading positive narratives and defying negative stereotypes. Community initiatives can provide support and resources to young Muslims who want to engage in this important work.

Through a comprehensive analysis of these factors, this study aims to provide a nuanced understanding of how the English language can be used to promote the values of Islam *Rahmatan lil 'Alamin*. By highlighting successful strategies and identifying areas for improvement, the research will contribute to ongoing efforts to build a more inclusive and compassionate global community. This research is not only timely but also important in an era where global communication and understanding are more important than ever.

Previous research has discussed various aspects related to the meeting of the use of English, Islam, and digital communication (Almayez, 2022; Al-Surmi, 2019; Castelli & Trevathan, 2005; Hidayati, 2016; Karmani, 2005c, 2005a, 2005b; Keddie, 2009; Mohd-Asraf, 2005; Numrich, 2005; Öktem, 2019; Perreault, 2014; Rahman, 2005). However, those that discuss the specifics related to the role of English in the spread of Islam are still very limited. Therefore, researchers are interested in researching the perspective of millennial students on the role of English in the spread of the values of Islam *Rahmatan lil 'Alamin*.

Despite the valuable insights provided by existing research, there is still a noticeable gap in the literature regarding proactive efforts by millennials to spread the values of Islam *Rahmatan lil 'Alamin* through the English language. While defensive strategies are important in countering misinformation, there are still shortcomings in exploring how young Muslims actively promote the principles of Islamic love and inclusiveness using English as a medium.

The main objective of this study is to fill this gap by analyzing and documenting the proactive methods used by millennials to spread the values of Islam *Rahmatan lil 'Alamin* in English. With a focus on the voices and strategies of young Muslims involved in social and religious work, the study aims to provide a comprehensive understanding of how global communication can be harnessed to promote peace, compassion, and justice.

Through the exploration of the effectiveness of this method, the research aims to provide practical recommendations to increase its impact. By identifying successful approaches and potential areas for improvement, the study will contribute to the development of an informed and strategic communication strategy within the Muslim community and beyond.

This research will not only advance academic understanding in the fields of religious studies, communication, and cultural studies but also have practical implications for strengthening a more inclusive and compassionate global community. By highlighting the proactive efforts of millennials in promoting the values of Islam *Rahmatan lil 'Alamin*, this research aims to inspire and empower individuals and communities to actively contribute to positive change in society through informed and strategic communication practices.

METHOD

It is qualitative research. The research employed semi-structured interviews as a means to elicit unforeseen themes. The interview questions cover the role of language in general and the role of English in the spread of Islam *Rahmatan lil 'Alamin* values. The study involved conducting and recording interviews, each lasting thirty to forty minutes. Before commencing the data collection procedure, the participants were duly apprised that their responses would not have any bearing on their professional pursuits, as their identities and affiliations would be kept confidential to ensure anonymity. This study employed the use of pseudonyms and provided generic details of the gender of the participants.

Semi-structured interviews of about one hour for each participant were used in this study to help unanticipated themes come to light. The role of language in general and the role of English in the dissemination of Islam *Rahmatan lil 'Alamin* values are both covered in the interview questions. Each interview took between thirty and forty minutes to conduct and record. Before the commencement of data collection, the participants were duly apprised that their responses would not adversely affect their professional pursuits, as their identities and affiliations would be kept confidential. As a result, this study only provided broad demographic data about the participants' gender.

The present study employed purposive sampling to enlist participants who could effectively facilitate the investigation of the matter at hand (McCartan & Robson, 2016). Several selection criteria were established for the chosen participants, e.g., they are included as millennials who were born between 1980-2000, have Islamic background knowledge, and are familiar with English skills.

Purposive sampling was used in this study to select participants who could help explore the critical topic (McCartan & Robson, 2016). Some requirements for choosing participants were established, such as being a millennial born between 1980 and 2000, knowing about Islam, and being proficient in English.

Table 1 below displays the details of the participants involved in the present study.

Table 1. The pseudonyms of the participants

No	Pseudonyms of Participants	Gender
1	MM1	Male
2	MM2	Male
3	MM3	Male
4	MM4	Female
5	MM5	Female
6	MM6	Female
7	MM7	Male
8	MM8	Male
9	MM9	Female
10	M10	Male
11	MM11	Female
12	MM12	Female
13	MM13	Female
14	MM14	Female

The interview data were analyzed using a thematic analysis (Terry et al., 2017). The data analysis procedures adhered to the following steps:

1. One of the initial steps in the data analysis process involves becoming acquainted with the data, which may entail tasks such as transcribing, reading, and re-reading the interview data.
2. The process of developing codes involves extracting relevant information from both the literature and the collected data. Both deductive and inductive methodologies enabled the incorporation of predetermined codes and emerging codes in data analysis.
3. The process of constructing themes involves categorizing codes that are similar into potential themes.
4. The process of identifying and categorizing themes was derived from relevant scholarly sources.
5. The process of compiling the report involves the disclosure of codes and themes, as well as the careful selection of pertinent quotations from the interview transcript to substantiate the analysis of research findings.

FINDINGS

Millennials' Voices Toward the Role of Language

Based on the data, millennials believe that language has some roles. Three roles of language were found in this research. They are: language makes communication easier, language acts as a medium of communication, and language makes it easier to access information.

The first role of language is that it makes communication easier. Language serves as a fundamental tool for facilitating human interaction, enabling people to convey their thoughts and feelings effectively. Without the elements of language, human interaction and communication would be impossible.

"A language is a communication tool." (Interview, MM1)

"Enabling human interaction to run smoothly." (Interview, MM2)

This emphasizes the importance of language in ensuring that interactions are coherent and meaningful. When individuals communicate, they rely on language to express their ideas and emotions, making it a critical component of everyday interactions.

"Language makes people being open-minded about their ideas." (Interview, MM6)

This statement highlights the role of language in fostering open-mindedness and the exchange of ideas. Through language, individuals can share diverse perspectives, which can lead to greater understanding and acceptance among people.

Terminologically, communication is the process of conveying a statement from one person to another. Language plays a significant role as a tool for communication, acting as the medium through which messages are transmitted and received. One of the participants noted,

"Language has a significant position because in communicating, it is ensured to use language." (Interview, MM13)

This underscores the indispensable role of language in any form of communication.

"In communicating, it is required to master the language used by the recipient or giver of the message." (Interview, MM7)

Effective communication necessitates a mutual understanding of the language being used. This mutual understanding is crucial for accurately conveying ideas and ensuring that the intended message is comprehended by both parties.

"This is because, in conveying ideas, the process is usually influenced by semantic factors related to the use of language to channel thoughts and feelings from the communicator to the communicant." (Interview, MM7)

The semantic elements of language, such as meaning and context, play a vital role in how messages are interpreted. Misunderstandings can arise when there is a discrepancy in the semantic understanding between the communicator and the recipient.

With good language skills, a person can grasp the meaning of the message conveyed by the interlocutor.

"With the ability to digest messages, of course, the recipient of the message will be able to understand what the message giver conveys so that there is no miscommunication." (Interview, MM12)

This illustrates the importance of language proficiency in ensuring that messages are accurately understood, thereby reducing the likelihood of miscommunication.

This means that the giver and the recipient of the message must have the same understanding of what is being communicated. This mutual understanding is especially important when conveying complex or culturally significant messages. For instance, when conveying a message about Islam *Rahmatan lil 'Alamin*, one must master the language understood by the recipient of the message so that the meaning of Islam *Rahmatan lil 'Alamin* can be well received by the recipient.

"In communicating, it is required to master the language the recipient uses. It is so that the recipient can receive the message and does not cause miscommunication." (Interview, MM7)

Mastery of the recipient's language is essential for effective communication, as it ensures that the message is accurately interpreted and prevents misunderstandings.

Similarly, when delivering a message about Islam *Rahmatan lil 'Alamin*, one must master the language known by the recipient. Therefore, the more languages a person knows or masters, the more effective they are in establishing interactions (Interview, MM7). Mastery of multiple languages expands an individual's ability to communicate with a wider audience, enhancing their capacity to share and receive diverse perspectives.

Second, language acts as a medium of communication. Human life is inseparable from language. It is because it is possible always to use language in every activity. Apart from being a direct communication tool, language is also used in indirect communication, namely in written form. Language is the primary means of communication in various parts of the world. Language becomes a medium that plays a role in channeling one's aspirations and wills, presenting expression, and giving rise to social cooperation. A language is a communication tool used by humans. The needs of each individual can be realized and channeled through language. At this point, the function of language appears to be evident in people's lives.

"The more languages a person speaks, the more opportunities they will have to communicate with people with different languages." (Interview, MM10)

This emphasizes the practical benefits of multilingualism in expanding communication opportunities.

"If a person only masters one language, he cannot understand the language others use. It means that the more languages a person speaks, the more opportunities they will have to communicate." (Interview, MM7)

This statement points out the limitations of monolingualism and the advantages of learning multiple languages for broader communication.

From the understanding of communication above, it is contained that in the paradigmatic sense, communication aims to obtain specific effects on communicants: cognitive, affective, and behavioral. Cognitive effects are the effects that arise in communicants that make them understand something conveyed by the communicator. On cognitive effects, the communicator's purpose is limited to the

communicator's desire to change the communicator's mind. While on affective effects, the communicator not only intends to talk about something to the communicant but also seeks to have the communicant driven by the attitude or feeling in question, such as pity, sadness, emotion, joy, anger, and so on. For all three effects to be well received, the use of language must be observed.

"Language is closely related to the communication process. Language is an indispensable component of every communication event. The act of communication involves the transmission of a message from the individual or entity initiating the communication to the intended recipient." (Interview, MM7)

This emphasizes the intrinsic link between language and communication, showing that effective message transmission relies heavily on language proficiency.

"The role of language, in general, is as a medium of communication, namely as a tool to convey ideas from someone to others." (Interview, MM10)

Because if a person only masters one language, he cannot understand the language others use. It means that the more language a person has, the more opportunities they will have to communicate with many people in different parts of the world, including Middle Eastern countries (Interview, MM7). The Middle East is the main point of Islam with its Arabic, so for Islam to spread and be known by Europe, America, and the whole world, it must master the language spoken by the country's people, namely English (Interview, MM7). English is essential for everyone because it has entered the era of globalization, so everyone must be able to master English to establish communication with people from outside or internationally.

"It means that the more languages a person speaks, the more opportunities they will have to communicate with people with different languages." (Interview, MM10)

This final quote reinforces the overall theme that multilingualism greatly enhances communication opportunities across different cultures and regions.

The third role of language is to ease access to information. As an academic, someone must think critically about the phenomena that occur, including critical thinking in response to global events such as the Taliban conflict. To study more deeply about the conflict, one must first master the language, one of which is English.

"As an academician, one must be required to critically know the problems that arise both at home and abroad, including the Taliban conflict." (Interview, MM10)

This highlights the necessity for academics to engage deeply with international issues.

"The poor state of the Palestinian population, Myanmar refugees, which are widely published by the BBC or CNN using English on social media Twitter." (Interview, MM10)

Mastery of English is essential to access these sources and understand the global narrative.

"To study the conflict, one must have good English skills because English language skills are used to study English-language literature or literature from Europe." (Interview, MM10)

This underscores the importance of English proficiency in accessing and comprehending scholarly and journalistic literature.

In addition to studying the Taliban conflict, mastery of English makes it easier to access Islamic information from various other countries. For example, the state of Palestine and Myanmar refugees are widely published by the BBC or CNN using English on social media platforms like Twitter.

"With a mastery of English, it will be easier to access Islamic information from various other countries, for example, about the state of Palestine and Myanmar refugees, which are widely published by the BBC or CNN using English on social media Twitter." (Interview, MM10)

This statement emphasizes the practical benefits of knowing English for staying informed about global issues through major news outlets and social media.

Millennial students' voices toward the role of English in the spread of Islam *Rahmatan lil 'Alamin values*

English ease to convey the values of Islam Rahmatan lil 'Alamin through various fields

Islam *Rahmatan lil 'Alamin* is an inclusive form of Islam, characterized by mutual respect and the belief that while one's religion is true, it does not mean other religions are wrong. This inclusivity prevents hostility between different religious believers.

"Islam *Rahmatan lil 'Alamin* is an Islam that is not exclusive but inclusive, i.e., ingrained mutual respect, believing that the religion it believes in is true, but does not justify that a religion other than Islam is the wrong religion. By being inclusive, each religious believer does not blame the other but sticks to their religious beliefs and is not hostile to religious believers outside their beliefs." (Interview, MM14)

This concept emphasizes affection over violence and aims to bring peace to all humanity, not just Muslims.

"Islam *Rahmatan lil 'Alamin* concept prioritizes affection over violence." (Interview, MM8)

"It prioritizes peace to all humankind and not only to Muslims." (Interview, MM14)

The Prophet Muhammad PBUH exemplified this principle, being recognized as one of the most influential figures in history.

"Islam *Rahmatan lil 'Alamin* appears in the person of the Prophet Muhammad PBUH as the most influential person in the world." (Interview, MM3)

In Indonesia, this concept is better known as Islam Nusantara, which promotes moderation as part of the government's agenda.

"In Indonesia, the term Islam *Rahmatan lil 'Alamin* is better known as Islam Nusantara. One of the themes being promoted by the government is moderation." (Interview, MM1)

However, the negative stigma towards Islam persists globally, partly due to misconceptions and actions by individuals misrepresenting Islamic teachings.

"There are still many negative stigmas from various parts of the world that lead to Islam from various circles who come from people outside Islam who do not understand the teachings of Islam." (Interview, MM14)

These misconceptions are compounded by visible markers such as beards or traditional clothing, leading to stereotypes.

"Some people see Islam as just names and clothes." (Interview, MM2)

"There is a negative label aimed at those with beards." (Interview, MM3)

Moreover, some groups misuse Islam to justify violent actions, further tarnishing its image.

"Some parties use the name of Islam to violate Islam." (Interview, MM4)

The September 11th attacks significantly impacted the perception of Islam, leading many to erroneously view it as a religion of terror and violence.

"For this tragedy, non-Muslims are mistaken in perceiving Islam because, in reality, a group of Muslims commits actions that are not under the teachings of Islam." (Interview, MM14)

It is crucial to highlight that these violent acts are not representative of true Islamic teachings.

"The label that Islam is a radical religion is a wildly unsubstantiated and not concrete argument because Islam is not a terrorist religion and all actions that lead to terror. The essence is not Muslims but claims to be Islam." (Interview, MM1)

To combat these misconceptions and convey the peaceful message of Islam *Rahmatan lil 'Alamin*, proficiency in English is essential. English is the global lingua franca, enabling communication and dissemination of ideas across borders.

"To understand and make it easier for followers of other religions about the mission of peace covered in Islam *Rahmatan lil 'Alamin*, it is necessary to have a mastery of the language, especially English." (Interview, MM7)

English proficiency is vital for accessing global information and effectively participating in the modern world.

"The ability to speak English is a fundamental ability and a need that everyone must have because, nowadays, it requires everyone to interact with the outside world." (Interview, MM5)

It facilitates the spread of Islam *Rahmatan lil 'Alamin* through various media, including music and lectures.

"English makes it easier to convey ideas or ideas in various fields, including Islam *Rahmatan lil 'Alamin*, because English is a universal and international language spoken by many countries worldwide." (Interview, MM7)

Prominent figures like Dr. Zakir Naik and Hisyam Kabani use English to reach a global audience, demonstrating its importance in spreading Islamic teachings.

"A concrete example of the spread of the value of Islam *Rahmatan lil 'Alamin* through English is the proselytizing activities carried out by Dr Zakir Naik as a da'i from the land of India who spreads Islam not only in one area it occupies but almost all over the world." (Interview, MM1)

"Another figure who also focuses on proselytizing using English is Hisyam Kabani. This *da'i* is from America and has visited Indonesia, Banyumas, and Lirboyo." (Interview, MM1)

Even in the field of music, artists like Maher Zain use English to share Islamic values through their songs.

"English also facilitates the spread values of Islam *Rahmatan lil 'Alamin* through the field of music, as the music sung by Mahar Zain, who preaches broadcasts Islam using his religious music." (Interview, MM11)

Thus, mastering English is essential for effectively spreading the message of Islam *Rahmatan lil 'Alamin* worldwide.

"One of the internal factors that can be an obstacle to the spread of the value of Islam *Rahmatan lil 'Alamin* is because a person has not mastered the ability to speak English." (Interview, MM7)

In conclusion, to spread the value of Islam *Rahmatan lil 'Alamin* globally, proficiency in English is a crucial requirement.

English expands the range of areas and targets in the spread of the value of Islam Rahmatan lil 'Alamin

Mastering the international language is something that everyone needs to develop. English is an essential communication medium for citizens of England, America, Canada, and other major countries. To be able to learn various sciences

abroad requires the ability to speak English because it is not enough just to study science from within the country but also to study science that exists abroad, including aspects of the religious field, namely spreading Islam *Rahmatan lil 'Alamin* through English.

"To be able to learn various sciences abroad requires the ability to speak English because it is not enough just to study science from within the country but also to study science that exists abroad." (Interview, MM11)

Islam *Rahmatan lil 'Alamin* is an Islam that carries and teaches compassion for all nature and for all humankind, which is heterogeneous in terms of language and culture.

"Islam is aimed at people in Makkah, Indonesia, and worldwide." (Interview, MM7)

Muslims who believe in the truth and glory of his teachings evidence His praiseworthy conduct; manners, meekness, compassion, and maintaining peace above all existing differences, whether between religions, nations, tribes, or ethnicities and not involving the Quran to justify its anarchist stance (Q.S. Yûsuf: 23).

For Islam *Rahmatan lil 'Alamin* to be realized, there must be a balance in establishing human relations with Allah (*hablum minallah*) and human relations with humans (*hablum minannas*). Man's relationship with Allah is realized in worship as follows: listening to Allah with all confidence and the Prophet Muhammad saw, establishing prayers, and so on. The relationship between man and man is realized by working responsibly, fulfilling zakat, establishing a brotherhood based on righteousness, emigrating towards goodness, and so on.

"The Messenger of Allah PBUH has practiced all that is contained in *hablum minallah* and *hablum minnannas*. Therefore, every Islam adherent must master English to spread Islam *Rahmatan lil 'Alamin*, especially in continental Europe." (Interview, MM12)

By mastering English, the target of proselytizing related to Islam *Rahmatan lil 'Alamin* values is getting wider to various parts of the country.

"It is different if a person only controls one language, then the scope of proselytizing is narrow. In this case, English is essential in spreading values of Islam *Rahmatan lil 'Alamin*." (Interview, MM7)

In today's modern era, English has a significant position.

"English is a prevalent language used by many countries in the world in establishing communication, so it has a crucial role globally." (Interview, MM2)

A participant expressed that English is an international language and a provision to grasp the world.

"Because no matter how intelligent a person is, if they don't have a command of English, they cannot do anything abroad." (Interview, MM12)

English has a significant role in spreading the values of Islam *Rahmatan lil 'Alamin*.

"If the value can be conveyed in the international language used by non-Muslims, then the message of the value will be readily accepted by all circles." (Interview, MM14)

English can connect one nation with another, so it is necessary to spread or indict Islam *Rahmatan lil 'Alamin* using English to a nation that has not or has lost its *Rahmatan lil 'Alamin* identity.

"English can connect one nation with another, so it is necessary to spread or indict Islam *Rahmatan lil 'Alamin* using English." (Interview, MM8)

English as a unifying language will make it easier to convey the value of Islam *Rahmatan lil 'Alamin* because, with it, we will be able to proselytize to various countries.

"No matter how intelligent people are, if they preach using Indonesian in America, the target of proselytizing does not understand what is being said. It is where the role of English looks very visible." (Interview, MM4)

English is essential when delivering proselytizing to various countries.

"English is essential when delivering proselytizing to various countries." (Interview, MM3)

The role of English in spreading the value of Islam *Rahmatan lil 'Alamin* is not limited by space and time.

"Islam *Rahmatan lil 'Alamin* does not only apply in Indonesia but also to other countries such as Australia." (Interview, MM1)

The way to socialize with Islam *Rahmatan lil 'Alamin* must be under the condition of the *mukhotob*, the invited man. For example, preaching in a layman's environment means using the language the layman uses. Likewise, when proselytizing abroad, as done by Gus Nadhir, who preaches in an environment that does not use English, then to convey Islam *Rahmatan lil 'Alamin* must also use English.

"Likewise, when proselytizing abroad, as done by Gus Nadhir, who preaches in an environment that does not use English, then to convey Islam *Rahmatan lil 'Alamin* must also use English." (Interview, MM1)

If Islam is spread through Arabic or Indonesian only, then the target is limited to people who speak both languages.

"If Islam is spread through Arabic or Indonesian only, then the target is limited to people who speak both languages." (Interview, MM14)

On the other hand, if the value of Islam *Rahmatan lil 'Alamin* is spread through English, more and more people will be able to access the idea and even explain why a lousy label about Islam in the eyes of the world can happen.

"If the value of Islam *Rahmatan lil 'Alamin* is spread through English, more and more people will be able to access the idea and even explain why a lousy label about Islam in the eyes of the world can happen." (Interview, MM14)

In conclusion, mastering English is essential for effectively spreading the message of Islam *Rahmatan lil 'Alamin* worldwide.

English helps in obtaining information about the spread of the values of Islam Rahmatan lil 'Alamin, which can be accessed on the internet

The English language helps in obtaining information about the spread of Islam *Rahmatan lil 'Alamin* values, which can be accessed on the internet. One of the advantages of English is that it is used as the primary language in technology, especially the Internet.

"I am used to using the internet to search for information about Islam, especially writings on Google Scholar" (Interview, MM11).

Through a search on Google Scholar, various references to English-language Islamic studies can be found in various scientific works, such as scientific journals and theses. As stated by one of the participants,

"I often access scientific theses rather than journals, especially theses that match the titles used in my research. This, in my opinion, is one of the efforts to support my final project later." (Interview, MM11).

One participant used his English skills to stream on YouTube about Islamic studies in English. Among the English-language Islamic studies he can access on YouTube is a video about the character Real Fatih, a Qur'an memorizer from England. In addition to Real Fatih, Eni also accessed a video on YouTube about Dr. Zakir Naik, a missionary from India who explained the theme of Islam.

"I used my English skills to stream on YouTube about Islamic studies. Among the English-language Islamic studies I access on YouTube is a video about the character Real Fatih, a Qur'an memorizer from England. In addition to Real Fatih, I also accessed a video on YouTube about Dr. Zakir Naik, a missionary from India who explained the theme of Islam. I think that a good mastery of Islam and English makes many viewers interested in embracing Islam" (Interview, MM11).

Dr. Zakir Naik, a *da'i* from India, an intelligent and insightful Muslim, had a very ingenious ability to debate with non-Muslims, so his opponents converted to Islam because of Dr. Zakir Naik's explanation (Interview, MM12). This means that the English language has an important role in spreading the values of Islam *Rahmatan lil 'Alamin*. In addition, what Dr. Zakir Naik said about Islamic values became a separate event for non-Muslims to convert to Islam (Interview, MM11).

In broadcasting the teachings of Islam, which include the values of Islam *Rahmatan lil 'Alamin*, one must first master the Islamic material and have good English language skills before conveying it to the general public. This means that it is not only enough to master Islamic values but also to master English when broadcasting Islam *Rahmatan lil 'Alamin* in English.

".. to broadcast the Islamic teachings of *Rahmatan lil 'Alamin*, one must master Islamic material and have good English language skills. So, not only Islamic values must be mastered, but also English." (Interview, MM11)

English language skills will help a person to broadcast Islam using English. One of the participants did so when he joined an English program at one of the state Islamic universities in Indonesia. One of the agendas that he must complete is to upload/share religious quotes taken from the Qur'an, hadith, or fatwa of scholars using English. He always does this agenda every Friday.

"One of the agendas that I have to complete is to upload or share religious quotes taken from the Qur'an, hadith, or fatwa of scholars using English. I always do this agenda every Friday." (Interview, MM11)

English supports efforts to straighten out the negative stigma directed at Islam.

It is a must for every Muslim to master the concept of Islam *Rahmatan lil 'Alamin* so that their behavior aligns with Islamic principles. As emphasized by MM13 in an interview,

"If Muslims do not understand the concept, then it is feared that their behavior will come out of the concept of Islam *Rahmatan lil 'Alamin*, which will have an impact on smearing the good name of the Islamic religion itself." (Interview, MM13)

In broadcasting Islam, proficiency in both Islamic knowledge and language, including English, is essential. MM12 highlighted this,

"To be able to proselytize professionally, the ability of religious knowledge possessed by a person must be supported by his ability to master the language, including English." (Interview, MM12)

This underscores the importance of language proficiency in spreading the values of Islam globally.

Moreover, MM10 shared their motivation for joining an English study program at an Islamic university, expressing the desire to balance religious knowledge with English language skills. They stated,

"Even though he was already armed with religious knowledge, he still needed to learn English." (Interview, MM10)

This reflects the recognition of the significance of English proficiency in disseminating Islamic values beyond local boundaries. Additionally, proficiency in

English can help counter negative perceptions of Islam. MM4 emphasized this, stating,

"The ability to speak English will support Muslims in straightening out the negative labels or stigmas directed at Islam that Islam is a radical religion." (Interview, MM4)

This highlights the role of language in challenging misconceptions and promoting understanding.

Furthermore, participation in religious exchange programs provides opportunities to share Islamic values globally. MM10 discussed plans to spread the value of Islam *Rahmatan lil 'Alamin* through such programs, aiming to engage in discussions about Islam in Indonesia and the concept of multiculturalism. This illustrates the proactive approach of individuals in promoting interfaith dialogue and understanding.

English makes it easier to capture messages about the value of Islam Rahmatan lil 'Alamin from various sources

English proficiency opens doors to a multitude of learning opportunities, particularly in scientific fields and Islamic studies, as articulated by MM11:

"With one's English proficiency, one will find it easier to have a broader opportunity to learn various scientific fields from speakers from various foreign countries, including Islamic studies." (Interview, MM11)

MM11 shared her experience of joining an International School program, where interaction with speakers from various countries, including Caucasians, was crucial:

"In the school, I must interact with Caucasians deliberately brought in to fill events in international schools. Among the themes discussed in international schools is related to culture, namely the cultural diversity owned by each country. Mainly the culture that exists in Indonesia." (Interview, MM11)

Furthermore, MM11 highlighted the significance of English in academic settings, where international professors, including those from America, contribute to discussions on various topics, including culture:

"In addition to international schools, one participant must also interact using English when studying. According to a statement submitted by one of the participants, several lecturers are deliberately brought in from abroad to fill lectures, including those from America. One of the themes discussed in the debate is culture." (Interview, MM11)

The Modern Islamic History course, as discussed by MM4, is one example where English serves as the medium of instruction, emphasizing the role of language proficiency in accessing specialized knowledge:

"One of the courses on Islam delivered using English is the Modern Islamic History course." (Interview, MM4)

Similarly, MM10 emphasized the importance of English proficiency in joining communities focused on comparative religions:

"It is similar to stating that one of the benefits obtained by mastering English is joining a community that lasts for three days." (Interview, MM10)

Mastery of English is essential for engaging with European literature and understanding diverse perspectives on religious studies:

"This community, among others, discusses the theme of comparative religions, such as the comparison of Catholic and Christian religions." (Interview, MM11)

Moreover, MM11 underscored the role of English proficiency in facilitating cultural exchange, particularly in Indonesian Islamic universities:

"Because of Indonesian Islamic universities, there are many visits from non-Muslim or Christian believers who want to learn about Islam, then with the ability to speak English, someone has the opportunity to accompany them to learn about the culture that exists in Islam." (Interview, MM11)

Conversely, MM6 highlighted the value of English proficiency in learning about foreign cultures:

"On the contrary, with the ability to speak English, a person can learn about the culture abroad." (Interview, MM6)

In academic contexts, such as the Indonesian Islamic Studies course mentioned by MM10, English proficiency enables students to comprehend lectures and access English-language resources:

"One course discusses Islam in lectures, namely the Indonesian Islamic Studies course." (Interview, MM10)

MM10 shared his experience of accessing English-language journals to fulfill academic assignments and participate in programs like religious exchanges organized by Americans:

"By mastering English, a person can readily capture messages from various Islamic sources in English." (Interview, MM10)

MM7 further emphasized the transformative impact of English proficiency on understanding and engaging with prominent figures like Dr. Zakir Naik:

"By mastering English, a person can readily capture messages from various Islamic sources in English. Armed with the ability to speak English, it is more likely for someone to understand the message of peace conveyed through English, as the message of peace conveyed by Dr Zakir Naik." (Interview, MM7)

MM7 highlighted how proficiency in both English and Islamic studies motivates individuals to actively engage in learning and dialogue.

DISCUSSION

The findings of this study highlight the multifaceted role of languages, especially English, in facilitating communication, accessing information, and promoting values of Islam *Rahmatan lil 'Alamin* among the millennial generation. The discussion will integrate these roles, drawing on the perspectives and experiences shared by the participants, and place them in the broader context of the importance of language in an increasingly globalized world. This discussion will also compare findings with existing theories and research on the role of language in communication, access to information, and the spread of cultural and religious values.

Language as a Tool and Medium of Communication

Language serves as a fundamental tool for human interaction, allowing individuals to express their ideas and thoughts clearly and effectively (Bickerton, 2016; Bonvillain, 2019; Carruthers, 2002; Vygotsky, 2012). The participants in this study emphasized the importance of mastering English to avoid misunderstandings and ensure that the message is conveyed and understood accurately. These findings are in line with communication theory that emphasizes the need for a common linguistic framework to facilitate mutual understanding (Chomsky, 1969). Linguistic accuracy is essential in conveying complex ideas and emotions, reinforcing the concept that effective communication depends on the same linguistic competence.

In addition to being a tool for verbal interaction, language also serves as a medium for written communication, which is essential for social cooperation and the dissemination of ideas (Bonvillain, 2019). The ability to speak languages in several languages, especially English, expands an individual's capacity to interact with diverse populations, increasing opportunities for cross-cultural interaction and understanding (Sercu, 2005). English, as a widely spoken international language, plays a crucial role in transmitting ideas across cultural and geographical boundaries, thus promoting global connectivity. This role is very significant in the context of spreading the values of Islam *Rahmatan lil 'Alamin*, as the ability to speak English allows the dissemination of Islamic teachings to a wider audience, countering negative stereotypes, and encouraging a more inclusive understanding of Islam.

Language Facilitates Access to Information

Language, particularly English, facilitates easier access to information, which is especially important in the digital age where a lot of information is available in English. Participants noted that English proficiency allowed them to access a wide range of resources, engage with international literature, and gain a comprehensive understanding of global issues. These findings are consistent with previous research on the global dominance of English as a lingua franca (Crystal, 2003; HOUSE, 2018). The ability to access and understand English-speaking resources is essential for academic and professional development, allowing individuals to participate in international academic programs and engage with a variety of perspectives.

In addition, English language skills are important for promoting an informed and critical discourse on global issues, including the spread of Islam *Rahmatan lil 'Alamin*. The participants highlighted that English allows them to critically engage with information about global events, such as the Taliban conflict or the plight of Palestinian and Myanmar refugees, which are often reported by major international media in English. Access to this information is not only beneficial for personal growth but also contributes to a more informed and engaged citizen of the world.

The Role of English in Spreading the Values of Islam Rahmatan lil 'Alamin

The findings also emphasize the specific role of the English language in spreading the values of Islam *Rahmatan lil 'Alamin*. The English language serves as a bridge to communicate these values to a global audience, thereby expanding the reach of Islamic teachings. The participants emphasized that English proficiency allows them to convey the inclusive and compassionate principles of Islam to non-Muslim audiences, challenge negative stereotypes, and promote a more accurate understanding of the religion. This perspective is in line with the idea that language can be a vehicle for cultural diplomacy and soft power (Ang et al., 2016; Njiru, 2016).

The use of English in da'wah activities, as shown by figures such as Dr. Zakir Naik and Hisyam Kabani, shows the effectiveness of this language in reaching diverse audiences. In addition, the English language facilitates the spread of the values of Islam *Rahmatan lil 'Alamin* through various media, including music, as seen in the works of artists such as Maher Zain. By using the English language, these figures can interact with a global audience and promote the values of Islam *Rahmatan lil 'Alamin* more effectively.

The findings of this study are in line with and expand existing theories and research on the role of language in communication, access to information, and the dissemination of cultural and religious values. Previous studies have highlighted the fundamental role of language as a means of communication and its importance in enabling effective interaction and reducing misunderstandings (Bonvillain, 2019; Chomsky, 1969). The study supports these theories, as millennials emphasize that language facilitates communication and helps avoid misunderstandings.

In addition, these findings reinforce the idea that language is a medium for accessing information (Fairclough, 2001; Gee, 2012). The study found that English language proficiency allows access to a wide range of information and literature, especially in the context of global issues and academic research, which is consistent with previous research on the global dominance of English as a lingua franca (Crystal, 2003).

Furthermore, this study highlights the role of the English language in spreading cultural and religious values, especially the values of Islam *Rahmatan lil 'Alamin*. It expands on the work of scholars such as Fishman (Fishman, 1991) and (Spolsky, 2004), who have discussed the role of language in maintaining and transmitting cultural and religious identities. Millennials in this study see English as an important tool to convey the values of Islam *Rahmatan lil 'Alamin* to a global audience, in line with the idea that language can be a vehicle for cultural diplomacy and soft power (Nye, 2004).

CONCLUSION

This research emphasizes the important role of language, especially English, in shaping the contemporary social, cultural, and information landscape for the millennial generation. English has not only emerged as a means of daily communication, but also as a gateway to global knowledge, a medium of cross-cultural interaction, and a means of spreading religious and cultural values. The multifaceted usefulness of the English language highlights its dominance as a global lingua franca and its crucial role in academia, media, and international relations.

By facilitating clear and precise communication, English minimizes misunderstandings and promotes mutual understanding. The language serves as a fundamental medium for verbal and written interaction, allowing individuals to engage in social cooperation and the exchange of ideas globally. In addition, the ability to speak English allows access to a wide range of information, which is especially important in the digital age where English dominates as the language of the internet and global media. This access is essential for academic and professional development, which encourages a more informed and engaged global citizenry.

In the context of promoting the values of Islam *Rahmatan lil 'Alamin*, English plays a crucial role. This language allows the spread of Islamic teachings to a wider audience, countering negative stereotypes, and encouraging a more inclusive understanding of Islam. By utilizing the English language, religious and cultural organizations can engage in effective da'wah and cultural diplomacy, promoting peace, inclusivity, and mutual respect among a diverse global audience.

This research is in line with existing theories about the importance of language in communication, information access, and cultural transmission, and extends these theories into the practical realm of contemporary global interaction. In addition, the study highlights the need for a comprehensive language education policy that prioritizes English language proficiency while promoting multilingualism to improve cross-cultural communication.

Based on these findings, several recommendations were put forward: strengthening English language education, promoting multilingualism, supporting intercultural initiatives, leveraging technology for language learning and communication, and conducting ongoing research to explore the broader impact of language proficiency.

In conclusion, the study emphasizes the important role of the English language in facilitating global communication, access to information, and the promotion of cultural and religious values. By implementing the recommended strategies, stakeholders can harness the power of language to foster greater understanding and cooperation in an increasingly connected world. Insights gained from the perspectives of the participants highlighted the importance of linguistic competence in the face of the complexity of the modern world, reinforcing the need for effective language education and English language proficiency. As we move forward, prioritizing language education and acknowledging the multifaceted role of English will be crucial in building a more informed, inclusive, and harmonious global society.

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