JOLLS: Journal of Language and Literature Studies
Website: https://journal-center.litpam.com/index.php/jolls/index
Email: jolls@litpam.com
DOI: https://doi.org/10.36312/jolls.v5i2.2646

June 2025 Vol. 5, No. 2
e-ISSN: 2808-1099
pp. 250-271

Challenging Misconceptions about Islam through Islamic English: An Assertive Speech Act Approach in Interfaith Dialogue

[1*]Siti Zulfah, [1]Hanung Triyoko
[1]English Education Department, Faculty of Postgraduate Studies, Universitas Islam Negeri Salatiga. Jl. Tentara Pelajar No. 2, Salatiga Central Java, Indonesia

*Corresponding Author e-mail: sitizulfah2407&gmail.com

Received: April 2025; Revised: May 2025; Published: June 2025

Abstract

Research has shown that interfaith dialogue is essential for fostering mutual understanding and peace among different religious communities, yet misconceptions and stereotypes, particularly about Islam, continue to hinder productive communication. The role of language, especially Islamic English, in bridging these gaps and facilitating accurate representations of Islam remains underexplored in the context of interfaith dialogue. This study investigates the role of Islamic English in addressing these misconceptions by analyzing its use through the framework of assertive speech acts. Adopting a mixed-methods approach, the study examines a publicly available YouTube video of an interfaith dialogue conference titled "Islam, Judaism, and Christianity – A Conversation", hosted by SMAADallas. A total of 135 occurrences of Islamic English terms were identified and analyzed based on their frequency, meanings, and pragmatic functions. The qualitative phase applies assertive speech act analysis to explore how these terms reinforce Islamic identity, clarify religious concepts, and establish common ground with other faiths. The findings reveal that the Muslim speaker strategically employs Islamic English through assertive acts such as asserting, stating, denying, describing, and explaining to challenge stereotypes, correct misunderstandings, and assert Islamic theological and historical truths. The study highlights how Islamic English serves as a discursive strategy in interfaith communication, ensuring linguistic and theological accuracy while fostering mutual respect. Ultimately Islamic educators and interfaith dialogue practitioners can incorporate Islamic English strategically to clarify Islamic identity, correct misconceptions, engage diverse audiences, and promote mutual respect and peaceful coexistence in educational and interfaith settings.

Keywords: Assertive speech acts; Islamic English; Interfaith communication; Religious identity; Misconception correction

How to Cite: Zulfah, S., & Triyoko, H. (2025). Challenging Misconceptions about Islam through Islamic English: An Assertive Speech Act Approach in Interfaith Dialogue, *Journal of Language and Literature Studies, 5*(2), 250-271. doi: https://doi.org/10.36312/jolls.v5i2.2646

https://doi.org/10.36312/jolls.v5i2.2646

INTRODUCTION

In today's modern world, globalization has brought the interconnectedness of people from different countries and backgrounds (Onuoha & Odeke, 2020). This interconnectedness involves not only the transfer of information and communication but also socio-economic, political, technological, and cultural exchanges. It also facilitates the exposure and spread of religious beliefs, with each religion practicing distinct teachings and values. Encouraging sustainable interfaith initiatives is a prominent approach to ensuring peace among religions with different principles (Habib et al., 2022). Interfaith initiatives are organized to resolve conflicts, build bridges, foster common action, or search for truth and understanding in the context of religious plurality (Visser et al., 2023). One of the most well-known methods to implement interfaith initiatives is through interfaith dialogue. Interfaith dialogue plays a vital role in international diplomacy due to its real

impact on conflict prevention. It fosters intercultural understanding and peace among religions (Körs et al., 2020; Saragih et al., 2020). Additionally, Siahaya et al. (2023) emphasize that interfaith dialogue contributes to promoting peace and reconciliation in existing conflicts among religions. Ultimately, fostering interfaith dialogue is essential for cultivating harmony in our diverse, multi-religious global society.

Given the key goals of interfaith dialogue in conflict prevention and resolution, the promotion of mutual understanding, and the cultivation of peace and harmony among diverse religious groups, it is important to recognize that Islam, as a global religion rooted in principles of peace and tranquility, inherently supports the values underpinning interfaith dialogue. Islamic principles are systematically taught and introduced in educational settings. Riaz et al. (2023) infered that, Islamic education, deeply rooted in the teachings of the Quran, the holy book of Islam and the life of the Prophet Muhammad, offers a distinctive perspective on peace, tolerance, and understanding. This education draws from a tradition that places paramount importance on compassion, justice, and the intrinsic worth of every human being. These values lie at the heart of Islam, forming the foundation upon which visions of a harmonious and just society are built.

Despite its aim to promote harmonious communication among religions, interfaith dialogue continues to face significant obstacles, such as prejudice, distrust, and a lack of understanding, which can hinder meaningful conversations (Rosidah et al., 2024). One prominent example of this challenge is the widespread misunderstanding and misrepresentation of Islam in contemporary global discourse. Despite Islam's emphasis on principles of harmony, the religion has been subjected to negative stereotypes, particularly after incidents like terrorist attacks (Marzouki et al., 2020), which have led to contradictory practices being associated with the religion. This has fueled confusion, misconceptions, distrust, and even hatred towards Islam, making it, as noted in numerous studies, one of the most misunderstood religions in the world today and throughout history (Mohamad, 1996). These persistent barriers not only undermine the potential of interfaith dialogue but also deepen religious misunderstandings and tensions, especially concerning global perceptions of Islam.

One of the major factors contributing to these misconceptions is how Islam is portrayed in global mass media. Studies have shown that terrorism incidents like 9/11, wars in Muslim-majority countries, and migration have significantly shaped the Western perception of Islam and Muslims, often focusing primarily on the Middle East. As a result, Western media has frequently linked Muslims and Islam with terrorism, violence, and extremist ideologies, presenting the religion as a threat to Western values (Ahmed & Matthes, 2017). This influence is amplified by the dominance of the English language in international media and popular culture. As English, originally spoken in Western countries, has become the leading global language (Rao, 2019). Countries where English is the primary language, such as the United States, have had a profound impact on global culture, particularly through Hollywood, the world's largest film industry. Hollywood often portrays Islam and Muslims negatively, reinforcing harmful stereotypes. A study by Yousaf et al. (2020) analyzed four Hollywood movies from 2012 and found that all depictions of Muslims were negative, portraying them as anti-Western and associating Islamic countries with violence and backwardness.

Beyond media portrayal, language represents another powerful force shaping public perception of Islam, particularly through how Islamic concepts are translated and communicated across linguistic and cultural boundaries. The translation of Islamic holy texts and religious terminology plays a crucial role in shaping how non-Muslim audiences understand the religion. A recent study by Elimam (2019) explored how the Qur'an, Islam, and Muslims are "narrated" in the British press, highlighting the translators' influence in shaping media narratives. Since narratives cannot cross linguistic and cultural boundaries

without translation, inaccurate or oversimplified translations can contribute to misleading or distorted representations of Islamic teachings. Elimam's study underscores how translated Qur'anic verses, when presented as literal and decontextualized quotations, can distort their intended meanings and theological context, thereby misleading readers and contributing to inaccurate perceptions of Islam. This selective framing, along with an emphasis on certain verses, tends to associate Islam with violence, while sidelining authentic Islamic voices and reinforcing a polarizing "us versus them" mentality.

Further complicating the accurate representation of Islam is the challenge of translating Islamic terms into English, where direct linguistic equivalents are often lacking. Saleh (2002) in his book of *Islamic Words and Expressions Dictionary*, stated that many terms in the Qur'an and Islamic teachings do not have precise or equivalent words in English due to the great difference and distance between Arabic and English in terms of history and culture. This linguistic gap can lead to misunderstandings or oversimplifications of key concepts in Islam. For instance, terms like "Qur'an" (the literal word of God) and "Jihad" (struggle) are often misunderstood when translated into English, as their deeper meanings may not be fully captured by the English words. This lack of equivalency can contribute to misconceptions and fuel the negative stereotypes surrounding Islam. Therefore, the translation of Islamic concepts requires careful attention to preserve the nuances of the original Arabic, ensuring that meanings are conveyed accurately and context is maintained (Elimam, 2019).

In response to both media distortion and linguistic misrepresentation, scholars and practitioners have advanced the concept of "Islamic English", a form of English that incorporates Islam-related expressions (Ali, 2014), as a means to restore the accuracy and authenticity of Islamic teachings in interfaith communication. Primarily, Al-Faruqi (1986) who proposed "Islamic English" in his book, "Toward Islamic English" defined Islamic English as the adaptation of the English language to accurately incorporate Quranic words and expressions, as well as Islamic proper nouns and concepts. This adaptation aims to preserve their original meanings without distortion, while meeting the linguistic needs of English-speaking Muslims. Hasan (2014) summarized four key reasons for the emergence of Islamic English. First, Islamic English arose as a postcolonial shift, allowing Muslims to use English free from colonial baggage that once hindered its adoption. Second, as English becomes a primary language for millions of Muslims, it has become a central medium for communication, intellectual engagement, and religious discourse within the global Muslim community. Third, with more Islamic texts being published in English than in any other language, English has become a key tool for transmitting Islamic knowledge on a global scale.

With its growing presence, Islamic English is believed to not undermine the fundamental rules of the English language, but rather an enrichment of it (Jassem, 1996). Al-Faruqi (1986) implies that much like how English has historically benefited from Latin, Greek, French, and German, integrating Islamic values and vocabularies, especially through the lives of English-speaking Muslims, can offer significant value to both English-speaking communities and the wider world, where these nations hold global influence. While Islamic English enriches the English language by incorporating religious vocabularies, it also serves some vital purposes particularly in interfaith communication. Triyoko (2014) emphasized that Islamic English contributes to reinforcing the identities of Muslims. Ali (2007) further added that this variety of English is potential to enhance mutual understanding and respect, by ensuring that both Muslims and non-Muslims comprehend and use Islamic terms correctly in English to ensure accurate and respectful interfaith communication, especially in a globalized context. Ultimately, not only does it enrich the English language by incorporating Islamic values and vocabularies, Islamic English also correct misconceptions in interfaith communication by strengthening

Muslims' identities, clarifying Islamic concepts, building mutual understanding and harmonious relations.

While Islamic English enhances communication by clarifying meanings and fostering mutual understanding, language choice alone is not sufficient, how statements are delivered in interfaith contexts also plays a crucial role. This points to the relevance of pragmatic strategies, particularly assertive speech acts. Assertive speech acts as proposed by Searle (1969), is a type of utterance in which the speaker expresses a belief, statement, or claim about the world, conveying information as true. Assertive speech acts include stating, denying, confessing, admitting, and predicting (Wijana, 2021) as well as describing, classifying, and explaining (Mabaquiao, 2018). These acts allow speakers to express beliefs and claims as truth, shaping how religious identities and doctrines are communicated. In interfaith dialogue, these acts play a crucial role in articulating theological stances, affirming communal beliefs, clarifying doctrinal differences, and challenging misconceptions in a constructive manner. By examining the assertive speech act force of utterances, we can explore how Islamic English fulfills functions like reinforcing religious identities, clarifying religious concepts, building rapport, and reducing misconceptions in interreligious communication.

Corresponding to the role of Islamic English, a previous related study has explored its functions in clarifying Islamic concepts and preserving accurate meanings. Othman and Ismail (2018), in their study titled *Islamic English in Islamic Talks*, examine the emergence of a new variety of English, termed Islamic English, used by Muslim speakers to retain Arabic terms when no direct English equivalents exist. This variety plays a crucial role in preventing the distortion of meanings during translation, especially in the global context where English serves as a common means of communication. Through content analysis of Dr. Zakir Naik's speeches, the study highlights how Islamic English is used to correct misconceptions about key Islamic concepts, such as "jihad" and "hijab." For example, the term "jihad" is often misinterpreted as "holy war," whereas its true meaning pertains to personal striving for justice and self-improvement. Similarly, "hijab" is discussed not as a symbol of oppression, but as a sign of modesty.

In relation to the pragmatic delivery of religious messages, several previous studies have examined the use of assertive speech acts in Islamic religious discourse, offering insights into how religious truths and teachings are communicated. Akmal et al. (2020) in their analysis of illocutionary acts in contemporary Islamic religious speeches found assertive functions like informing, stating, describing, reminding, and concluding. Through these speech acts, the speaker not only shares religious insights like factual knowledge or historical information, but also guides interpretation, clarifies misconceptions, and fosters deeper engagement with Islamic teachings. Correspondingly, a study by Dipta et al. (2024) on similar topic revealed assertive acts like stating and concluding with the aim to convey truths, expressing what is considered true and correct according to Islamic principles. Additionally, Maskuri (2024) analyzing the assertive illocutionary acts in Friday sermons at a local mosque in Indonesia, found that these acts are expressed in the forms of stating, comparing, illustrating, exemplifying, telling, thinking, assuming, explaining, informing, doubting, affirming, judging, criticizing, concluding, emphasizing, reminding, analogizing, admitting, accusing, quoting, and interpreting. All of these acts are used to communicate specific Islamic teachings and values and reinforcing religious beliefs and practices among the congregation. These studies show how assertive speech act analysis deepens the understanding of the communicative functions in religious discourse by revealing how language functions to convey, reinforce, and interpret Islamic teachings, while engaging listeners in reflection and moral guidance.

Based on the reviews of previous related studies, several critical gaps are identified. While Othman and Ismail (2018) examined Islamic English in religious talks, their study was confined to intra-Muslim contexts, such as speeches, and did not consider how Islamic English operates in interreligious communication. Their findings, while foundational, lack insight into how linguistic choices shift when engaging non-Muslim audiences. Similarly, studies by Akmal et al. (2020), Dipta et al. (2024), and Maskuri (2024) employed speech act theory to analyze assertive illocutionary acts in Islamic sermons and preaching. These studies revealed important patterns in how Islamic messages are delivered rhetorically, identifying critical assertive functions. However, they did not incorporate Islamic English as a distinct linguistic phenomenon, nor did they investigate how assertive acts function in interfaith dialogues, where communicative demands are more complex due to differing religious assumptions and potential misconceptions.

This study addresses that gap by integrating the analysis of Islamic English and assertive speech acts within an interfaith dialogue context. Specifically, it extends Othman and Ismail's (2018) work, who examined Islamic English within intra-Muslim religious talks, by exploring how Islamic English operates pragmatically in interfaith communication when Muslim speakers communicate with non-Muslim interlocutors. It also builds on the studies by Akmal et al. (2020), Dipta et al. (2024), and Maskuri (2024) by applying assertive speech act theory beyond monologic sermons, exploring its role in dialogic, interreligious settings where Islamic English is actively used to clarify beliefs and respond to misconceptions. Building on this integration, the study offers a novel contribution to religious pragmatics and interfaith communication by examining how Muslim speakers assert identity, clarify Islamic teachings, and challenge stereotypes through Islamic English.

To guide this investigation, the study is framed by the following research questions:

1. What are the frequencies, meanings, and patterns of Islamic English terms used in the interfaith dialogue conference?
2. What assertive speech acts are enacted through Islamic English during the interfaith dialogue conference?
3. How does Islamic English contribute to addressing misconceptions during the interfaith dialogue conference through the analysis of assertive speech acts?

RESEARCH METHOD

Research Design

This research explores the assertive speech acts within Islamic English phrases used in interfaith dialogue conference. To achieve this, the study adopts a mixed-methods approach, combining both quantitative and qualitative techniques to comprehensively examine how Islamic English phrases function in interfaith dialogue. Specifically, it focuses on their role in reinforcing Islamic identity, clarifying religious meanings, building rapport among religious groups, and ultimately correcting misunderstandings. Data for this study are gathered through the analysis of recorded interfaith dialogue conference, available on platforms such as YouTube. A purposive sampling method is employed to select a relevant video based on their representativeness of interfaith dialogue settings and the presence of Islamic English phrases. The video is transcribed verbatim, and all instances of Islamic English are identified and categorized. This process allows for the organization of the phrases into a manageable dataset for further examination. The research is structured in two phases: the first phase involves a quantitative analysis of the frequency and distribution of Islamic English phrases across the selected dialogues. This phase aims to identify patterns and trends in the use of these phrases. The second phase applies qualitative methods, including assertive speech act analysis, to examine the social

functions and contextual significance of the identified phrases, focusing on how they reinforce Islamic identity, clarify religious concepts, and build rapport. The quantitative phase informs the qualitative analysis, ensuring both phases work together to provide a comprehensive understanding of how Islamic English contributes in addressing misconceptions and facilitate respectful communication in interfaith dialogue.

Research Subject

This study utilizes publicly available interfaith dialogue conference video, *"Islam, Judaism, and Christianity - A Conversation"*, from SMAADallas' YouTube channel as primary data. One of the main speakers is a Palestinian-born American Muslim scholar with expertise in Islamic studies, actively engaged in interfaith dialogue and public discourse. His bilingual proficiency in Arabic and English, combined with his role in prominent educational and research institutions, positions him as a credible voice in contemporary Islamic English usage. Given the ethical considerations of digital content usage, this study adheres to YouTube's fair-use policy, allowing for the use of publicly accessible content for scholarly purposes. Fair use is justified as the study analyzes linguistic features (Islamic English terms and assertive speech acts) rather than reproducing the video for commercial gain. No modifications were made to the original content, and proper attribution is maintained throughout the study. As the study relies on YouTube's fair use policy, consent form was not distributed to subject of the research. Regardless, speaker confidentiality was maintained by anonymizing personal identifiers in the transcript, recognizing the sensitivity of interfaith religious discourse. The video was selected purposively for three key reasons: its relevance to the research topic and context, featuring structured interfaith discussions among Muslim, Christian, and Jewish scholars; its wide reach, with over 13 million views, which broadens the study's significance; and its inclusion of a Muslim speaker using Islamic English, offering a rich dataset for analyzing the role of this English variety in addressing misconceptions about Islam.

Procedure of Data Collection and Research Instruments

The primary method used for data collection in this study is document analysis, which is particularly suitable for efficiently utilizing publicly available video data. This non-intrusive and cost-effective approach allows for a precise examination of Islamic English phrases and their illocutionary functions in interfaith dialogue (Bowen, 2009). The data collection process began with recording the interfaith dialogue conference video from the *SMAADallas* YouTube channel. The video was transcribed using *NoteGPT*, a free online YouTube transcript generator, which provided accurate transcriptions of the spoken content. The transcript of the video was generated by pasting the video link into the NoteGPT website, which automatically produced a transcription copied for further analysis. The transcriptions were then organized, with a specific focus on extracting and isolating the Islamic English terms used by the Muslim speaker. The analysis focused on representative Islamic English terms that express Islamic concepts through assertive speech acts, categorized using Searle's (1969) framework. This systematic process enabled a structured examination of their frequency, patterns, types of assertions, and functions within the dialogue, aligned with the study's focus.

Procedure of Data Analysis

The data analysis in this study follows a two-phase approach: quantitative content analysis and qualitative assertive speech act analysis, as presented in the following figure.

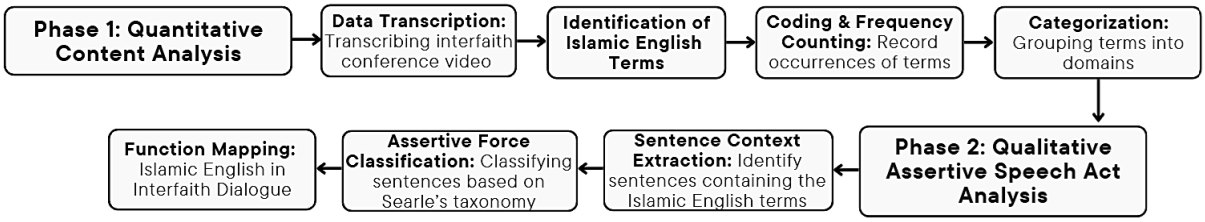

Figure 1. Two-Phase Data Analysis Procedure: Content and Assertive Speech Act Analysis

As illustrated in Figure 1, the first phase of analysis begins with transcribing the video and identifying Islamic English terms using content analysis. Islamic English terms in this study refer specifically to Arabic-origin words and phrases embedded in English discourse, identified based on their semantic relevance to Islamic teachings and their morphological retention of original Arabic forms. To interpret the meanings behind each Islamic English term, the researcher consulted Faruqi's (1986) *Towards Islamic English*, Saleh's (2002) *Islamic Words and Expressions Dictionary*, and Steingass' (1884) *The Student's Arabic-English Dictionary* allowing contextual and culturally grounded analysis. All identified terms were quantified with their frequency recorded, and the occurrences were then categorized into thematic domains, i.e., core beliefs in Islamic identity, sacred texts and teachings, etc. This categorization was crucial for mapping the lexical distribution across various discursive themes.

In the second phase involved assertive speech act analysis to examine how Islamic English terms functioned within their sentence-level context. Using Searle's (1969) classification of assertive acts (e.g., stating, asserting, denying, explaining, concluding), each sentence containing Islamic English terms was assessed for assertive force. If a term was used in a sentence exhibiting assertiveness, it was included for deeper qualitative analysis. The final stage assessed how these assertive uses align with the communicative functions of Islamic English in interfaith dialogue, such as challenging misconceptions about Islam, clarifying Islamic identity, affirming shared values, and promoting mutual understanding. The integration of these two phases, quantification and assertive function identification, ensures both empirical rigor and interpretive depth in understanding how Islamic English contributes to challenging misconceptions about Islam in interfaith discourse.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The Frequencies, Meanings, and Patterns of Islamic English Terms Used in the Interfaith Dialogue Conference

This section presents and analyzes the data collected from the selected interfaith dialogue conference, focusing on the Muslim speaker's use of Islamic English terms and their contributive role in shaping the dialogue, particularly in addressing misconceptions. The first part of the analysis introduces the frequencies and patterns of specific Islamic English terms used during the conference, which are displayed in Tables1. The meanings of the Islamic English terms listed in the table are primarily derived from Steingass (1884), Al-Faruqi (1986) and, Saleh (2002), as discussed in the Methodology section. These sources provide the foundational definitions used throughout this analysis. Following the presentation of the table, an interpretation of the findings is provided to explain how these terms reflect the core themes of Islamic identity, beliefs, practices, figures, and holy places discussed in the conference. After presenting and interpreting the findings, the section concludes with a more critical analysis of the patterns of the data, highlighting key trends in the conferences, and exploring how the use of Islamic English contributes to addressing common misconceptions that Islam faces.

Table 1. Islamic English Terms/Phrases in Interfaith Dialogue Conference: "Islam, Judaism, and Christianity - A Conversation"

No.	Terms (Arabic)	Meaning	Frequency	Percentage (%)
1.	Muslim (مُسْلِم)	A person who submits entirely to the will of Allah, a believer in Islam.	50	37.04
2.	Quran (القرآن)	The word means "reading" or "recitation", it is the exact words of Allah revealed to the prophet Muhammad PBUH.	24	17.78
3.	Islām (إسلام)	Submission to the will of God (Allah).	17	12.59
4.	Muhammad (محمد)	Literally means, the highly praised one, the last prophet in Islam, regarded as the messenger of Allah who delivered the Qur'an.	17	12.59
5.	Adam (آدم)	The first human being created by Allah, considered the first prophet in Islam.	5	3.70
6.	Allahu Akbar (الله أكبر)	Allah is the greatest, surpassing all in power and greatness.	3	2.22
7.	Allah (الله)	The name for the divine, all-powerful God in Islam.	2	1.48
8.	Sunnah (سنة)	The practices, sayings, and actions of the Prophet Muhammad, serving as a model for Islamic living.	2	1.48
9.	Hadith (حديث)	The recorded sayings and actions of the Prophet Muhammad, which form part of his Sunnah.	2	1.48
10.	Medina (المدينة)	Literally "the city," it is the second holiest city in Islam, where Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) established the first Muslim community.	2	1.48
11.	Mecca (مكة)	The holiest city in Islam, the birthplace of prophet Muhammad and where Ka'ba is located.	1	0.74
12.	Ila Allah (إلَى الله)	"To Allah" or "towards Allah." It is often used in Islamic expressions to denote direction or submission to Allah.	1	0.74
13.	Adamiyyah (آدَمِيَّة)	The brotherhood and sisterhood amongst the children of Adam, a universal unity.	1	0.74
14.	Ibrahimiyah (إبراهيمية)	The brotherhood among those who follow the monotheistic faiths that trace their roots to Prophet Ibrahim.	1	0.74
15.	Muhammadiyah (محمّدية)	The brotherhood among Muslims, who follow the teachings and example of Prophet Muhammad (PBUH).	1	0.74
16.	'Isa (عيسى)	The Arabic name for Jesus in Islam	1	0.74
17.	Sunni (السنّي)	A member of the majority of Muslims who believe in the legitimacy of the first four caliphs as rightful successors to the Prophet Muhammad.	1	0.74
18.	Ash-Shi'a (لشيعة)	Muslims believe that Prophet Muhammad's rightful successor was Ali,	1	0.74

No.	Terms (Arabic)	Meaning	Frequency	Percentage (%)
		his cousin and son-in-law, and not the first caliph, Abu Bakr.		
19.	Syariah (الشريعة)	The divine guidance derived from the Qur'an and Sunnah, serving as a path for Muslims to live righteously, promoting justice, morality, and adherence to Allah's will in all aspects of life.	1	0.74
20.	Halal (حلال)	Actions or things permitted by Allah.	1	0.74
21.	Hijab (حجاب)	Modest attire for Muslim women, covering the body as per Islamic principle of modesty.	1	0.74
		Total	135	100

The inclusion of 21 Islamic terms in the interfaith dialogue conference reflects the thematic focus of discussions between Islam, Judaism, and Christianity. These terms, which consist of Quranic words, Islamic proper nouns, and key religious concepts adapted into English (Al-Faruqi, 1986), fall into seven major categories: Core Beliefs & Identity, Sacred Texts & Teachings, Prophets & Historical Figures, Islamic Practices & Ethical Framework, Brotherhood in Islamic Perspective, Islamic Sectarian Identities, and Sacred Locations. The following bar chart presents the number of terms mentioned within each category, highlighting the relative emphasis placed on each theme during the conference.

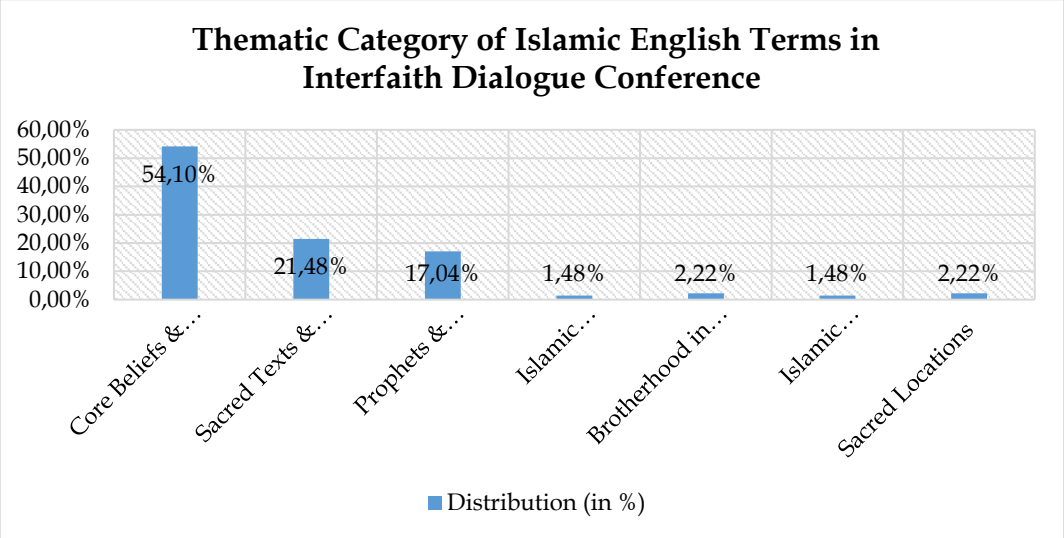

Figure 2. Distribution of Islamic English Terms by Thematic Category in the Interfaith Dialogue Conference (in Percentage)

As presented in Figure 2, the distribution of Islamic English terms across thematic categories reflects varying levels of emphasis, offering insight into the Muslim speaker's approach in framing and conveying Islam within an interfaith setting. Core Beliefs & Identity in Islam (54.10%) dominated the discourse, followed by Sacred Texts & Teachings (21.48%) and Prophets & Historical Figures (17.04%). In contrast, categories such as Islamic Practices & Ethical Framework, Brotherhood in Islamic Perspective, Islamic Sectarian Identities, and Sacred Locations were minimally represented, each comprising less than 3% of the total. This pattern suggests a strategic focus on identity, scripture, and universally shared prophetic figures, while more sensitive or potentially

divisive topics, such law, rituals, or sectarianism, were less emphasized. Through a critical analysis of term frequency, meaning, and thematic grouping, underlying trends in how Islam was presented and positioned in this interfaith dialogue can be clearly identified.

Core Beliefs & Identity in Islam

This category comprises *Muslim* (37.04%), *Islam* (12.59%), *Allah* (1.48%), *Allahu Akbar* (2.22%), and *Ila Allah* (0.74%), all of which establish the foundation of Islamic faith and religious identity. The striking difference in frequency among these terms suggests a significant focus on Islamic identity over theological concepts. The term "Muslim" (37.04%), a person who submits to Allah's will, appears most frequently, dominating the discussion with 50 mentions. This suggests that the dialogue was heavily centered on Muslim identity, the role of Muslims in society, and how they engage with other religious communities. Rather than abstract theological discourse, the emphasis was on Muslims as individuals and a collective group, highlighting their presence in the interfaith context. This aligns with the idea that interfaith dialogue often focuses on building relationships among religious communities rather than debating doctrinal differences. Meanwhile, "Islam" (12.59%), meaning submission to Allah, appearing 17 times, was significantly less frequent than "Muslim". This discrepancy suggests that while the religion itself was discussed, the identity of its followers took precedence. The conference may have sought to emphasize who Muslims are rather than strictly defining Islamic doctrine. This could reflect a strategic choice in interfaith settings, where discussing religious communities fosters a sense of shared humanity, while deeper theological debates may lead to division. That is also why the conference is entitled, "conversation" instead of "debate".

The low frequency of "Allah" (1.48%), the name for God in Islam, which occurs 2 times, is surprising, given that the concept of God is central to Islam. This suggests that the speaker may have focused less on defining the nature of God in Islam and more on Muslims' lived experiences and beliefs. Since all three Abrahamic religions recognize one supreme God, explicit discussion of "Allah" may have been deemed unnecessary in favor of more practical and identity-based topics. Subsequently, the term, "Allahu Akbar" (2.22%) which means, "Allah is the greatest," appears three times, possibly reflecting discussions on common Islamic expressions and worship practices. Finally, "Ila Allah" (0.74%), meaning "to Allah" or "toward Allah", was mentioned only once. This phrase reflects the spiritual direction and submission of a believer toward God, aligning with the Islamic concept of Tawhid (the oneness of God). Its singular mention may indicate that while spiritual devotion was acknowledged, it was not a primary focus in the discussion compared to identity-related themes. Overall, this category's pattern suggests that Muslim identity took precedence over deep theological discussions, reinforcing the idea that the dialogue aimed at bridging interfaith relationships rather than debating doctrine.

Sacred Texts & Teachings

This category includes *Quran* (17.78%), *Sunnah* (1.48%), *Hadith* (1.48%), and *Syariah* (0.74%), all of which represent the authoritative sources of Islamic beliefs and practices. The *Quran* (17.78%) is the second most frequently mentioned term after "Muslim," appearing 24 times. It is the holy scripture of Islam, believed by Muslims to be the literal word of Allah, revealed to Prophet Muhammad (PBUH). The word "Qur'an" means "recitation" or "reading", emphasizing its oral and written preservation. It serves as the primary source of guidance for Muslims in matters of faith, law, morality, and daily life, covering theological principles, ethical teachings, and legal rulings. The occurrence of this term indicates that the dialogue heavily referenced Islam's primary scripture as a source of religious authority and guidance. The high frequency of the *Quran* compared to *Sunnah*, which refers to the practices, actions, and teachings of Prophet Muhammad

PBUH, and *Hadith*, which means the recorded sayings, actions, and approvals of Prophet Muhammad PBUH, both appearing twice (1.48%), suggests that the discussion prioritized Islam's divine revelation over prophetic traditions. This pattern is significant because, while *Sunnah* and *Hadith* are essential in Islamic scholarship which serve as the second key source of Islamic law and guidance after the *Qur'an*, their lesser mention here implies that the conversation focused more on direct scripture rather than interpretative traditions.

The low mention of "Syariah", emerging once (0.74%), which refers to the sacred guidance based on the *Qur'an* and *Sunnah*, providing Muslims with a way of life that upholds righteousness, justice, morality, and obedience to Allah's will in all areas of life, is also noteworthy. The inclusion of this term may reflect a desire to clarify Islamic practices that are often misunderstood or misrepresented in the Western media, especially in discussions how Shari'ah has been linked to interpretations of Islam, particularly in anti-multicultural and Islamophobic debates (Possamai et al., 2013). Given that *Sharia* law is often a topic of debate in interfaith discussions, its singular mention suggests that the conference likely avoided deep discussions on Islamic law, either to prevent controversy or because it was not the main focus of engagement. Instead, the preference for discussing the *Quran* suggests a text-based rather than legalistic approach to understanding Islam. Overall, this category's pattern indicates that the *Quran* was the primary reference point, while discussions of Islamic jurisprudence and prophetic traditions were secondary or deliberately limited to avoid theological divergence.

Prophets & Historical Figures

This category includes *Muhammad* (12.59%), *Adam* (3.70%), and *'Isa* (0.74%), all of whom hold significant roles in Islamic theology and interfaith connections. The mention of "Muhammad" 17 times (12.59%) suggests a strong emphasis on his role as Islam's final prophet and key figure in shaping Islamic teachings. The frequency of his name is identical to the term "Islam," reinforcing his central role in defining the faith. This could indicate that the speaker sought to clarify misconceptions about Prophet *Muhammad*, particularly regarding his leadership, moral example, and role in delivering the *Quran*. Meanwhile, "Adam" appears 5 times (3.70%), likely emphasizing the shared human ancestry among all Abrahamic faiths. His relatively high frequency suggests that the speaker sought to highlight common ground between Islam, Christianity, and Judaism, reinforcing universal human origins and mutual recognition of divine creation. "'Isa" (Jesus) appears only once (0.74%), despite his major theological significance in both Islam and Christianity. This suggests that Islam's perspective on Jesus was acknowledged but not deeply explored, likely to avoid theological tensions regarding his nature and role. Since Islam views *'Isa* (Jesus) as a prophet and Christianity sees him as the Son of God, the discussion may have chosen to focus on shared moral teachings rather than theological distinctions. This category's pattern reveals a strong emphasis on *Muhammad*, a notable focus on *Adam* as a unifying figure, and a limited discussion of *'Isa* (Jesus) to maintain interfaith harmony.

Islamic Practices & Ethical Framework

This category includes *Halal* (0.74%) and *Hijab* (0.74%), both of which represent practical applications of Islamic teachings in daily life. These terms highlight the ethical and moral dimensions of Islam, affecting not only religious observance but also cultural and societal norms. The term "Halal" (0.74%) appeared once, which is notable given that dietary laws and permissible actions (Al-Faruqi, 1986), are often major topics of discussion in interfaith dialogues. Its single mention suggests that while the concept of what is permissible in Islam was acknowledged, it was not a central theme in the discussion. Since halal extends beyond food to include ethical conduct, financial transactions, and lifestyle

choices, its limited appearance may indicate that the speaker avoided legalistic debates and instead prioritized broader themes such as belief, identity, and scripture. Similarly, "Hijab" (0.74%) appeared only once, reflecting discussions on Islamic modesty and gender-related practices. In interfaith settings, *hijab* is often a focal point for discussions on women's roles in Islam, religious freedom, and cultural identity (Al-Faruqi, 1986). However, its single mention suggests that while Islamic modesty was acknowledged, it was not a major focus of the dialogue. This may reflect an attempt to avoid polarized debates on gender and dress codes, which are often sensitive topics in interfaith discussions. The pattern here indicates that practical aspects of Islamic living, such as dietary laws and modesty, were touched upon but not deeply explored. This aligns with the broader trend in the conference: prioritizing religious identity and common theological ground over specific religious laws and lifestyle regulations.

Brotherhood in Islamic Perspective

This category includes *Adamiyyah* (0.74%), *Ibrahimiyah* (0.74%), and *Muhammadiyah* (0.74%) with each appearing only once, reflect three layers of brotherhood in Islam: universal humanity, Abrahamic faiths, and the Muslim community. The presence of these terms highlights Islam's emphasis on interconnectedness and unity, both within and beyond its religious boundaries. "Adamiyyah" (0.74%) which means humanity and personhood (Şentürk, 2002), signifies the universal brotherhood of all humans, tracing back to Prophet *Adam* PBUH, the first prophet in Islam as well as the first human universally (Steingass, 1884). Its inclusion suggests that the dialogue recognized the shared human lineage of all people, regardless of faith. This aligns with the overarching interfaith goal of promoting unity and coexistence. Subsequently, "Ibrahimiyah" (0.74%) represents the bond among followers of monotheistic faiths that trace their origins to Prophet Ibrahim PBUH (Abraham). Since Islam, Judaism, and Christianity all regard Ibrahim as a foundational figure, this term's presence reinforces the speaker's emphasis on common religious heritage rather than differences. Its singular mention suggests that the dialogue acknowledged this shared ancestry but did not make it a primary discussion point.

"Muhammadiyah" (0.74%) refers to the brotherhood within the Muslim community, uniting those who follow the teachings of Prophet Muhammad (Jamil et al., 2023; Steingass, 1884). The fact that it appeared only once suggests that the dialogue emphasized broader interfaith connections (such as Adamiyyah and Ibrahimiyah) over internal Muslim solidarity. This pattern aligns with the goal of interfaith engagement as discussed by Andrabi (2023): fostering understanding, unity, and harmony among distinct religious groups rather than focusing on intra-Muslim dynamics. Together, these terms highlight the layered understanding of brotherhood in Islam, but their low frequency suggests that while these ideas were acknowledged, the speaker did not center the discussion around them. Instead, it likely used them as supporting concepts within the broader conversation on religious coexistence.

Islamic Sectarian Identities

This category consists of *Sunni* (0.74%), which refers to a follower of the largest branch of Islam, recognizing the first four caliphs as the legitimate successors of Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) (Saleh, 2002), and *Ash-Shi'a* (0.74%), which represents a group within Islam that holds that Ali, the Prophet Muhammad's cousin and son-in-law, was the rightful successor, rather than Abu Bakr, the first caliph (Yu & Kwan, 2024). Both of these terms represent the major sects within Islam. The equal and minimal frequency of these terms (each appearing once) suggests that sectarian differences were intentionally downplayed in the dialogue. The presence of both terms acknowledges that Islam is not monolithic and that different theological perspectives exist within the Muslim world.

However, their limited mention suggests that the speaker did not delve deeply into intra-Muslim differences but instead sought to present Islam in a unified manner to an interfaith audience. This is a strategic approach in interfaith settings, where emphasizing unity rather than division is more conducive to constructive dialogue. Had the conference focused more on sectarian identities, it might have introduced complex and potentially divisive historical debates. By limiting these terms to just one mention each, the discussion likely prioritized Islam's shared principles and broader interfaith relations rather than internal Muslim divisions.

Sacred Locations

This final category includes *Mecca* (0.74%) and *Medina* (1.48%), two of Islam's holiest cities. Their inclusion in the discussion underscores the significance of sacred geography in Islam and its connection to religious history. "Medina" (1.48%) appeared twice, while "Mecca" (0.74%) appeared once. The higher frequency of Medina suggests that the dialogue may have focused more on Islam's historical development (since Medina was the site of the first Muslim community) rather than purely on its sacred rituals (which are more associated with Mecca). Mecca, being the holiest city in Islam and the location of the Ka'ba (Steingass, 1884), holds profound religious significance, particularly in relation to *Hajj* (pilgrimage) and daily prayer direction (Qibla) (Widodo & Alatas, 2023). However, its singular mention suggests that the discussion may not have focused heavily on pilgrimage or worship-related topics but instead acknowledged Mecca's significance in passing. Medina, on the other hand, is crucial because it was where Prophet Muhammad PBUH established the first Islamic state and where he is buried as stated by Munt (2014) in Ayyad (2015). Its slightly higher frequency suggests that the conference might have engaged with Islam's historical roots and community-building aspects more than its ritualistic dimensions. The pattern in this category indicates that while sacred geography was acknowledged, it was not a major focus of the discussion. Instead, the emphasis seems to have been placed on Islam's broader teachings and identity rather than physical places of worship.

The analysis of term frequency and thematic emphasis across all seven categories reveals a clear prioritization of Muslim identity (Muslim, Islam) over doctrinal debates or legalistic interpretations. The prominence of "Muslim" (37.04%) and "Quran" (17.78%), compared to other terms, indicates that the dialogue primarily centered on who Muslims are (religious identity) and what they believe (religious belief) as clearly affirmed in Nong et al. (2022)., rather than engaging in sectarian divisions, theological disputes, or legal complexities. Potentially controversial topics, such as Islamic sectarianism (Sunni vs. Shi'a), Sharia law, and theological differences regarding Jesus ('Isa), were mentioned only minimally, suggesting a deliberate focus on common ground rather than discord. Additionally, the inclusion of brotherhood concepts (Adamiyyah, Ibrahimiyah, Muhammadiyah) and sacred locations (Mecca, Medina) reflects an effort to position Islam within a framework of unity and historical continuity. Overall, the conference's approach appears strategic and inclusive, emphasizing shared identity, scriptural foundations, and ethical principles rather than engaging in theological or legalistic complexities. This aligns with the broader goal of interfaith dialogue: fostering understanding and mutual respect as previously emphasized by Körs et al. (2020), Saragih et al. (2020), and Visser et al. (2023). By highlighting Muslim identity, the Qur'an, and shared Abrahamic connections while minimizing intra-Muslim and interfaith tensions, the discussion structured its engagement in a way that was both accessible and non-confrontational, reinforcing the idea of building bridges through common values rather than theological argumentation. Ultimately, the Islamic English terms used by the speaker in this conference support the fundamental objectives of interfaith dialogue as infered by Habib et al. (2022) And Siahaya

et al. (2023) in establishing peace, avoiding arguments, and clarifying religious identity and concept to deal with existing misconceptions in a respectful and trustworthy conversation.

Islamic English Contributions in Interfaith Dialogue: Their Roles in Addressing Misconceptions Through the Analysis of Assertive Speech Acts

Following the analysis of Islamic English terms and their frequencies in the previous table, Tables 2 examines how these terms are used in actual utterances during the interfaith dialogue conference. By analyzing assertive speech acts, these tables highlight how Muslim speakers employ Islamic English terms to address misconceptions through the assertion of facts, clarification of religious concepts, and establishment of common ground. Each table is interpreted and analyzed carefully, with an interpretation of how the Islamic English terms are used within the statements made by the speakers, focusing on the specific assertive acts these statements perform, as well as a thorough analysis on how Islamic English contributes to addressing misconceptions.

Table 2: Assertive Speech Acts in Interfaith Dialogue Conference: "Islam, Judaism, and Christianity - A Conversation"

Types of Assertive Speech Acts (with themes)	**Excerpts**	**Interpretations**
Denying: the misconception of replacing the Constitution with Sharia law	"We're not trying to replace the Constitution with *Sharia* law."	This statement rejects the misconception that Islam aims to replace the U.S. Constitution with Sharia law.
Asserting a fact: Historical contributions of Islam	"We are a 1,400-year-olds religion and that within *Islam* you had the birth of hospitals and medicine. The first University in the world was founded by a *Muslim* woman."	A factual assertion about Islam's historical contributions to medicine and education.
Asserting a fact: Connection between 'Allah' and God in Christianity and Islam	"*Allah* is actually the same name word that is used in the Arabic Bible... Arab Christians say *Allah Akbar* which means God is greater. "	This factual assertion highlights the linguistic connection between "Allah" and God in both Christianity and Islam.
Asserting a fact: Common misunderstanding about Sunni & Shia	"so this is where 99% usually when you hear *sunni*, *shia* you're thinking about Iraq or Iran..."	The speaker asserts a fact about what people usually think when they hear these terms.
Asserting a fact: The authoritative role of Sunnah	"... the vast majority of *Muslims* around the world are which means *sunnah* which is the life of the Prophet, the way of the Prophet PBUH, … his life and his words are authoritative. … they carry authority and they are the first place to go to…"	The speaker asserts the authoritative role of the Sunnah in guiding Muslim beliefs and practices.
Asserting a fact: Scrutiny of Hadiths for authenticity	"So in *Islam* we have a very strict method of scrutinizing *hadiths* which are sayings of the Prophet Muhammad PBUH there are some *hadiths* that are so beautiful but they're not authentic..."	This assertion explain how hadiths are evaluated in Islam, highlighting the importance of authenticity over emotional or aesthetic appeal.

Types of Assertive Speech Acts (with themes)	**Excerpts**	**Interpretations**
Asserting a fact: The Constitution of Medina as the first constitution	"The first constitution in the world according to some historians was the constitution of *Medina...* where *Muslims* and Jews agreed upon certain obligations to one another."	The sentence is aimed at giving information about a specific historical event and the nature of the agreement in the Constitution of Medina.
Asserting a fact: Halal food in Islam	"... Muslims can eat *halal* ..."	This sentence asserts that halal food is what is permissible for Muslims to consume.
Asserting and describing: Brotherhood in Islam	"... In our faith tradition we have a recognition a few layers of brotherhood. First there's the *Adamiyyah*, the children of *Adam*, the Brotherhood and sisterhood amongst the children of *Adam*, that there is a universal brotherhood that exists there... *Ibrahimiah*, ... those who claim the father Abraham, ...there is the brotherhood within Christ and *Islam* and that *Muslims* also affirm a position a unique distinction in position of Jesus Christ PBUH... there is a *muhammediye*... those who believe in the Prophet *Muhammad* PBUH affirming a brotherhood amongst themselves."	The speaker is both describing the concept of brotherhood in Islam (moving from the universal to the more specific) and asserting that these layers of brotherhood exist.
Asserting historical & religious claims: Connecting 'Allah' with the God of Moses and Jesus	"... so the name *Allah* refers to what Jesus PBUH would have said *Illa Allah* refers to the same god of Moses..."	The claim connects the name "Allah" to the deity Jesus and Moses referred to
Asserting religious belief: Shared worship of one God among Muslims, Jews, and Christians	"... A verse in the *Quran* which says, "Oh people of the book (which refers to the Jews and the Christians) come to a common word that we worship our God and your God and our God is one.""	This theological assertion emphasizes the shared worship of one God among Muslims, Jews, and Christians.
Explaining a religious concept: The evolving context of Quranic revelation	"The *Quran* was not revealed in one shot but rather between the age of 40 and 63 of the Prophet Muhammad PBUH and so it was dealing with the evolving context as well when *Muslims* were in *Mecca* which is the earlier part of the revelation."	The statement informs details in the Quran revelation and the reasoning behind the nature of the revelation in a broader context.
Explaining a religious concept: The Islamic name for Jesus	"... was named *Issa* which means Jesus..."	This statement explains the equivalent name for "Jesus," in Islam.

In Table 2, the assertive speech acts used by Muslim speakers during the interfaith dialogue conference "Islam, Judaism, and Christianity - A Conversation" play a significant role in uncovering the aims of Islamic English terms in addressing misconceptions about Islam, correcting misunderstandings, and promoting mutual understanding. In accordance with the assertive speech acts framework by Searle (1969), the study found

various types of assertive speech acts such as, denials, factual and belief assertions, descriptions, and explanations. Each type serves a specific purpose in investigating the speaker's strategy in clarifying Islamic teachings and practices, as well as offering contextual background of Islam that may have been widely misunderstood. This aligns with the broader objectives of interfaith dialogue, as emphasized by Körs et al. (2020) and Saragih et al. (2020), in fostering mutual understanding and peace among different religious groups.

Denying Misconceptions

The first category, denial, is seen in the speaker's rejection of the misconception that Islam seeks to replace the U.S. Constitution with Sharia law. Based on Searle (1969) in Wijaya (2021), denial or denying is an assertive speech act involve rejecting or negating a proposition or claim made by someone else. In this context, denial functions as a way of asserting that something is false or incorrect. In the statement, the speaker firmly denies the idea that Sharia law aims to replace national governance, addressing a pervasive misunderstanding in many Western societies that conflates Islam with political extremism. Supporting this claim, Rahman (2022) found that Western media has intentionally oversimplified and misrepresented Islam and Sharia to stir fear, push foreign policy agendas, and fuel Islamophobia, which has contributed to an increase in hate crimes and societal panic. Thus, this denial act echoes the importance of challenging misconceptions that are commonly perpetuated through media and rhetoric, as noted by Ahmed & Matthes (2017), who emphasize the role of media in shaping skewed perceptions of Islam.

Asserting Islamic Facts and Beliefs

The second type, asserting as an assertive speech act involves expressing a fact or belief, where the speaker commits to the truth of the proposition being stated (Mabaquiao, 2018). This assertion of fact is used to highlight significant contributions of Islam to world history, particularly in the fields of medicine and education. For instance, the speaker asserts, "We are a 1,400-year-old religion and that within Islam you had the birth of hospitals and medicine," and "The first University in the world was founded by a Muslim woman," drawing attention to the Islamic world's pioneering role in the development of medical sciences and educational institutions. This factual assertion is reinforced by Nurlathifah (2021) on the historical contributions of Islamic civilization to the intellectual and cultural development of the world. At the same time, the second excerpt highlights that Muslim women, far from being restricted or oppressed, have played a significant and empowering role throughout Islamic history. The speaker tries to challenge common misconceptions about Muslim women position in Islam, which, as Klaina (2024) found, are often linked to objects of violence, oppression, and gender inequality by Western portrayals, simply because they are Muslims.

Another assertion of fact is made when discussing the relationship between the terms "Allah" and "God," as used in both Christianity and Islam. The speaker clarifies, "Allah is actually the same name word that is used in the Arabic Bible... Arab Christians say Allah Akbar which means God is greater." This explanation serves to correct the misconception that "Allah" refers to a different deity than the God worshipped by Christians, emphasizing the linguistic and theological overlap between the two faiths. This aligns with the work of Saleh (2002), who emphasizes the challenges of translation in conveying religious concepts and the importance of linguistic accuracy in preventing such misunderstandings. Similarly, the speaker asserts a common misunderstanding regarding the Sunni and Shia branches of Islam: "so this is where 99% usually when you hear Sunni, Shia you're thinking about Iraq or Iran..." This statement counters the oversimplified view that the Sunni-Shia divide is solely associated with specific political conflicts, such as those in Iraq and Iran. This claim is aligned with Fischer et al. (2007) in Latif (2024), which

explored how the Western media often frames Sunni-Shia tensions within the context of geopolitical conflicts, particularly focusing on the war on terrorism, which contributes to the reduction of these religious differences to political struggles. Hence, the speaker's assertion on this matter tries to highlight the broader and more complex religious distinction between the two groups.

Further assertive speech acts analysis identifies theological clarifications regarding the authoritative role of the Sunnah in guiding Muslim practice. The speaker asserts, "the vast majority of Muslims around the world are Sunni, which means Sunnah... his life and his words are authoritative," emphasizing that the Sunnah, which represents the life and sayings of the Prophet Muhammad, is a foundational source of guidance in Islam, often complementing the Quran (Al-Faruqi, 1986; Saleh, 2002; Steingass, 1884). A similar assertion of fact is found regarding the rigorous evaluation of Hadiths, the sayings of the Prophet Muhammad. The speaker notes, "We have a very strict method of scrutinizing Hadiths," explaining that not all Hadiths are accepted as authentic, regardless of their emotional appeal, thus correcting misconceptions, skepticism, and criticism about the authenticity and reliability of Hadiths in Islamic practice that many renowned Western scholars such as, Gustav Weil, Alois Sprenger, William Muir, Ignaz Goldziher, Leone Caetani and Henri Lammens, John Wansbrough, as well as Patricia Crone and Michael Cook (Amin, 2005), have often perpetuated or raised since the 19th century.

In addition to addressing theological concerns, historical facts are presented to highlight Islam's commitment to social cooperation and legal frameworks. The speaker asserts that "The first constitution in the world according to some historians was the Constitution of Medina," pointing to the historical document that established agreements between Muslims and Jews, disputing the concept that Islamic governance is inherently intolerant of religious diversity, as Islam nowadays is particularly linked to radicalism. The misinterpretation of certain Islamic concepts, such as Jihad, by radical groups to justify violence (OIC, 2015), has further fueled misconceptions. Terrorist attacks, such as the 9/11 incident, have worsened the misrepresentation of Islam, leading to its portrayal by the Western media as an global threat to religious harmony (Ahmed & Matthes, 2017). In contrast, as what Ria et al. (2023) infer, Islam emphasizes the creation of a tolerant and just society, both intra and inter religions, with its teachings rooted in the Quran and the life of the Prophet Muhammad PBUH, which uphold compassion, justice, and the intrinsic worth of every human being. Thus, this historical assertion serves to challenge the misconception that Islam is inherently exclusive.

Other than asserting historical fact, the speaker uses an Islamic English term 'halal' which deals with actions or things permitted by Allah (Al-Faruqi, 1986), to assert facts about Islamic dietary laws. The statement "Muslims can eat halal" is a simple clarification that Muslims are allowed to consume food and beverages that meet these specific dietary guidelines based on Islamic teachings. Although the speaker does not explain in detail what foods or drinks considered halal, but the purpose of the explanation can be inferred to provide a clear understanding of what halal means in the context of Islamic dietary laws.

The concept of brotherhood in Islam is also addressed, with the speaker uses a number of Islamic English terms in describing a multi-layered understanding of unity. In a statement explaining the "recognition of a few layers of brotherhood," the speaker articulates the Islamic view of human solidarity, ranging from universal brotherhood among all people (Adamiyah), the spiritual brotherhood among those who follow the teachings of the Prophet Ibrahim PBUH (Ibrahimiyah), and to more specific bonds between Muslims (Muhammadiyah). This layered description of brotherhood underscores Islam's inclusivity and its emphasis on both universal and faith-based relationships. This transparency of religious concepts that the speaker practices in the dialogue aligns with

Körs et al. (2020), which argue that such action is critical for fostering mutual understanding and harmony among religions in interfaith dialogue.

Another assertion of fact connects the term "Allah" to the God of Moses and Jesus, with the speaker claiming, "the name Allah refers to what Jesus PBUH would have said Illa Allah refers to the same god of Moses..." This statement reinforces the continuity among the Abrahamic faiths which encompass Judaism, Christianity, and Islam, clarifying that "Allah" refers to the same deity worshipped by Moses PBUH and Jesus PBUH. The speaker supports this assertion by further quoting a verse from the Quran: "... Oh people of the book (which refers to the Jews and the Christians) come to a common word that we worship our God and your God and our God is one." This assertion underscores the theological unity between the three faiths, clearly and validly stating that Islam is not separate from Judaism and Christianity in terms of the worship of a single, omnipotent God, which is aligned with Andrabi's (2023) argument that the Holy Qur'an emphasizes the commonality among Abrahamic faiths. This aligns with Ali's (2007) argument that the accurate usage of Islamic terms, such as 'Allah,' facilitates the speaker in delivering accurate meaning and interpretation of Islamic concepts, hence, fostering mutual understanding and promoting respect, peace, and unity between Muslims and people of other religions.

Explaining Islamic Religious Concepts

In terms of explanations of religious concepts, the speaker provides 2 statements of explanations, in which based on Searle in Mabaquiao (2018) is defined as an assertive speech act involves providing information, clarifications, or reasons to make something understandable. When explaining, the speaker asserts facts or relationships to help the listener comprehend a concept, event, or situation. The speaker provides insight into the nature of the Quran's revelation, noting that "The Quran was not revealed in one shot but rather between the age of 40 and 63 of the Prophet Muhammad PBUH." This explanation clarifies that the Quran was revealed progressively, with its verses addressing the evolving social, political, and spiritual contexts during the Prophet Muhammad's lifetime (Faris, 2023). Another explanation of a religious concept is found in the speaker's statement about the Islamic name for Jesus: "was named Issa which means Jesus." This simple explanation clarifies that Islam also addresses Jesus, the same central figure that Christianity upholds, however not as a God but as a prophet.

This study both aligns with and extends previous research on assertive speech acts as a strategic framework to reinforce Islamic English's contributions in Islamic religious discourse. Like Akmal et al. (2020) and Dipta et al. (2024), this study identifies stating and describing but further expands these acts' role as key strategies for investigating how Islamic English conveys Islamic teachings and clarifies misconceptions on Islam. However, it expands on prior findings by highlighting how denials function within Islamic English, particularly in countering misconceptions is essential, an aspect not explicitly discussed in earlier studies.

Additionally, while Maskuri (2024) identified explaining as part of religious discourse in Friday sermons, this study emphasizes its distinct role in interfaith settings, where explanations are used not only to reinforce Islamic English roles in delivering religious beliefs but also to bridge gaps in understanding between different faiths. Furthermore, by analyzing assertions of both fact and belief, this analysis deepens the discussion on how Islamic English articulates Islamic historical, theological, and social contributions in interfaith dialogue, rather than just within Muslim audiences. Ultimately, these findings highlight that assertive speech acts serve as a framework for understanding the communicative functions of Islamic English in interfaith dialogue, not only as a linguistic medium as stated by Al-Faruqi (1986) and Jassem (1996), but also as a strategic

tool for affirming religious identity, fostering mutual understanding, promoting peace, and untimately challenging misconceptions, reinforcing Triyoko's (2014), Ali's (2007), and Othman's and Ismail's (2018) arguments. This study, therefore, contributes to the growing discourse on interfaith communication by demonstrating how the Muslim speaker use Islamic English in combatting common misrepresentations of Islam in a respective religious dialogue setting, through the lens of assertive speech act analysis.

CONCLUSION

This study has demonstrated how Islamic English, analyzed through the framework of assertive speech acts, challenges misconceptions about Islam in interfaith dialogues. The findings reveal that Islamic English terms, categorized into themes such as religious identity, scripture, prophets, ethical practices, brotherhood, sectarian identities, and sacred locations, are strategically employed to clarify Islamic beliefs and foster understanding. Through assertive speech acts including stating, denying, describing, explaining, and asserting religious and historical facts, the Muslim speaker effectively reinforced Islamic identity, dispelled misinterpretations, and established theological commonalities with other Abrahamic faiths. Notably, Islamic English was used to assert historical and theological truths, correct misconceptions about Islamic law, and emphasize Islam's contributions to civilization. By integrating linguistic precision with speech acts, Islamic English serves not only as a communicative tool but also as a mechanism for theological and cultural clarification in interfaith discourse. Ultimately, this study highlights how assertive speech acts identify the contributions of Islamic English in clarifying Islamic identity, countering misrepresentations, and fostering peaceful interfaith engagement. These findings offer practical relevance for Muslim religious leaders engaged in interfaith dialogue, who may benefit from using Islamic English terms with contextual clarity to preserve Islamic identity and correct distorted interpretations. Educators in Islamic studies and interfaith education, can also incorporate authentic Islamic English terminology to challenge common misconceptions. Discourse analysts working in religious or sociolinguistic contexts can use the assertive speech act framework to examine how Muslim speakers in pluralistic settings assert theological positions through strategic language use, like Islamic English.

REFERENCES

Ahmed, S., & Matthes, J. (2017). Media representation of Muslims and Islam from 2000 to 2015: A meta-analysis. *The International Communication Gazette*, *79*(3), 219–244. https://doi.org/10.1177/1748048516656305

Akmal, S., Fitriah, & Zafirah, H. (2020). Illocutionary acts in religious discourse: The pragmatics of Nouman Ali Khan's speeches. *Langkawi: Journal of The Association for Arabic and English*, *6*(2), 130–142. https://doi.org/10.31332/lkw.v6i2.1938

Al-Faruqi, I. R. (1986). *Toward Islamic English*. International Institute of Islamic Thought.

Ali, H. M. B. M. (2007). Islamic terms in contemporary English. *English Today 90*, *23*(2), 32–38. https://doi.org/10.1017/S0266078407002064

Ali, H. M. B. M. (2014). Islamo-English: A variety of English for the ummah. *Research Journal of English Language and Literature (RJELAL)*, *2*(3), 68–75.

Amin, K. (2005). The reliability of the traditional science of Hadith: A critical reconsideration. *Al-Jami Ah Journal of Islamic Studies*, *43*(2), 255–281. https://doi.org/10.14421/ajis.2005.432.255-281

Andrabi, A. A. (2023). The relevance of interfaith dialogue in Islamic perspective: bridging understanding and harmony. *Journal of Xi'an University of Architecture & Technology*, *15*(9), 451–463. https://doi.org/10.37896/JXAT15.9/32640

Ayyad, E. (2015). The holy city of Madina: Sacred space in early Islamic Arabia by Harry Munt. *Journal of Islamic Studies*, *26*(3), 1–3. https://doi.org/10.1093/jis/etv064

Bowen, G. A. (2009). Document Analysis as a Qualitative Research Method. *Qualitative Research Journal*, *9*(2), 27–40. https://doi.org/10.3316/QRJ0902027

Dipta, D., Karim, N. B. H. A., & Sholeh, A. S. (2024). Exploring illocutionary speech acts in Yasmin Mogahed's dakwah videos: A pragmatic study. *JlE: Journal of Literate of English Education Study Program*, *5*(1), 17–30. https://doi.org/10.47435/jle.v5i1.2884

Elimam, A. S. (2019). Media, translation and the construction of the Muslim image: A narrative perspective. *International Journal of Comparative Literature & Translation Studies*, *7*(2), 24–32. https://doi.org/10.7575/aiac.ijclts.v.7n.2p.24

Faris, S. (2023). Exploring the divine message: Quranic studies in the context of Islamic scholarship. *Dirasah: International Journal of Islamic Studies*, *1*(2), 111–125. https://doi.org/10.59373/drs.v1i2.16

Fischer, P., Greitemeyer, T., & Kastenmüller, A. (2007). What do we think about Muslims? The validity of Westerners' implicit theories about the associations between Muslims' religiosity, religious identity, aggression potential, and attitudes toward terrorism. *Group Process Intergroup Relat*, *10*(3), 373–382. https://doi.org/10.1177/1368430207078697

Habib, M. S., Akhter, N., Ahmad, G., & Saleem, M. M. (2022). Challenges to inter-faith peace in pluralistic society: An appraisal of modern approaches for sustainability. *Palarch's Journal of Archaeology of Egypt/Egyptology*, *19*(2), 1447–1457.

Hasan, M. M. (2014). Islam's encounter with English and Ismail al-Faruqi's concept of Islamic English: A postcolonial reading. *The American Journal of Islamic Social Sciences*, *31*(2), 1–21. https://doi.org/10.35632/ajis.v31i2.287

Jamil, M., Abbas, S. Z., Amir Al-Salami, A. A., Hussein Al-Khafaji, F. A., Saenko, N. R., & Ramírez-Coronel, A. A. (2023). Islamic teachings and religious brotherhood in the Islamic society. *HTS Teologiese Studies/Theological Studies*, *79*(1), 1–6. https://doi.org/10.4102/hts.v79i1.8369

Jassem, Z. A. (1996). Islamic English: An applied linguistic perspective. *Selected Papers on Theoretical and Applied Linguistics from 9th Symposium on Theoritical and Applied Linguistics*, *9*, 269–276.

Klaina, M. (2024). The image of the Muslim woman in Western thought. *LECTURES: Journal of Islamic and Education Studies*, *3*(2), 65–82. https://doi.org/10.58355/lectures.v3i2.89

Körs, A., Weisse, W., & Willaime, J. P. (2020). Introduction: Religious diversity and interreligious dialogue. In *Religious Diversity and Interreligious Dialogue* (pp. 1–17).

Latif, M. A. (2024). The identity of religion always comes Up: The war, the mass media and the reproduction of Muslim identity in the West. *Soc. Netw. Anal. Min*, *14*, 201. https://doi.org/10.1007/s13278-024-01354-2

Mabaquiao, N. M. J. (2018). Speech act theory: From Austin to Searle. *Augustinian: A Journal for Humanities, Social Sciences, Business, and Education*, *19*(1), 35–45.

Marzouki, Y., Barach, E., Srinivasan, V., Shaikh, S., & Feldman, L. B. (2020). The dynamics of negative stereotypes as revealed by tweeting behavior in the aftermath of the Charlie Hebdo terrorist attack. *Heliyon*, *6*(8), 1–12. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.heliyon.2020.e04311

Maskuri, S. K. D. S. (2024). The assertive illocutionary act of Khatib' Islam preacher' in Friday sermons in Baiturohim Mosque of Surakarta. *Journal of Pragmatics Research*, *6*(2), 206–266. https://doi.org/10.18326/jopr.v6i2.206-226

Mohamad, D. S. M. (1996). Islam the misunderstood religion. *Jati*, *2*, 1–10.

Munt, H. (2014). *The holy city of Madina: Sacred space in early Islamic Arabia*. Cambridge University Press.

Nong, N. F. M., Idris, M. R., Zakaria, W. F. A. W., & Nor, A. Y. M. (2022). Relationship between Islamic identity, spirituality and religiosity in social identification. *International Journal of Academic Research in Business and Social Sciences*, *12*(6), 1232–1243. https://doi.org/10.6007/IJARBSS/v12-i6/13915

Nurlathifah, T. B. (2021). Contribution of Islam in the world (case study of Islamic education transmission). *International Journal of Islamic Studies*, *1*(1), 1–10.

OIC. (2015). *Eight OIC observatory report on Islamophobia*.

Onuoha, I. O., & Odeke, F. C. (2020). Globalization and religion: Analysing the impact. *East African Journal of Traditions, Culture and Religion*, *2*(1), 48–59. https://doi.org/10.37284/eajtcr.2.1.213

Othman, K., & Ismail, A. I. (2018). Islamic English in Islamic talks. *MATEC Web of Conferences*, 1–4. https://doi.org/10.1051/matecconf/201815005081

Possamai, A., Turner, B. S., Roose, J. M., Dagistanli, S., & Voyce, M. (2013). Defining the conversation about Shari'a: Representations in Australian newspapers. *Current Sociology*, *61*, 626–645. https://doi.org/10.1177/0011392113488486

Rahman, S. U., Mohmand, S. S. S., & Ahmed, I. (2022). Sharia law-the West engulfed in a frenzy of fear. *Pak. Journal of Int'L Affairs*, *5*(3), 441–451. https://doi.org/10.52337/pjia.v5i3.603

Rao, P. S. (2019). The role of English as a global language. *Research Journal Of English (RJOE)*, *4*(1), 65–79.

Riaz, M., Baloch, F., Siddiqui, M., & Bashir, M. (2023). The role of Islamic education in promoting peace and tolerance. *Al-Qantara*, *9*(4), 307–327.

Rosidah, U., Faridi, & Tobroni. (2024). Interfaith dialogue in Islamic religious education. *JKPI: Jurnal Konseling Pendidikan Islam*, *5*(1), 120–133.

Saleh, M. I. (2002). *A dictionary of Islamic words and expressions* (2nd ed.). Al-Jumuah Magazine.

Saragih, H. M., Surya, E. H. P., & Islamiah, S. N. (2020). Indonesia's effort to improve Islamic images in the United States during 2009-2017: A case study of interfaith dialogue. *AJIS: Academic Journal of Islamic Studies*, *5*(1), 1–20. https://doi.org/10.29240/ajis.v5i1.1351

Searle, J. R. (1969). *Speech acts: An essay in the philosophy of language*. Cambridge University Press.

Şentürk, R. (2002). Adamiyyah and 'Ismah: The contested relationship between humanity and human rights in classical Islamic law. *İslam Araştırrmalari Dergisi*, *8*, 39–69.

Siahaya, J., Ibnu, S., Siddiq, A., Murdo, I. T., & Nafi, M. (2023). Interfaith dialogue in the context of globalization: The role of religion in international diplomacy. *International Journal of Science and Society*, *5*(4), 851–864.

Steingass, F. (1884). *The student's Arabic-English dictionary*. Crosby Lockwood and Son.

Triyoko, H. (2014). Islamic English: The case in English teaching-learning in Indonesia. *International Conference on Language and Religion*, 88–106.

Visser, H. J., Liefbroer, A. I., & Schoonmade, L. J. (2023). Evaluating the learning outcomes of interfaith initiatives: A systematic literature review. *Journal of Belief and Values*, *45*(4), 689–712. https://doi.org/10.1080/13617672.2023.2196486

Widodo, A. P., & Alatas, A. (2023). In awe of the holy city: Mecca in the eyes of five medieval travellers. *IIUM Journal of Religion and Civilisational Studies*, *6*(2), 183–159. https://doi.org/10.31436/ijrcs.v6i2.298

Wijana, I. D. P. (2021). On speech acts. *Journal of Pragmatics Research*, *3*(1), 14–27. https://doi.org/10.18326/jopr.v3i1.14-27

Yousaf, M., Sial, N., Munawar, A., & Shahzad, M. (2020). Stereotype of Islam and Muslims in Hollywood movies: An analysis of representation. *The Scholar Islamic Academic Research Journal*, *6*(1), 63–95. https://doi.org/10.29370/siarj/issue10ar9

Yu, F. L. T., & Kwan, D. S. (2024). Competing Orthodoxy in the Islamic world: Sunnis versus Shi'as. In *Perspectives on Development in the Middle East and North Africa (MENA) Region* (pp. 45–59). Springer. https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-031-62739-2_4