Language Use and Islamic Practices in Multilingual Europe

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ABSTRACT

This article draws on fieldwork conducted into the linguistic practices of religious languages by three Muslim individuals in the Nordic countries and the Netherlands. All informants or their ancestors in the study were born in the Muslim quarter of the Indian subcontinent, with the exception of one informant who hails from Suriname. Few works (Schor 1985; Haque 2012, 2014; Zolberg and Woon 1999) in sociolinguistics focus on the practice of Islam by immigrants in their daily lives, where a plethora of languages are used for different functions. As a field of social inquiry, there is also an attempt to understand the role or impact of religion in the immigrant's life as a practicing Muslim. The findings suggest that Arabic remains the principal liturgical language for prayers, while Urdu was rendered as a sanctified language for many believers, as literature on Islamic teaching is widely available in this language.

In twentieth-century Europe, Islam was introduced by the channels of migration, particularly after the Second World War, as reported by Fetzer and Soper (2005, 2). Later on, especially after 1970, the reunification of Muslim immigrant families led to an exponential population growth of Muslims in Europe.[1] A few works (Schor 1985; Zolberg and Woon 1999; Haque 2012b, 2014)

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1. The estimated Muslim population was 25.8 million in mid-2016 according to Pew Research Centre, http://www.pewforum.org/2017/11/29/europes-growing-muslim-population/. In the Netherlands, the reunification of families started in the early 1970s.

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focus on the use of diverse languages by Muslim immigrants to understand and practice the teachings of Islam in Europe. Crystal (1981) laments that "theolinguistics" is not equipped with a framework adequate to analyse religious languages. The verbal repertoire of immigrants may represent a plethora of languages used for different functions but fewer studies have focused on the liturgical ones. As Samarin (1976, 5) states, "sociolinguistic studies of religion seek to determine the way in which language is exploited for religious ends," suggesting that it may therefore prove vital to know the role of the languages in order to enact and shape the identity of the third largest religious minority in Western Europe.

Ferguson (1982, cited by Spolsky 2006, 7) has argued that the "diffusion of religions, usually accompanied by diffusion of a specific variety of literacy, has been one of the major causes for the language diffusion." Some languages were thus served not only in the dissemination of religion but also in the literacy of the target population. Many ethnic populations of the world were exposed to literacy by the means of religion. Winsa (2005, 265) stipulated that in many protestant countries, the Bible was the main source of literacy, such as among the masses in Sweden. Other missionary work, as mentioned in the study of St. Stefan of Perm (Ferguson 1971, cited by Spolsky 2003), traces the translation of the Bible into Komi in the fourteenth century, with a particular emphasis on literacy. Likewise, in the Indian subcontinent (Pakistan, India, and Bangladesh), the *madrasahs*, the Islamic institutions of learning mainly for boys, imparted first literacy lessons in classical Arabic, the language of the Qur'an.

This article focuses on three practicing Muslim individuals from two Nordic countries (Norway and Finland) and the Netherlands, all with immigrant origins and all having ancestral links with India; all are naturalized citizens in their host countries.[2] The research questions of the present study are as follows: What are the languages used in practicing the Islamic faith? Are religious practices confined to Qur'anic Arabic, or do they utilize other languages for specific purposes in religiosity? The study will reveal the varied language preferences of these individuals toward understanding and practicing their Islamic faith and how they construct their ethnic Islamic identity in contemporary Europe based on a largely circulated ideology of monolingualism and anti-multiculturalism.[3] Foner and Alba (2008, 368) emphasize the fact that the public debate in Western Europe since the 1990s has been dominated by the failure of Muslims to integrate, and a prevalent

2. By practicing Muslims, I mean those individuals who pray diligently five times a day, regularly visit mosques, recite the Qur'an, fast during the month of Ramadan, observe dietary restrictions, and adhere to other doctrinal rituals of Islam.

3. Previous works have shown that the perception of Muslims in Europe is not favorable; see Peach and Vertovec (1997); Allen and Nielsen (2002); Ogan et al. (2013).

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view is established that Islamic culture and that of the West are irreconcilable. The findings of this study do not align with the "economic model to extend materialist critique into the realm of religion" (Bourdieu 1990, 107) but rather focus on the role played by language and ideology. The effort by Indian Muslims to better understand this religion in the diaspora stems in part from their own deep personal beliefs and from a connection to cultural values that they or their parents have transmitted. These are the ideological artifacts that they have continued to nurture, even in somewhat difficult circumstances. Reviewing a complete range of ideological notions from a language viewpoint, Woolard and Schieffelin (1994, 72) emphasize the importance of understanding "linguistic form and its cultural variability in political economic studies of discourse." Swartz (1996, 82) quotes Bourdieu to demonstrate the dimension of power in the religiosity of one's life in society. Religion is perceived as a powerful institution, a force in terms of common beliefs and practices, one called "collectivity" by Durkheim. From a sociolinguistic viewpoint, my focus will be to determine which language is most vital to performing religiosity and which ones help maintain the religiosity of participants. I will show how the position of Arabic remains static and prestigious as a liturgical language, whereas other languages such as Urdu, English, and Dutch, are relied upon for understanding and transmitting religious knowledge.

Most Muslim families transmit religious values to their children through the primary sources of Islam (the Qur'an and the Hadith), in which believers are reminded to live in this world with a sense of *taqwa* (God-consciousness), which means to live and conduct oneself with the realization that God is with them and watching them. This message is best conveyed by parents to their children not only through preaching but also through practical demonstration of the divine teachings and practices in their own lives. Children are encouraged from the age of seven to perform the obligatory five-times daily prayers (*salat* or *nemaz*).

Though Persians enjoyed the attributes of the Islamic language in India through the nineteenth century, it was Urdu that was finally sanctified as the language of the larger part of the Muslim community in South Asia and, thereafter, as the language for dissemination of Islamic scholarship. After the partition of India in 1947, Urdu was adopted as the national language of Pakistan, both to maintain its Islamic legacy and to reinforce the nation's identity.[4] In India, it earned its status as one of the constitutional languages and the second or third official language in four Indian states and three union territories.[5]

4. The full name of Pakistan is the Islamic Republic of Pakistan.

5. The four Indian states are Andhra Pradesh, Bihar, Telengana, and Uttar Pradesh, and Delhi, Jammu and Kashmir, and Ladakh are the three union territories.

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In the North Indian Muslim context, Urdu is privileged to convey moral, ethical, and other religious values in children as well as in adults; thus, next to Arabic, it acquires the status of a religious and pure language. Children learn Arabic mainly for the purpose of learning to read the Qur'an and for performing ritual prayers. It is taught in *madrasahs* and, mosques, and through private tutoring at home.

Wuthnow (2003, 16–18) argues that social inquiry in the field of religion has received less attention from sociologists despite the enormous revolutionary contributions of Weber, Marx, and Durkheim, whose works remain of interest even in contemporary times (26). Ebaugh (2003, 226) emphasizes equally the absence of religion as a research topic of interest for immigrant scholars in many social scientific journals of the late 1990s. Though this study is foregrounded with a sociolinguistic approach, my attempt would be to put religion as a variable in addition to the language, in order to capture the dynamics of these two variables from the lens of sociology of religion. A study along similar lines that demonstrates religion as a sociolinguistic variable in post-Muslim Spain was conducted by Juan and Sayahi (2019).

From a sociological viewpoint, I will try to examine the religiousness of the participants under the framework of two theories as cited by van Tubergen (2013, quoting Ruiter and van Tubergen 2009): (1) social influence theory, and (2) religious market theory. The social influence theory pertains to the direct influence or relationship of one person's faith by his or her own social network. The more the network and environment of a person are religious in character, the greater the chances that the individual shows signs of religiousness. The religious market theory is concerned with the "supply of religious products: if individuals find the religious product they desire, they are likely to attend religious meetings" (van Tubergen 2013, 716).

To adequately study the religiosity of individuals in daily life, it is useful to understand the concept of "the social processes in which the religion is created and deployed," asserts Ammerman (2014, 196). One can find similar arguments in the works of Durkheim, as mentioned by Poggi (2000, 142–43), in a discussion of the ritual practices that the individuals "themselves generate such practices, invest them with their peculiar significance and validity, make them binding for future conduct." Drawing inspiration from Ammerman and Durkheim, and from the religious market theory, I propose another paradigm that would prove pertinent in the absence of the above two theories. I call it the "religious production model," under which the environment of religion is created by the individuals themselves and deployed first in the home and then in other social

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spaces. I imagine an acute shortage of religious products and environment, which would compel the creation of religiosity outside of the home and gradually extend to the neighborhood and then to the whole town. Ebaugh (2003, 226) offers the example of the United States, where the "new immigrants are creating religious diversity as they transplant their home country religions into their new neighborhoods."

Quoting the "household function model" pioneered by Gary Becker (1965), Clain and Zech (1999, 924) demonstrate its link with the study of family religiosity. The authors stress internal factors like "purchasing of religious prayer books, symbols, and artifacts" but also "time spent attending religious services, time spent engaged in fellowship and service activities, and devotional time in prayer and meditation." In the case of Muslim immigrants in Europe, the "religious production theory" may consist of strict adherence to the ritual worship ordained by Islam, bringing home the Qur'an and other religious literature for the purpose of studying them and subscribing to television channels with religious content or leanings. Moreover, the partronage of halal markets, where all the edible products are decreed as lawful and permissible by the Holy Qur'an, is common. In the similar vein, "halal tourism" is also a brainchild of the religious production theory.[6] Previous studies have indicated that halal tourism corresponds to "Islamic faith" and "conforms with Islamic teachings regarding behaviorisms, dress, conduct and diet" (World Market Tourism 2007; Battour et al. 2010). Under the religious production model, it is imperative for Muslims to incorporate the traits of Islamic traditions, identifying themselves, as consumers, primarily in compliance with their religious beliefs. Foner and Alba (2008, 367) offer an example along these lines related to Catholics in the United States who "felt forced to establish their own school system in the middle of the nineteenth century to protect their children from the overtly protestant teaching in the state-sponsored or public school system." Both "religious market theory" and "religious production theory" have been explained in the words of Bourdieu (1991, 22) as dependent "on the material and symbolic force of the groups the claimants can mobilize by offering them goods and services that satisfy their religious interests."[7] We find the religious production model may have huge implications in line with halal tourism or halal products, which have a significant

6. Thousands of hashtags related to halal have been created on Instagram, which reflects a new trend. Many photos related to halal, such as mosques or foods, are posted. Some of the popular hashtags are #halaltrip, #halaltours, #muslimtravels, and #halaltravels. Furthermore, we now also find halal dating websites and halal matrimonial agencies on the Internet.

7. Cited by Swartz (1996, 83).

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bearing for the social influence theory. Echchaibi (2012) shows how an annual transactional economic summit held in Malaysia since 2006 promotes halal industry. Some examples of halal products are Mecca Cola (invented in France [Sedgwick 2014]) and the burqini (Sharia-compliant female swimsuit), or halal services such as are found in KFC and Subway franchises, which are halal certified in many parts of Europe (including all outlets in France), with some found in the United States as well (Sedgwick 2014). Overall, both approaches, sociolinguistic and sociology of religion, might provide significant information on the cultural, religious, and linguistic undercurrents of this monographic study on Muslim immigrants with relation to Islam in Europe.

This article is structured as follows. In the first part, I will give a brief summary of the participants involved in the study and the research tools that were employed to elicit the data. In the second part, each of the case studies will be discussed at length, focusing on the individuals, with their trajectories and language biographies, and finally their language practices and the place of religious language in their life. These case studies will also be assessed under the synopsis of literature proposed in the introductory section. The third part concludes with the overall findings.

Participants of the Study and Methodology

The first part of the data was collected during my fieldwork as a PhD candidate (Haque 2012a), for which my focus was on the language practices and policies of Indian-origin immigrants in Europe. The second part of the data was collected in 2018. The two families who participated in my doctoral study were from Norway and Finland. The fieldwork was conducted in 2007, in Norway, at the home of an Indian family; the primary breadwinner of the household, who introduced himself as Faiz, invited me into his home. He is my first informant for this article, and his data emanate from the first part of the data collection, as well as from the second part, as he was interviewed again in September 2018. We have been connected through Facebook since 2007, and he has since replied to my queries via this social network. The second participant, Saheed, lives in the Netherlands but originally hails from Suriname, a former Dutch colony. He filled out the questionnaire, and I followed him on Facebook in order to study his language practices with his peers. He responded to many of my questions through Facebook's chat tool, and I interviewed him via a WhatsApp video call in September 2018. My third informant is Areeb, the eldest son of an Indian-origin family living in Finland. My fieldwork on him and his family went on for a year and a half, from January 2009 to mid-2010. His parents regularly invited

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me for a longitudinal study on the language practices and policies of the family. Areeb was an informant for the first part of the data collection and took part in the study's second phase (from February 2018 to September 2018) while a young college student. He filled out the questionnaire via e-mail and gave a semi-structured interview on Skype. With Facebook "friend" status (like the other two informants), Areeb regularly responded to questions through this social media platform.

The e-mail questionnaire was the first tool in which the participants were asked general questions on language practices, competency, and attitudes. Two questionnaires were sent. The aim of the first was to elicit information from the participant about his civil status, about communication with parents and siblings, and about his views on learning and speaking a language. I crafted this questionnaire with the help of my PhD supervisor, Marinette Matthey, during my doctoral study (Haque 2012a). The second questionnaire was borrowed from a research project on the intergenerational linguistic transmission of three generations of Spanish and Italian immigrant families in Switzerland (PNR56, "Diversité des langues et compétences linguistiques en Suisse"). The purpose of this second questionnaire was to determine in greater detail whether or not home languages were transmitted and the role that liturgical languages played in particpants' verbal repertoire.

Interviews were an important part of the follow-up process. Informants knew that the second platform would be based primarily on language practices related to religion. This required fieldwork in the religious places they frequently visited. The ethnographical tools such as field notes, outcropping, and participant observation would have yielded much better results. I applied the member-checking tool of the ethnography under which I sent my manuscript to the informants and asked their opinions about their reporting of languages related to religion. Gall et al. (2005, 551) describe this tool as follows: "member checking is a procedure used by the qualitative researchers to check their reconstructions of the emic perspective by having field participants review statements in the researchers' report for accuracy and completeness." While it is considered a risky tool because the informants are likely to retract certain statements from the study that could affect the analysis, I still used this instrument because the informants seemed to cooperate more fully in this piece of inquiry.

Reporting Religious Languages

For the fieldwork conducted on four Indian families in four European countries (Haque 2012a), no mention of any religious languages was included in

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the questionnaire. However, questions were asked related to the languages known to the informants and their levels of competency in each of the known languages. Only during the semistructured interviews did the role of religious languages surface; in those subsequent conversations, the subject further detailed the use of religious languages. Often, the presence of these languages in the informants' verbal repertoire was discovered with the use of ethnographical tools such as participant observations, outcropping, and field notes, and they were later confirmed in subsequent interviews. One hypothesis for not reporting the sacred languages might be the limited competency of the informants, and, hence, they may have thought that it would not be counted by the researcher. Additionally, its limited functional or almost nonexistence in the informants' daily lives might lead to nonreporting. As argued in my previous study (Haque 2011a, 51), "possible reasons for such contradictory reporting of actual language practices to investigators might be the guilt of shame felt by the informants over the fact that they are not speaking the host country languages, or speaking their first language in domains such the workplace, family residence and school."

In the second phase of data collection, only the person from the Netherlands reported the usage of Arabic and Dutch in religious practices. The young informant from Finland reported that English had been the main source for religious information. For the person from Norway, English was also the main language that served the function of religiosity. Fishman (2006, 18) observed the impact of English on religion, citing numerous examples, particularly in the case of immigrants, including "Hispanics and Amerindians in the USA, immigrants and Aborigines in Australia, Maoris in New Zealand, immigrant minorities in Anglo-Canadian and Anglo-Indians." English has appeared also as the principal lingua franca for many Muslims around the world, thanks to its status as a world language. Many new Islamic chaplains have succeeded in conveying the message of Islam in simpler English words and phrases. Muslims' attitude toward English is not as docile as it appears to be, because the first image that English represents is one related to a history of colonialism and Christianity. English represents the ideas and ethos of Western values imposed over 300 years of the domination of Western civilization. Ratnawati (2005, 104) has shown the negative images of English in the Muslim world, such as in Morocco where "English is often perceived as a tool for imperialism." Likewise, in Saudi Arabia, Ratnawati demonstrates that if one group believes English to be a basic requirement, another group is hostile to "exposing our young children to foreign language and culture," believing it "will be a calamity for their cultural and religious upbringing." Quoting Asmah (1992) on Malaysian Muslims, learning English is "to learn the language

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of the Christians" (120) or that of "the colonialists." However, a recent study by Ratnawati has shown a change in the attitude among Malay Muslims, 90 percent of whom have a positive attitude and disagree with the notion that by learning English they put their own cultural values at risk. In India, through the lens of economic values, English was commonly believed to be the language of social ascension or upward mobility. For its religious role, credit may go to the Indian Islamic preacher Zakir Naik, who founded the Islamic Research Foundation in 1991. He used English as the lingua franca for Indian Muslims, and with the Indian public in general, for the purpose of disseminating Islamic knowledge in colloquial forms and rendering the Qur'anic Arabic verses more approachable by means of interpretation. His TV channel, Peace TV, became popular with millions of viewers and his books in English became a hit with the Muslim youth. Celebrated as a televangelist, his role transcended the traditional Muslim preacher as he "covered contemporary Muslim issues, responding to challenges posed to him by non-Muslims, clearing up misconceptions about Islam, and debating with influential non-Muslim figures (Haqqani 2012, 1–2)." Incidentally, none of my three informants mentioned the name Zakir Naik, and this I believe is attributed to their growing up and living in Europe.

Case Studies

Case Study from Norway

Faiz, fifty-six years of age, has lived in Norway since 1996 when he was a thirty-four-year-old doctoral student. In 2007, I went to collect data at the family's home. Living with four children and his wife (their fifth child was born in 2011), Faiz was working in a company where English was the major language. The parents, who both hailed from Patna, India, reported their mother tongue to be Urdu. Faiz also reported Hindi, English, and Norwegian as other languages in use, and the elder child claimed Hindi as well, but the rest of the siblings reported only Urdu as their mother tongue and English and Norwegian as their two other main languages. Urdu was clearly the main language of communication inside the home. The mother in particular made painstaking effort to teach Urdu at home, buying Urdu primers for the children on every trip the family took to India.

Faiz has a PhD in science. He had long been working in a private consulting firm based in Norway, and from 2014 to 2018, he went to explore a business opportunity with his wife and three kids in Dubai. Previously, before moving to Dubai, he lived in Trondheim, and upon his return, he moved to Oslo.

The second phase of data collection with Faiz started in September 2018. Our conversation was conducted in Urdu with some phrases in English. English

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was reported as the main language of religion. In fact, Faiz described English as his real mother tongue, but he told me that he was often reminded by others to use Urdu instead, as it would better represent his Islamic identity. Having lived two years in England with his parents as a child and later being enrolled in an English medium school, Faiz felt much more comfortable in English than in any other language. All his resources on the Internet related to religious scriptures and discourses are in English. He claimed to listen often to the famous young Muslim scholar Nouman Ali Khan on YouTube channels. Another person he reported listening to is Abdul Aziz Abdul Rahim, an Islamic scholar of Indian origin who settled in the United States to undertake the mission of translating the Qur'an into English and into other Indian languages. He disseminates Islamic knowledge and teaches Qur'anic Arabic lessons mainly through his own website, UnderstandQuran.com and through YouTube channels. Faiz visits the websites and downloads the videos and texts in English.

Faiz claims that Urdu has only a limited role in his religious practices. He prefers English translations for reading an interesting text he finds in Urdu. As Faiz has pursued only limited studies in Urdu, his competency skills in reading it and his familiarity with its vocabulary are somewhat weak. Contrary to the general belief that Urdu is associated only with the Muslim community, Faiz, who lived in Lucknow, India, said that Urdu is a predominant language of that city's inhabitants, Muslim as well as non-Muslim. He offered an example of a WhatsApp group from Lucknow, of which he is a member, where his non-Muslim friends post in Urdu. Although he does not associate Urdu with either Islam or Muslims, he is conscious that Urdu has been given the status of a religious language in India. The only religious resource in Urdu on which he relies is a YouTube channel by Amir Sohail, a scholar who teaches Arabic grammar for the purpose of understanding the Qur'an via the medium of Urdu. For these lessons and talks in Urdu, Faiz draws a parallel with the channel of Nouman Ali Khan and understands the religious content in Urdu.

Neither Faiz nor any of the other family members reported Arabic on the questionnaire. During my fieldwork in 2007, it became clear that the male family members were offering prayers (*salat*) by reciting Qur'anic Arabic at home. Faiz attributed the gradual improvement of his reading skills in Arabic to his constant education through Amir Sohail's website and to video channels in Urdu.[8] He thinks that the liturgical language is a significant language for Muslims, and to understand well the meaning of Qur'an, and other religious texts, all Muslims

8. See http://www.lisanulquran.com/.

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should master the language. During his four-year stay in Dubai, he enrolled in an Arabic class, but that was more for business purposes than for meeting his own religious objectives. He has joined other online classes, particularly those run by Nouman Ali Khan himself.[9] Like all Muslims, he too offers his ritual prayers (*salat*) in Arabic; however, like many Indian Muslims, he pronounces his intention (*niyat*) to pray in the Urdu language.[10]

Faiz has adequate competency skills in Norwegian, although he does not use this language at all for religious purposes. He regrets that Norwegian is not used by the Islamic community as it should have been because most of the immigrants learn Norwegian and it could serve as the lingua franca for bridging the gaps between the different sects and between different linguistic and ethnic communities. Ebaugh (2003, 233) has pointed out that the "multiethnic congregations face a number of challenges in order to create unity . . . among the ethnic/nationality groups." She quotes Ebaugh and Chafetz (2000): "language usage in immigrant congregations is often a highly contested issue and one that poses dilemmas for the clerical and lay leaders responsible for congregational policy." Most of the mosques in Europe, including in Norway and the Netherlands, privilege the language of the sermon based on the native language of the owner or founder of the mosque, which in turn is responsible for the presence of a large number of congregants of the same linguistic community. The imams in many Western European countries alternate between the host country's language and Arabic during the Friday sermon. I myself have noticed the code switching among French, Qur'anic Arabic, and vernacular Arabic of North Africa in the mosques in Paris and Grenoble. The tussle in Norway, according to Faiz, is that every year during Ramadan, it is advertised that the sermon of Eid prayers would be translated from Qur'anic Arabic into Norwegian, but he has noticed that the translation of the sermon is instead done to Urdu,[11] not Norwegian. However, the language of the mosque's website, run by the Islamic Cultural Central Norway, is Norwegian.[12] He recalls that on only one occasion (during the religious attendance of

9. Faiz gave the example that the Bayyinah TV website (https://bayyinah.tv/) run by Nouman Ali Khan, contains a wealth of information, including online Qur'anic Arabic classes. He took the life subscription to this channel.

10. Considered as the essential part before commencing the *salat*, Faiz indicated that the Indian imams have emphasized that without the *niyat*, the *salat* could not be performed. But nowadays, according to him, many scholars consider it unnecessary to pronounce the *niyat* aloud, as it was not part of the Prophet Mohammad's practice.

11. Urdu is preferred because the funders and principal owners of the mosque are immigrants of Pakistani origin.

12. See https://www.islamic.no/.

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the Islamic Council of Trondheim) did he use Norwegian to address the meeting on some specific questions related to certain practices of Islam.

Examining Faiz's trajectory over eleven years, my understanding is that the absence of the religious social network and religious market theory in Norway, when the family was in Trondheim, did not have a detrimental effect on his religiosity. As there were people of different faiths and linguistic communities, but no practicing Muslim families, in the nearby neighborhood, Faiz and his wife created an in-home religious ambiance that would help them practice their own faith. The in-home religious production information stems from the data collected in 2007. The in-home religious environment in Faiz's family was regulated by the Urdu language. Religious instructions were given to the children, and discussions on these lines, were carried out in Urdu. Urdu is represented as the repository of Islamic faith and Muslim traditions of the Indian subcontinent; this is part of the "linguistic ideology" that, Silverstein says (1979, 193, quoted by Woolard 1998, 4), incorporates "sets of beliefs about language articulated by users as a rationalization or justification of perceived language structure and use." Hence, use of the Urdu language and its transmission to the children seemed justified in the parents' eyes. Both Faiz and his children could also go through the collection of Islamic literature in English that was available at home.

Case Study from the Netherlands

Saheed, forty-four years old, is a second-generation immigrant who hails from Suriname. He came with his parents to the Netherlands at the age of five and was brought up in Amsterdam for most of his life. He reports Urdu and Suriname Hindi as his mother tongues. However, it is with Dutch that his level of competency is highest, as he received his education in that language and is fluent in it. He cited English as the language in which he is most fluent after Dutch. He lives with his three children and wife, originally from Suriname, in Amsterdam. I came to know Saheed, who is currently unemployed after having worked in the IT sector, when I met him on a train in the Netherlands. Though Urdu is his mother tongue, along with Suriname Hindi, we never spoke to each other in Urdu or Hindi; the interview was conducted in English. Saheed used Urdu for some words related to religious practices, which will be discussed later.

Saheed's principal religious language is Arabic, the language in which he performs his prayer and of his Qur'an. He started learning Arabic at the age of 7, and by the age of 13 or 14, he had finished reading the Qur'an as well as his lessons in Arabic. His Arabic classes were first held at the home of his maternal grandfather (whom he calls نانا *nana* in Urdu), where, along with some of his

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cousins, he used to go every day after school for an hour or so. His *nana* taught them to read elementary Arabic and also gave them assignments in Arabic reading and writing. Later, he joined Saturday classes in the Amsterdam mosque, where Arabic classes and instructions on prayers were held, lasting about three hours. The main objectives of the class were to gain competency in reading Arabic, especially the Arabic text of the Qur'an, and to memorize some of its smaller chapters (*surahs*) in order to recite the prayer. This is also the objective of teaching Arabic to young children in the Indian subcontinent. According to Rosowsky (2006, 312), "it is impossible for Muslims to offer the prayer without reciting the first chapter of Quran[13]." Saheed did not take any private lessons in Arabic during his holidays in Suriname. Often, it has been found that immigrant children receive private instruction in religion or in the language of their heritage. This has been the case with Areeb, the third informant, who was given Qur'an lessons. However, access to online instruction over the past two decades has facilitated the teaching of the Qur'an and Arabic to such an extent that employing private tutors is hardly necessary anymore. Saheed said that the imam advised him to make the Qur'anic supplications in their original Arabic form because of the divine blessings attached to them. The primordial importance of Arabic for Islam has been noted by many scholars in sociolinguistics. According to Calvet (1999, 37), quoting Al Jazairi on the Arabic language,[14] "The language of Adam is Arabic; it is also the language of the paradise. When he disobeyed his God, he was made to speak in Syriac." Calvet adds that the common understanding in Islam is that no other language can overtake Arabic in terms of eloquence and poetry. Qur'anic Arabic has thus occupied an important place in the verbal repertoire of all Muslims, practicing and nonpracticing. Positing a decalogue of theoretical principles in the field of sociology of language and religion, Fishman (2006) argued that "religious languages /varieties are more stable than others." Qur'anic Arabic is a stable language, thanks mainly to it being a sacred language; in fact, its holy status has shielded it from any evolution whatsoever since its inception. This has perhaps rendered it as a difficult language, and different schools of thought and different Islamic scholars make varying interpretations of it.

Truncated competency in Arabic is sufficient to accomplish prayer.[15] It is assumed that Qur'anic Arabic, being the preferred language of God, endows authenticity of one's Islamic identity with a sense of rapprochement with God.

13. The name of the first chapter of the Qur'an is *Al-Fatiha* (The opener). It has seven verses.

14. *Al nur al-mubin fi qisas al-anbiya* (Beirut, 1978); see Bounfour (1976).

15. By truncated competency, I mean those competencies in languages that are based on the domains or to fulfill specific activities. See Haque (2011b).

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During the Friday sermons (*khutba*) or religious congregations[16] (*jalsa*), the imam or person delivering the speech precedes it with recitation of a few verses of the Qur'an and other invocations in Arabic. Although this may not be fully understood by many believers, it still provides a certain authenticity and gravity to the religious discourse being delivered. For Saheed, the supplications are always uttered in Dutch.

Saheed considers that Dutch is fast becoming the common language of Muslims in the Netherlands.[17] Recently, many Islamic shops have opened in Amsterdam, in which one can find books and texts translated into Dutch. Saheed reported Dutch as the main language for reading literature and consulting topical information on Islam. He also thinks that Dutch will be embedded slowly in all walks of life of the immigrant community. It has the potential to become the lingua franca of the Muslims in the Netherlands. Different linguistic communities praying together in the Grand Mosque of Amsterdam indicate the new role that the Dutch language has as a language of Islam. The imam delivers his sermons and speaks in Dutch, commonly understood by all congregants. Regrettably, with exceptions, some imams prefer to address the congregants in Urdu given their Pakistani or Indian origins, rather than translating the discourse from Arabic into Dutch. During my fieldwork to two mosques in Amsterdam, I noticed that in the Grand Mosque of Amsterdam, there was self-segregation along linguistic lines, which Numrich (1996) calls "parallel congregation." While Dutch is the common language among the multicultural congregation, Urdu speakers tend to form their own group, and speakers of other languages do likewise. Interaction between groups is limited only to greetings.

Saheed found it easier and more natural to seek certain information in Dutch rather than in English. He mainly uses the Internet to find translations of Qur'anic verses. He types naturally in Dutch, for example, explaining to me, "If I type *Vertaling* Surah Ar Rahman on Google, it will give me the translations (*vertaling* in Dutch) and all the results in Dutch and very rarely in English."[18] Likewise, Dutch has been the main language for getting information on hadith (Prophetic sayings). Some mosques (Djame Moskee Taibah, Grand Mosque,

16. The term *congregation* has been borrowed from Warner (1994). It designates "local, face-to-face religious assemblies."

17. https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=_K-Z90l0f7Y. A Muslim lady is asking question on the sermon to the assistant imam of a mosque.

18. Perhaps Saheed missed the point that the search engine Google shows the result on the basis of the location of the Internet user unless such function has been turned off.

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Amsterdam) upload videos of the sermons (*khutbas*) and other religious discourse delivered in the mosque to their official YouTube channel,[19] which are mostly in Dutch.[20] Videos are broadcast live and can also be watched later in the recorded format. Saheed hardly ever went to bookstores to buy religious books for himself. Instead, he preferred to borrow and thus benefit from the rich collection of Islamic texts of his father-in-law. As for his children, he bought them religious texts, in Dutch, in story format.

The political environment in the Netherlands has become clouded in the past few years with Islamophobia. Geert Wilders, the leader of the Partij voor de Vrijheid (Party for freedom) has made it his intention to ban the Qur'an, mosques, and Islamic schools in the Netherlands (Duman 2018, 78). His party placed second in the Dutch general election in 2017. Saheed's view on the potential of the Dutch language as a sanctified language for the Netherlands Muslims reflects perhaps the Islamophobic environment in which he is residing.

Urdu and Suriname Hindi have almost no role to play in the religion. Saheed does not see it having any attachment or bonding to Islam. He can read Urdu translation of the Qur'an but with great difficulty. Therefore, he prefers to read in Dutch. He hardly remembers the usage of Urdu for religious practices. Before starting to offer his ritual prayer (*salat*), he only uses Urdu to express his intention to pray (called *niyat* in Urdu), as he was taught back home. His children, however, do so in Dutch. In Faiz's case in Norway, as I discovered during the first phase of my fieldwork, his children were using the Arabic language for prayer.

Saheed narrated how his family, particularly his father-in-law, was instrumental in opening a mosque in Amsterdam, and he refers to it as "our mosque." The elder members of Saheed's family invested their time and money to build the religious infrastructure in Amsterdam when they came in 1975. They own a mosque, purchased in 2007 for 100,000 euros. It has room for fifty women and fifty men. Before buying the mosque, Saheed's family simply rented places in Amsterdam for worship. When the religious production theory was put in place around 1980, the social influence theory was also in motion. Saheed recalled that his Qur'anic Arabic classes were held at his grandfather's house. There was a strong religious network composed of Saheed's family members, and this helped him to absorb the religious values.

19. See the YouTube channel of Alladin Studios at https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCXcDI9nBuiu4GwzJtU44wtQ.

20. See https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=jtqBVaf5s8c. In this video we can hear the first passage in Dutch, but later the language is Urdu.

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Case Study from Finland

Areeb, nineteen years old, lives in Finland, where he is enrolled in his first year of college. Urdu and Hindi are the two mother tongues reported by him in the questionnaire. English was the main language of his schooling, and he has a good competency level in Finnish. Working part-time as a coach for a cricket team, Areeb uses Finnish as the language of instruction to the young boys. Outside and inside the home, he speaks in Urdu with his parents. He travels to India every two to three years, and while there he speaks and interacts with his extended family members and loved ones only in Urdu or Hindi. The interview was conducted mainly in Urdu. Areeb did, however, reply to some questions in English.

The main languages for understanding and practicing religion for him are Arabic and English. In the questionnaire, Areeb did not report his competency in Arabic or its function in performing his prayers. According to Areeb, "I thought it was not necessary to point it. It has a very limited function for me." As mentioned before, previous literature (Rosowsky 2006; Jaspal and Coyle 2009) indicates that the aim and objective of learning Arabic are limited to reciting the verses of Qur'an. Jaspal and Coyle (2009, 4) noticed among second-generation Muslim immigrants from South Asia but living in the United Kingdom that "the meaning of the verses recited is seldom understood." Some prominent verses are learnt by heart in order to perform the ritual prayer (*salat*). But in the learning process, native Urdu speakers find it difficult to pronounce some of the sounds of the Arabic alphabet. Arabic phonemes like ض, the equivalent of which may be /dˤ/ is pronounced more or less with the influence of Indo-Iranian or particularly Farsi language as /z/.[21] Another example is ث /θ/, which is most commonly pronounced as /s/ by Urdu speakers.[22] Areeb said that his recitation of the Qur'an improved considerably at the age of sixteen when he took a two-month long course in *Tajweed* over Skype from a professor in Saudi Arabia.[23]

He went on to say, "To me, the main language of transmission of religious knowledge has been in Urdu." Areeb came to Finland when he was three-and-a-half years old. Instructions in religion were given to him by his mother in Urdu

21. Around the period of the Muslim holy month of Ramzan, a fierce debate erupts among Indian Muslims over the spelling Ramzan versus Ramdan. The shifting from Ramzan to Ramdan is seen as an act of fundamentalism by many people, including those who are Muslim themselves.

22. Though I have used the term *Urdu speakers* from a linguistic viewpoint, it may happen that many Muslims do not have any written knowledge or even reading knowledge of the Urdu script. The schooling is done in the Hindi medium. Phonemes belonging to the Indo-Aryan languages, such as retroflex and aspirated sounds, may also serve as a hindrance in the utterance of the correct Arabic sound.

23. *Tajweed* is the set of rules governing the way in which the words of the Qur'an should be pronounced during its recitation.

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when he was 5 years old. Basic Arabic lessons were taught at home in Finland and during holidays in his hometown in India. On Urdu, he says:

شروع شروع میں ماما سیکھاتی تھی اردو۔ تھوڑا بہت حدیث پڑھایا۔ ہم سَب اردو میں پڑھا ہے۔ جیسے آپ سورہ لے لیجئے، سورہ الفاتِحہ، اسکا معنی اردو میں آتا ہے۔

[In the beginning, it was my mother who taught me. I read also the Hadith. I read everything in Urdu. I learned verses in Urdu, its meaning in Urdu. Take, for example, *Surah – Al – Fathia*, I know its meaning in Urdu.]

Urdu had a significant impact on him as the basic creed of the Islamic faith, as his mother explained to him the meaning and implication of the opening chapter of the Qur'an, along with some of the Prophetic sayings (Hadith), in Urdu. This continued until the age of fourteen or so, and then his mother stopped after taking up a job, leaving Areeb to take care of his younger brother. On being asked whether he remembered any *hadith* in Urdu, his reply was in the negative. He recalled that during his visits to India, he attentively listened to the religious sermons delivered in the Friday prayers in mosques and would understand about 60 to 70 percent of the content. However, Areeb thinks that the role of Urdu since age 5 or 6 began diminishing quickly, particularly once he began relying more on English.

To understand the meaning of a Prophetic saying (*hadith*) or supplication (*dua*) in Arabic, Areeb turns to its translation in English. This helps him gain better insight into the message of the actual text in Arabic. He benefits from the rich resources available in English on the Internet as well as through mobile applications. He often watches videos on YouTube and benefits from talks and sermons given by Nouman Ali Khan,[24] especially during the month of Ramadan. After hearing from Nouman Ali Khan, he said that "Urdu was left away." With the availability of such religious resources in English, there remains hardly any need for Urdu for him.

Finnish has no role to play in his life as a practicing Muslim. He only knows that the translation of the Qur'an is available in Finnish. With regard to Finland, his country of citizenship, I asked if he would like to see any national language policy to help the immigrant community perform their religious duties. Areeb's response to my query was that there was no impact of religion on the Finnish society; in other words, it was overwhelmingly secularized there. To my

24. A video that was available on YouTube at the time of writing depicted Nouman Ali Khan as extremely popular among the younger generation, particularly salient in the diaspora, in which from a linguistic viewpoint, the second and third generations, who are losing their cultural and linguistic heritage, communicate their knowledge in one language, which is English. It does not seem that Areeb knew Nouman Ali Khan before appearing on the Internet. Many prominent Islamic scholars in English were suggested or their names appeared on the side screen on YouTube. Areeb's mother reportedly suggested Nouman Ali Khan's name to his son.

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question about whether Islamic shops were to be found in or around Helsinki, he said that he was not aware of any and thought that the Finns were not a religious people. As it has been discovered by Schneider and Crul (2012, 29), in Europe, "the second generation also feels strong enough to claim a religious identity even in the face of a largely secular majority population, thus showing how Islamic life in all its diversity has also become an established part." Areeb has no qualms about asserting his religious identity where according to him, Muslims appeared to be more numerous than even practicing Christians.

With the absence of a religious social network in Finland, as was the case in Norway, Areeb seemed to face the same kind of situation as Faiz. Areeb's mother was the principal person responsible for building the religious environment at home. Ebaugh (2003, 234) points that "immigrants look to religious institutions as the place to reinforce and pass on the native language and ethnic values, traditions, and customs to the next generation." Though it holds true for the United States, and even in France, where immigrants of North African origin send their children to mosques for Saturday "Arabic language classes," and as reported by Merabti and Moore (1993, 99), children of Indo-Pakistani descent in England go to mosques to attend evening classes during the week and on Saturdays. Areeb's mother directed and guided him toward acquiring knowledge of religion in a manner that was distinct and separate from his school education. About every 2 to 3 years, Areeb's travel to India intensified the *social influence theory*. Areeb's religious practice may be termed as "people might be involved in religious activities to please significant others" (van Tubergen 2013) (parents, uncles, relatives) irrespective of the fact that he himself was sincerely religious. The *social influence theory* is more in line with social pressure; that is, children may be under pressure to perform a religious act or do some religious duties to fulfill the desire of their elders. During holidays, when schools are closed, young Muslim male children on the Indian subcontinent are accompanied to the mosque by their parents or guardians for Friday Prayers. The strong presence of a religious network takes care of transmission and practice of religious knowledge. The abundance of supply in the market is illustrated with mosques and the call for prayers (*azaan*) resonating from them five times a day, as well as shops selling religious items. Areeb was exposed to this kind of poignant religious environment in India on a fairly regular basis.

Discussion

One can identify the practicing of religion in daily life as part of the social processes which yield from the religious capital built or accumulated in the trajectory of

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individuals. Bourdieu's theory on "capital" in terms of valued resources refers to "religious capital" as "the constitution of religious field where a group of religious specialists is able to monopolize the administration of religious goods and services" (cited by Swartz 1996, 75). Though the participants of this study were exposed to different degrees of religious capital, they have in turn, in their own capacity, found it useful as a marker of their ethnic identity and to compensate in some manner for the loss of or waning of a cultural and linguistic heritage.

In figure 1, the innermost circle (1) represents the Arabic language as the central language for practicing faith. All three subjects use Qur'anic Arabic for performing prayers. Circles 2 and 3 express the nonsanctified languages used for understanding and enhancing knowledge of their faith. For Areeb and Faiz, English and Urdu are the important mediums, whereas for Saheed it is primarily Dutch and then English. The outermost circle (4) expresses the language which is not at all or rarely used for the purpose of religion. Relying upon the "rationalization of language in the linguistic ideology" by Silverstein, Hill (1998, 72) mentions that "the uses of language appear because preexisting social categories require them." All these cases show multilingual adaptations in a particular

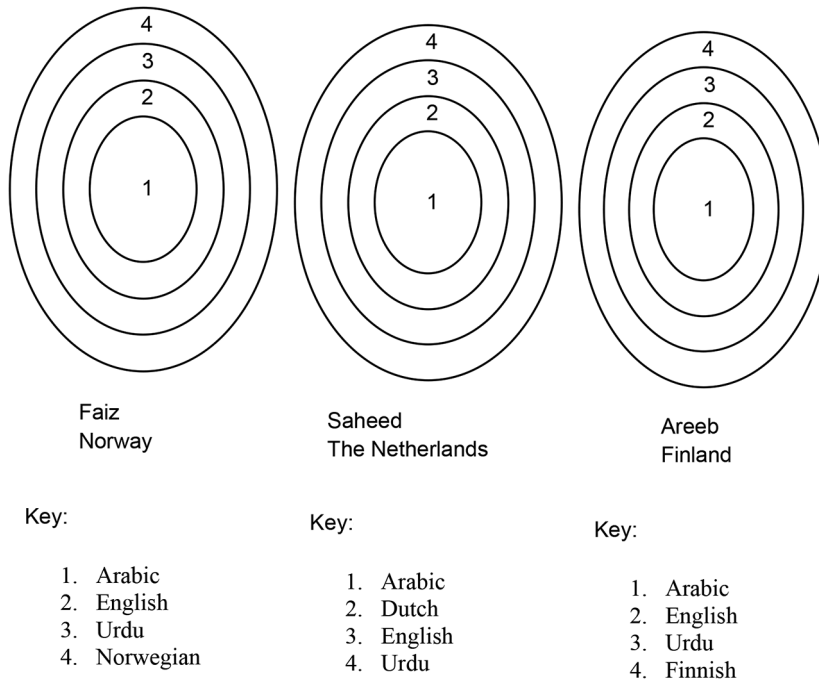


Figure 1. Language usage for practicing Islam by the three individuals

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setting, where the scope of language use, notably in religious contexts, was restricted almost exclusively to one language.

The notion of collectivity has also emerged as an important element in this study. Durkheim recalls Poggi (2000, 143) as "a ritual feast [that] may generate a controlled, regulated tumultuousness." Poggi wrote that the "strong states of consciousness are generally entertained in common, are intrinsically collective; . . . it is this that makes them strong." The degree of the notion of collectivity varied for each participant of this study, ranking low for Areeb and Faiz and extremely high for Saheed. The formers were more interested in practicing and understanding religion at an individual level, but the latter invested in the collectivity of members through building a mosque. The Dutch language seems crucial for him as the new voice for Islam in the Netherlands when it comes to binding together different ethnic and linguistic groups.

Conclusion

Though a case study could not deliver data for a broader analysis, some information collected in this study proves valuable in delineating language usage and its role in practicing Islam in Europe. The linguistic trajectories and narrative biographies as a practicing Muslim gave important, in-depth insight for discerning patterns of religiosity of immigrants. The theoretical paradigms employed from the viewpoint of sociology of religion were an attempt to explore the purview of religiosity in relation to the role of languages endowed with different functions.

Heritage language has been represented as the central element in marking one's ethnic and religious identities, but its role seems to be diminishing for all the informants. Despite their differing levels of competencies in Urdu, that language was reported as their common mother tongue. Saheed does not consider Urdu as a language that has anything to do with religion, and he rarely uses it in a religious context. The role of Urdu has been minimized for Areeb; he now relies more on English for religious texts, and he seeks English sources on the Internet. Urdu also plays a reduced role for Faiz in practicing his own faith. Further study could narrow down the underpinnings of identity of these individuals, how they link identity with their religious languages in verbal repertoire and how languages are viewed within the framework of their integrative role in Western Europe.

Among the host languages—Norwegian, Dutch, and Finnish—only Dutch was reported as a language whose function was to understand the translation of religious texts in Arabic and for other religious materials. This was true in the

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case of Saheed, as Dutch had been his main language since the age of five; for Faiz and Areeb, on the other hand, Norwegian and Finnish were the auxiliary languages, and English was the main language of work, school and their extended network. Arabic, conversely, creates a special bond among believers and it transmits Islamic doctrinal rules; in fact, all participants in the study claim to use Arabic for performing rituals. Faiz asserts that the liturgical language should be the lingua franca for all Muslims so that besides its sacred role in Islam it can facilitate communication among different linguistic and ethnic communities. Understanding it from the frame of linguistic ideology, Silverstein (1998, 125) evokes the "sharedness of ideology, like that of culture of language, and the relationship of ideology (individual) consciousness . . . that survive from Destutt de Tracy's usage, which focused on the specifically human condition as 'ideational.'" However, that seems highly ambitious. The compulsion to learn Qur'anic Arabic because it is a legitimate code might prove overwhelming for Muslim youth, and they may feel disenchanted as they do not understand it nor relate to it. Muslim chaplain celebrities have increased in popularity thanks to their using simple English with bits of humor in order to attract a large number of followers. In our study, Faiz and Areeb drew upon English-speaking chaplains as their source for enhancing their Islamic knowledge. Though competency in the parental language differed for each, and the use of multiple languages tends to widen the gap with one's ancestral heritage, religion appeared to be the unique social variable which has helped maintain and sustain cultural identity. In my previous study (Haque 2019) on a Hmong family in France, it was found that the practice of Shamanism by the parents helped to maintain the practice of the Hmong language and to further foster ties with others in the Hmong community. Religion as an enactment of social practices is in fact the "social solidarity" (Durkheim 1893) for the practicing group of immigrants to reassert an act of solidarity with one's own ethnic heritage.

The Islamic congregation or ethnic segregation along lines of religion demonstrates that religion constitutes an important factor in today's Europe. The religious production theory was conspicuous for Faiz, who faced an acute shortage in his social network and in the religious market related to Islam. During Saheed's childhood, religious production was in full swing, and along with that, he was exposed to the social influence of his peer groups, parents, and relatives. Areeb remained deeply influenced by the social influence theory, on the one hand, by his own mother, who bequeathed religious instruction and, on the other, by his family network in India. Under the diasporic context, the religious congregation and its ties have successfully reinforced ethnic identity, which helped preserve traces

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of the heritage language while at the same time maintaining religious and cultural pride with the help of multiple languages: host, English, and Arabic. Contrary to a common belief regarding the irreconcilability of Islamic culture and the West as cited by Foner and Alba (2008), the findings shed important light on the appropriation of the host language and culture by the participants while an attempt is made to nurture and further strengthen ethnic identity.

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