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Multilingualism as a Tool for Global Da'wah and Diplomacy: A Comparative Analysis of WJAP's Language Framework

Dr. Hafiz Khubaib ur Rehman Awan (Corresponding Author)

Nazim-e-Aala (Secretary General) Wifaq ul Jamiaat Al Arabia Pakistan.

dr.khubaiburehman@gmail.com

Dr. Maryam Raza

Assistant Professor, Islamic Studies Department, Green International University, Lahore.

dr.maryamraza@giu.edu.pk

Dr. Muhammad Aamir Tuaseen

Executive Director, Majlis-e-Ilmi Foundation Research & References Education Organization/Former Chairman Pakistan Madarsa Education Board Ministry of Religious Affairs & IFH Govt. of Pakistan.

aamir.tuaseen@gmail.com

ABSTRACT

In an increasingly interconnected world, multilingual competence has emerged as a critical instrument for international communication, diplomacy, educational outreach, and religious engagement. For Islamic institutions seeking to disseminate knowledge globally, language proficiency is no longer optional but strategically essential. This study examines multilingualism as a tool for global Da'wah and diplomacy through a comparative analysis of the language framework proposed by Wifaq ul Jamiaat al Arabia Pakistan (WJAP). Employing a qualitative analytical methodology, the research explores the historical role of languages in Islamic civilization, contemporary theories of multilingual education, and the strategic significance of language acquisition in international engagement. The findings indicate that multilingual educational models enhance intercultural communication, expand educational access, strengthen diplomatic capacity, and improve the effectiveness of global Islamic outreach. The study concludes that structured language education can serve as a bridge between Islamic scholarship and the international community.

Keywords: Multilingualism, Da'wah, Educational Diplomacy, Islamic Education, Language Policy, International Relations, Cross-Cultural Communication.

1. Introduction

Language has always occupied a central position in human civilization. It serves not merely as a means of communication but as a vehicle for knowledge transmission, cultural interaction, diplomacy, and intellectual development.

Throughout Islamic history, multilingualism contributed significantly to the expansion of scholarship, trade, governance, and intercultural dialogue. Muslim scholars frequently mastered multiple languages including Arabic, Persian, Turkish, Greek, Latin, Urdu, and various regional languages.

In the contemporary era, globalization has intensified the importance of linguistic competence. Educational institutions seeking international engagement must prepare students to communicate across linguistic and cultural boundaries.

Recognizing this reality, WJAP proposes a multilingual educational framework incorporating Arabic, English, Urdu, Chinese, Turkish, French, Persian, Pashto, Punjabi, and other strategic languages.

2. Problem Statement

Many religious educational institutions continue to emphasize limited linguistic competencies, restricting graduates' ability to participate effectively in global academic, diplomatic, and religious discourse. The absence of comprehensive language education limits international outreach and reduces access to global knowledge networks.

3. Research Objectives

This study seeks to analyze the programmatic intent of language reform through five core vectors:

1. To examine the historical significance of multilingualism in Islamic civilization.
2. To analyze the relationship between language and global Da'wah.
3. To evaluate multilingual education as a tool of educational diplomacy.
4. To assess the WJAP language framework.
5. To propose strategies for strengthening linguistic capacity within Islamic institutions.

4. Research Questions

The analytical trajectory of this paper responds to the following central problems:

1. Why is multilingualism important for contemporary Islamic education?
2. How does language proficiency enhance global Da'wah efforts?
3. What role does multilingualism play in educational diplomacy?
4. How can Islamic institutions develop effective language policies?
5. What lessons can be derived from the WJAP framework?

5. Literature Review

Research in multilingual education consistently demonstrates positive outcomes in cognitive development, intercultural competence, and academic achievement.

Jim Cummins (2001) argues that multilingual proficiency enhances intellectual flexibility and academic performance. Similarly, Colin Baker (2011) emphasizes the growing significance of linguistic diversity in a globalized world.

Studies in international relations further indicate that language proficiency contributes significantly to diplomatic effectiveness and cross-cultural communication. Islamic history provides numerous examples of multilingual scholarship, where scholars translated and transmitted knowledge across civilizations, facilitating intellectual exchange and scientific advancement.

6. Theoretical Framework

This comparative evaluation is synthesized using three structural pillars:

Intercultural Communication Theory

Effective communication requires understanding linguistic and cultural contexts deeply rather than superficially.

Islamic Universalism

Islam addresses humanity as a whole and fundamentally encourages communication across cultural and linguistic boundaries.

Educational Diplomacy Model

Education serves as an essential soft-power instrument capable of strengthening international cooperation and mutual understanding.

7. Research Methodology

The study employs qualitative analytical methods involving historical analysis, educational policy review, comparative language education studies, analysis of WJAP educational proposals, and a rigorous review of international multilingual education literature. Thematic analysis was utilized to identify recurring trends and strategic implications.

8. Historical Role of Multilingualism in Islamic Civilization

Islamic civilization historically embraced linguistic diversity through dedicated functional spheres:

- **Arabic:** Served universally as the core language of revelation, theological codification, and high scholarship.
- **Persian:** Functioned as a major literary, bureaucratic, and regional administrative language.
- **Turkish:** Played an important political and structural role within major Muslim empires across regions.
- **Regional Languages:** Facilitated direct local community engagement, colloquial education, and grassroots outreach.

Prominent scholars often mastered multiple languages, enabling them to access diverse intellectual traditions and communicate across geographical regions.

9. Multilingualism and Global Da'wah

Effective Da'wah requires communication that is linguistically accessible and culturally sensitive:

- **Expanding Reach:** Systematized language skills enable direct and unobstructed engagement with broader audiences.
- **Improving Understanding:** Direct communication dramatically reduces reliance on intermediaries and third-party translations.
- **Building Trust:** Speaking native local languages enhances structural credibility and initial social connection.
- **Countering Misconceptions:** Multilingual outreach facilitates accurate representation of Islamic teachings in hostile or unfamiliar environments.

10. Educational Diplomacy and International Engagement

Educational diplomacy involves the use of educational institutions as instruments of international cooperation. Multilingual graduates contribute directly to academic exchanges, international conferences, research collaboration, interfaith dialogue, cultural diplomacy, and international development initiatives. Language competence therefore strengthens both institutional and national influence.

11. The WJAP Language Framework

The proposed WJAP model structures language acquisition into specific dynamic clusters:

- **Core Languages:** Arabic, English, and Urdu form the uncompromised academic base.
- **Strategic International Languages:** Target modules in Chinese, Turkish, French, and Persian.
- **Regional Languages:** Localized integration of Punjabi, Pashto, Sindhi, and Balochi.

- **Emerging Global Languages:** Additional regional dialects or international tongues may be incorporated dynamically according to changing strategic needs.

The framework aims to produce graduates capable of operating effectively within local, national, and international environments.

12. Comparative Analysis

The institutional landscapes present sharply contrasting strategic choices:

- **Traditional Language Models:** These focus primarily on Arabic and localized vernacular languages, limiting universal translation capabilities.
- **Modern Educational Models:** These prioritize English and western communication vectors exclusively, sidelining traditional theological anchors.
- **WJAP Integrated Model:** This framework unifies religious scholarship, international communication, diplomatic engagement, cultural understanding, and shared global economic opportunities.

This integrated approach offers significantly greater strategic flexibility and global relevance.

13. Findings

- Multilingualism significantly enhances educational outcomes.
- Language proficiency strengthens global Da'wah efforts.
- Educational diplomacy benefits from multilingual graduates.
- Language diversity promotes intercultural understanding.
- Strategic language education expands employment opportunities.
- Integrated language policies strengthen institutional competitiveness.

14. Discussion

The findings indicate that multilingualism should be regarded as a strategic educational priority rather than a supplementary skill. Contemporary Islamic institutions operate within an increasingly globalized environment where communication, collaboration, and cultural engagement are essential.

The WJAP framework demonstrates how religious education can be combined with linguistic competence to prepare students for leadership roles in academia, diplomacy, media, and international development. Such integration reflects the historical legacy of Islamic civilization while responding to contemporary global realities.

15. Policy Recommendations

- Introduce structured multilingual curricula.
- Expand language teacher training programs.
- Establish international language centers.
- Promote student exchange initiatives.
- Encourage multilingual research publication.
- Integrate language learning with digital technologies.
- Support international partnerships.
- Develop standardized language proficiency assessments.

16. Conclusion

Multilingualism represents a powerful instrument for global Da'wah, educational diplomacy, and international engagement. In an interconnected world, Islamic institutions must equip students with the linguistic competencies necessary to communicate effectively across cultural and geographical boundaries.

The WJAP language framework provides a comprehensive model that combines religious scholarship, intercultural communication, and strategic engagement. By investing in multilingual education, institutions can expand their global influence, strengthen academic collaboration, and contribute more effectively to international dialogue and understanding.

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