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AN ANALYSIS OF RELIGIOUS LEXICAL LOCALISATION IN SINGLE NATIONAL CURRICULUM-BASED ENGLISH TEXTBOOKS IN PAKISTAN

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Abstract
This study investigates how religious lexical items are used to localise English in SNC-based English textbooks for Grades 6–8 in Pakistan. Grounded in the framework of World Englishes, the study examines how English in school textbooks is shaped by local religious and sociocultural realities rather than presented as a culturally neutral language. Using qualitative textual analysis, the study analyses three English textbooks and identifies religious lexical items embedded in unit titles, reading passages, dialogues, comprehension questions, exercises, and writing tasks. The findings show that religious vocabulary is not limited to isolated lesson content; instead, it is systematically distributed across multiple pedagogic spaces. Textbook 6 mainly represents religious lexis through prophetic biography and festival discourse, especially in units related to Seerat-un-Nabi and Eid-ul-Fitr. Textbook 7 presents a denser and more structured religious discourse through themes such as the last sermon, worship, sacrifice, and ritual practices. Textbook 8 extends religious lexical representation into broader moral and social domains such as tolerance, justice, leadership, and community values. Overall, the study finds that religious lexical items function as an important means of localising English in Pakistani school textbooks. It concludes that English in these textbooks is represented as a culturally embedded and religiously meaningful medium shaped by the Pakistani Muslim educational context.

Keywords: World Englishes; Pakistani English; religious lexical items; textbook analysis; localisation of English; SNC textbooks

Introduction

English is no longer viewed as a single, uniform, and culturally neutral language. Rather, it is widely understood as a global language that exists in multiple forms shaped by the histories, identities, and communicative needs of different societies. This understanding is central to World Englishes, which challenges the assumption that only one or two native-speaker models should define legitimate English. From this perspective, English textbooks are not neutral teaching tools; they are important sites where particular forms of English are selected, legitimised, and normalised for learners. Recent textbook research in World Englishes has also shown that teaching materials play a major role in determining which varieties of English become visible in classroom practice and which remain marginal (Lindqvist & Soler, 2024).

In Pakistan, the study of English textbooks is especially important because English occupies a privileged and influential position in education and wider institutional life (Abbas et al., 2021). Rahman (2016) notes that English in Pakistan has historically functioned as a language of power and elite culture, and that its role in the education sector has been especially significant. At the same time, English in Pakistan has not remained detached from local realities. It has developed within a multilingual and culturally layered environment and has taken on local meanings, local expressions, and local discourse practices. Rahman further observes that English in Pakistan has become a non-native variety in its own right, while Mahboob (2009) argues that Pakistani English can also reflect Islamic values and South Asian Islamic sensitivities. These arguments are particularly relevant for the present study because

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they suggest that English in Pakistan may carry local religious meanings rather than functioning only as an imported linguistic model (Mahboob, 2009; Rahman, 2016).

The present study is situated within the context of Pakistan's Single National Curriculum (SNC), which was introduced to provide a more unified curricular framework across school systems. Official curriculum documents for English at Grades 6–8 are available through the Ministry of Federal Education and Professional Training, and SNC-based English textbooks are distributed through the Punjab Curriculum and Textbook Board's e-books platform (Ministry of Federal Education and Professional Training [MoFEPT], n.d.; Punjab Curriculum and Textbook Board [PCTB], n.d.). Because these textbooks are state-approved and widely used, they are highly influential in shaping what learners encounter as school English. They do not simply teach reading, writing, and grammar; they also shape learners' sense of what kinds of language, identities, and values are presented as normal, acceptable, and educationally meaningful. For this reason, analysing SNC-based textbooks provides an important way of understanding how English is currently being framed for Pakistani learners.

Within this broader context, the religious dimension of English textbook discourse deserves focused attention. In Pakistan, religion is deeply embedded in public life, moral discourse, and educational ideology. When religious lexical items appear in English textbooks, they do more than provide topical content; they may reveal how English is being adapted to a specifically Pakistani Muslim sociocultural environment. In this sense, religious words are analytically important because they can show how English becomes locally meaningful and how global language practices intersect with local belief systems. Mahboob's (2009) discussion of English as an Islamic language is especially useful here, because it helps explain how English can accommodate religious meanings and participate in the expression of Islamic identity in Pakistan. A focused analysis of religious lexical items can therefore offer insight into the localisation of English in school materials and into the ideological framing of textbook discourse.

The focus on Grades 6–8 is also significant. At the middle-school level, textbook content usually becomes more conceptually developed and thematically rich than in the earlier grades. Learners encounter not only basic language structures but also narratives, moral lessons, historical figures, social values, and culturally embedded themes. This makes Grades 6–8 an especially productive level for examining how English is used to convey meanings that go beyond language instruction itself. Since the SNC framework for these grades is designed to guide students across a range of communicative and thematic contexts, the textbooks at this level provide a useful corpus for investigating how religious vocabulary is embedded in English-language pedagogy (MoFEPT, n.d.).

Another reason for this study is that textbook analysis in Pakistan has often focused on ideology, curriculum, representation, and identity more broadly, but the specific role of religious lexical items in localising English still remains underexplored. Existing scholarship has already shown that textbooks in Pakistan are closely connected to identity formation and value transmission, which means that language materials cannot be treated as ideologically neutral. However, the precise linguistic role of religious vocabulary in English textbooks requires closer examination from a World Englishes perspective. Such a focus can help move the discussion from general claims about ideology to a more specific analysis of how lexical choices themselves contribute to the local shaping of English. In this way, the study brings together textbook analysis, Pakistani English, and World Englishes in a more focused and manageable research design.

Therefore, this study investigates religious lexical items in SNC-based English textbooks for Grades 6–8 in Pakistan in order to understand how they contribute to the

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localisation of English. It treats religious vocabulary not as incidental content, but as a meaningful linguistic and cultural resource that may reveal how textbook English is shaped by local identity and educational priorities. By doing so, the study aims to contribute to World Englishes scholarship, Pakistani textbook research, and broader discussions of how English is socially and ideologically situated in school materials. Ultimately, the study argues that English in these textbooks should not be viewed only as a language of formal instruction, but also as a medium through which local religious meanings are represented and normalised for learners.

Rationale of the Study

This study is important because English textbooks do not merely teach language forms; they also shape learners' ideas about which kinds of English, identities, and cultural meanings are made visible and legitimate in the classroom. In the case of SNC-based English textbooks for Grades 6–8 in Pakistan, focusing on religious lexical items is especially valuable because these items can show how English is being localised within a specifically Pakistani and Islamic sociocultural context, rather than being presented as a culturally neutral language. Such a focus is also supported by recent World Englishes scholarship, which shows that textbook materials are a key site for examining how different varieties of English are represented and normalised in educational settings (Lindqvist & Soler, 2024). Therefore, analysing religious words in these textbooks can help reveal how English is ideologically framed, how local identity is embedded in school materials, and how textbook discourse contributes to the broader localisation of English in Pakistan.

Significance of the Study

This study is significant because it highlights how religious lexical items in SNC-based English textbooks for Grades 6–8 shape the way English is presented to learners in Pakistan. By focusing on religious vocabulary, the study can reveal that English in these textbooks is not only a subject for language learning, but also a medium through which local religious identity, values, and cultural meanings are conveyed. This is important because textbooks influence learners' understanding of language, society, and acceptable forms of expression. The study can therefore contribute to a better understanding of how English is localised in Pakistani school materials and how religious elements play a role in constructing the sociocultural character of textbook English.

Literature Review

The present study investigates religious lexical items in SNC-based English textbooks for Grades 6–8 in Pakistan from a World Englishes perspective. The review begins with the broader conceptual background of World Englishes and Pakistani English, then moves to empirical studies relevant to textbook representation, language localisation, English pedagogy, and religious content in Pakistani curricular materials. The purpose of this review is to position the study within current scholarship and to identify the gap it addresses.

World Englishes emerged in response to the limited view that only British or American English should be treated as legitimate norms. Kachru (1985) was among the first scholars to argue that English has developed into multiple socially grounded varieties across the world and that these varieties must be understood in relation to their local histories and institutional roles. This perspective became more firmly developed in later scholarship, especially in Schneider's (2007) work on postcolonial Englishes, which explains how English becomes locally shaped through contact with indigenous languages, sociocultural realities, and identity formation. From this perspective, English in postcolonial settings should not be studied only as a borrowed code; it should also be examined as a language that acquires local meanings and functions. This framework is highly relevant to textbook analysis because textbooks often become one of the most visible sites where such meanings are normalised for learners.

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Within this broader framework, Pakistani English has been discussed as an institutionalised non-native variety shaped by the historical, educational, and sociolinguistic realities of Pakistan. Rahman (2016) explains that English in Pakistan developed within domains such as administration, higher education, and power, and gradually became part of the country's local linguistic ecology. Mahboob (2009) adds that English in Pakistan may also carry Islamic values and South Asian Muslim sensitivities, which makes it different from a purely imported standard model. These insights are important for the present study because they support the view that English in Pakistan may reflect local identity and belief systems in its lexical and discourse choices. In this sense, analysing school textbooks becomes especially significant, since textbooks are among the main pedagogical spaces in which students encounter English as an authorised form of language.

Recent Pakistani scholarship has increasingly shown that English textbooks are not neutral pedagogic tools but ideological texts that shape learners' identities, values, and cultural understandings. Ali et al. (2019), in their study of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa English textbooks, demonstrated that textbook discourse reproduces ideological meanings related to religion, nationhood, and leadership. Similarly, Afzal et al. (2021) comparatively examined ideological constructions in Pakistani English textbooks and found that these materials embed multiple ideological assumptions through discourse choices and thematic organisation. These studies are important because they establish that English textbooks in Pakistan do not simply teach language skills; they also participate in the construction of wider sociocultural meanings.

This line of inquiry has been extended in more recent studies of SNC and primary-level materials. Khan et al. (2023) explored the ideological and educational function of primary English textbooks under the SNC and showed that textbook content and visuals work together to shape learners' values, worldviews, and educational positioning. In a similar way, Zaheer et al. (2025) analysed ideological orientations in Pakistani primary English textbooks and confirmed that English materials are deeply implicated in the reproduction of moral, cultural, and political discourses. Likewise, Dad et al. (2025), through a corpus-based critical discourse analysis of PCTB English textbooks, identified recurring ideological patterns in textbook discourse and showed how such materials normalise particular social meanings in the classroom. Taken together, these studies clearly show that Pakistani English textbooks are culturally and ideologically loaded texts.

In the Pakistani context, Batool et al. (2023) offer particularly direct relevance to the present study. Their analysis of a public primary school English textbook found that the textbook displayed a layered varietal profile that included British English, American English, South Asian forms, and Pakistani English lexical presence. This study is significant because it demonstrates that Pakistani school textbooks are not necessarily monocentric and may already contain multiple Englishes, even when such diversity is not explicitly acknowledged. However, Batool et al. focused mainly on broader lexical representation in primary-level material. Their work did not isolate religious lexical items as a separate analytic category, nor did it focus on the middle-school grades. The present study builds on their contribution by narrowing the lens to religious lexical items in Grades 6–8, where the textbook discourse is more thematically dense and ideologically explicit.

However, despite their relevance, these studies mainly approach textbooks through the broad lenses of ideology, discourse construction, and curricular representation. They do not specifically examine religious lexical items as a distinct linguistic category, nor do they explain how such lexical choices contribute to the localisation of English from a World Englishes perspective, especially in middle-school textbooks for Grades 6–8. In other words, while previous research has shown that ideology is embedded in Pakistani English textbooks, the

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specific role of religious lexis in shaping textbook English as a localised form remains underexplored. Therefore, a clear gap exists at the intersection of Pakistani textbook ideology, religious lexical representation, and World Englishes, which the present study addresses by focusing on religious lexical items in SNC-based English textbooks for Grades 6–8 in Pakistan.

Ahmed et al. (2023) contribute to the discussion from another relevant angle through their study on the indigenisation of English in a Pakistani context. Using questionnaire and interview data, they explored how cultural factors shape the learning and use of English in Pakistan and found evidence that English is increasingly being understood and used in locally grounded ways. Their study is particularly helpful because it moves beyond textbook content alone and demonstrates that indigenisation is also visible in attitudes, classroom experience, and language practice. For the present study, this research supports the idea that English in Pakistan cannot be understood only through imported norms. It must also be studied as a language influenced by local culture and social context. This insight is relevant to analysing religious lexical items because such items may represent one of the most visible forms through which English becomes culturally embedded in Pakistani educational materials.

Mobeen and Baig (2024) provide another useful empirical contribution by evaluating the integration of vocabulary and grammar in an SNC English textbook for Grade V. Their study found that textbook evaluation is essential for understanding whether curriculum goals are actually realised in the material used by learners. Although their focus was not World Englishes or religion specifically, the study is relevant because it confirms the importance of close textbook analysis within the SNC context. Their work suggests that the textbook remains a major site where national curriculum intentions are filtered, shaped, and operationalised. This is important for the present study because it supports a textbook-based methodology and reinforces the need to examine not just broad policy claims but the specific lexical content that learners encounter in official school materials.

Zhang and Gonzales (2025) add a pedagogical dimension to this literature through their study of World Englishes pedagogy and learner identity. Investigating a critical intervention informed by World Englishes, they found that such pedagogy could reshape how learners position themselves in relation to English and could challenge inherited native-speaker ideologies. Although the study focused on one learner in Hong Kong rather than textbook analysis in Pakistan, it is still highly relevant because it demonstrates that exposure to more plural understandings of English can influence learner investment and identity. This matters for the current study because textbooks often serve as learners' first sustained contact with authorised English forms. If local and socially meaningful expressions are represented in textbooks, they may contribute to a stronger sense of ownership and relevance. Thus, Zhang and Gonzales's study provide indirect but important support for investigating how religious lexical items may shape learners' encounter with English in Pakistan.

Research Gap

The literature reviewed above clearly shows that World Englishes scholarship has established the plural and locally shaped nature of English, and that textbook research has increasingly questioned the dominance of Inner Circle norms in ELT materials. It also shows that Pakistani scholarship has begun to document both the mixed varietal nature of school textbooks and the ideological significance of religious content in SNC materials. However, an important gap still remains. Existing studies have not sufficiently examined religious lexical items as a specific mechanism through which English is localised in Pakistani middle-school textbooks. Research on global ELT textbooks has focused mainly on variety representation in general, while Pakistani studies have either examined broader lexical mixing or analysed religion primarily as ideology. The intersection of World Englishes, Pakistani English,

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religious lexical representation, and SNC-based English textbooks for Grades 6–8 therefore remains underexplored. The present study addresses this gap by focusing specifically on how religious lexical items are used in these textbooks and how they contribute to the localisation of English within a Pakistani Muslim educational context.

Research Question

The research question of this study is:

1. How are religious lexical items used to localise English in SNC-based English textbooks for Grades 6–8 in Pakistan?

Research Methodology

This study uses a qualitative research method to examine how religious lexical items are represented in SNC-based English textbooks for Grades 6–8 in Pakistan. A qualitative approach is appropriate because the study aims to explore meanings, patterns, and contextual use rather than measure data statistically. Since the focus is on textbook language and the localisation of English through religious vocabulary, the study analyses the textbooks as the main source of data. In this way, the research method allows close interpretation of how religious words are used in officially prescribed school materials.

Textual Analysis

The study is based on textual analysis, specifically qualitative content analysis of textbook discourse. This approach is suitable because the data consist of written educational texts, and the purpose is to examine how religious lexical items appear within them. The analysis focuses on lesson titles, reading passages, dialogues, vocabulary sections, comprehension exercises, and activities. It does not treat words as isolated items only; rather, it considers how they function within the wider context of the textbook. This helps explain how religious vocabulary contributes to the representation of English in the Pakistani school context.

The analysis is guided by a World Englishes perspective, particularly the idea that English in postcolonial settings may be shaped by local cultural and religious realities. Therefore, religious lexical items are examined as indicators of how English is localised in these textbooks.

Data of the Research

The data for this study consist of the SNC-based English textbooks for Grades 6, 7, and 8 used in Pakistani schools. These textbooks were selected through purposive sampling because they directly match the focus of the study. Grades 6–8 were chosen because middle-school textbooks contain richer thematic and ideological material than lower grades and are more likely to include religiously meaningful vocabulary.

The unit of analysis is the religious lexical item. In this study, religious lexical items refer to words and expressions with explicit Islamic religious meaning or strong association with religious discourse in Pakistan. These include names and titles of sacred figures, terms related to rituals and practices, references to holy places, religious greetings, and expressions linked to Islamic festivals or beliefs. Only clearly religious lexical items are included in the analysis.

Data Analysis Procedure

The data analysis was carried out in four stages. First, the researcher conducted a close reading of all three textbooks and identified all words and expressions with clear religious meaning. These were collected from different textbook sections and recorded with their textual context. Second, the identified items were organised into categories according to their religious function. For example, some items referred to religious figures and titles, others to rituals and

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practices, holy places, or religious greetings and expressions. Third, the researcher examined the recurrence and distribution of these items across the three textbooks. Although the study is qualitative, noting repetition helped identify stronger patterns of representation. Finally, the lexical categories were interpreted in relation to the aim of the study: to understand how religious lexical items contribute to the localisation of English in SNC-based textbooks. The same inclusion criteria were used across all three books to maintain consistency. Only lexical items with explicit religious relevance were included, and repeated checking was carried out to ensure systematic classification.

Analysis and Findings

This chapter presents the analysis and findings of the study on religious lexical varieties in SNC-based English textbooks for Grades 6–8. The analysis focuses on the extraction of religious lexical items from the selected textbooks and on examining their localisation within different textbook parts, such as unit titles, reading passages, oral communication sections, comprehension questions, exercises, and writing tasks. The purpose is to show how religious vocabulary is represented and how it contributes to the localisation of English in these textbooks. The analysis demonstrates that religious lexical items are not confined to isolated lesson content. Instead, they are distributed across multiple pedagogic spaces and are repeatedly embedded in classroom English. This suggests that English in these textbooks is not presented as culturally neutral, but as a language shaped by the Pakistani Muslim sociocultural context.

Analysis of Textbook 6

Religious Lexical Varieties in Textbook 6

The extraction of religious lexical items from Textbook 6 shows that religion is represented both through prophetic biography and festival-related discourse. The most prominent lexical items include *Hazrat Muhammad, Rasool, Rasoolullah, Allah, Assalaamu Alaikum, Wa Alaikum Assalam, Allah Hafiz, Eid-ul-Fitr, Ramadan, Shawwal, Chand Raat, Eid namaz, Salat ul Eid, fitrana, Eidi, Holy Quran, hajj and masjid*. These items occur in the units *Seerat-un-Nabi* and *Eid-ul-Fitr*, which are the most religiously dense parts of the textbook.

Table 4.1

Religious lexical varieties and their localisation in Textbook 6

Religious lexical item / variety	Example from textbook	Localisation in textbook
Hazrat Muhammad	"Hazrat Muhammad is the last Rasool of Allah"	Unit title and main reading lesson
Rasool / Rasoolullah	"Rasoolullah was immensely renowned..."	Main reading passage
Allah	"Allah helps those who help others"	Dialogue / oral communication
Assalaamu Alaikum	Greeting form	Dialogue / oral communication
Wa Alaikum Assalam	Greeting reply	Dialogue / oral communication
Allah Hafiz	"Thank you and Allah hafiz"	Dialogue / leave-taking
Eid-ul-Fitr / Eid	"Eid-ul-Fitr is one of the most significant religious event for Muslims"	Unit title and reading passage

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Religious lexical item / variety	Example from textbook	Localisation in textbook
Ramadan	"the holy month of Ramadan"	Reading passage
Shawwal	"the start of Shawwal"	Reading passage
Chand Raat	"the night is known as Chand Raat"	Reading passage
Eid namaz / Salat ul Eid	"Eid day starts with Eid namaz called Salat ul Eid"	Reading passage
Fitrana	"to give fitrana"	Reading passage and questions
Eidi	"Kids get 'Eidi' from their elders"	Reading passage
Holy Quran	"The Holy Quran was revealed..."	Reading passage
Hajj	"Perform hajj last year"	Exercise sentence
Masjid / Badshahi Masjid	"Ahmad went to Badshahi Masjid..."	Exercise and reading passage

Findings from Textbook 6

The findings show that religious vocabulary in Textbook 6 is not limited to central reading passages only. It extends into oral communication, dialogues, exercise sentences, and writing-related material. This is important because it means that religious vocabulary is not simply presented as reading content to be understood once; rather, it is recycled through different pedagogic modes. As a result, learners encounter religious lexis not only while reading but also while speaking, answering questions, and completing tasks.

Another important finding is that the localisation of English in Textbook 6 happens at both the referential and interactional levels. At the referential level, religion becomes the subject matter of lessons through units such as *Seerat-un-Nabi* and *Eid-ul-Fitr*. At the interactional level, formulaic expressions such as *Assalaamu Alaikum, Wa Alaikum Assalam,* and *Allah Hafiz* shape the spoken routines of textbook English. Thus, English is not only used to describe religious life; it is also used in locally familiar ways of greeting and leave-taking. This suggests that T6 presents English as a language embedded in a Pakistani Muslim classroom world rather than as a detached external standard.

Analysis of Textbook 7

Religious Lexical Varieties in Textbook 7

Textbook 7 presents a denser and more conceptually structured religious lexical layer than Textbook 6. The most prominent lexical items include *Rasoolullah, Hazrat Muhammad, Khutbah, Dhul Hijah, Hijrat, Makkah Mukarramah, Madina Munawarrah, Allah, riba, Zakat, Ramadan, Holy Quran, Sunnah, Eid-ul-Adha, Eid-ul-Fitr, Hazrat Ibrahim, Hazrat Ismail, Jibrail, Zilhaj, namaz, masjid, ghusl, miswak,* and *miracle*. These occur mainly in *The Last Sermon of Rasoolullah* and *Eid-ul-Adha*.

Table 4.2

Religious lexical varieties and their localisation in Textbook 7

Religious lexical item / variety	Example from textbook	Localisation in textbook
The Last Sermon of Rasoolullah	Unit title	Lesson title

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Religious lexical item / variety	Example from textbook	Localisation in textbook
Rasool / Rasoolullah	"What did Rasoolullah say..."	Title, reading, questions
Hazrat Muhammad	"Hazrat Muhammad delivered his last sermon"	Reading passage
Khutbah	"Last sermon (Khutbah)"	Reading passage
Dhul Hijah	"on the ninth of Dhul Hijah"	Reading passage
Hijrat	"10 years after Hijrat"	Reading passage
Makkah Mukarramah / Madina Munawarrah	Place names	Reading passage
Allah	"Fear Allah" / "worship Allah"	Reading passage
Riba	"What is riba or usury?"	Reading passage and question
Zakat	"to pay the Zakat"	Reading passage
Ramadan	"to fast in Ramadan"	Reading passage
Holy Quran / Sunnah	Section heading and content	Reading passage
Path of righteousness	"do not stray from the path of righteousness"	Reading and while-reading
Eid-ul-Adha / Eid-ul-Fitr	Festival terms	Unit title and reading passage
Hazrat Ibrahim / Hazrat Ismail	Sacrifice narrative	Reading passage
Jibrail	"Allah sent the angel Jibrail"	Reading passage
Zilhaj	"on the 10th of Zilhaj"	Reading passage
Communal namaz / masjid	"Muslims perform a communal namaz of Eid in a masjid"	Reading passage
Sunnah / ghusl / miswak	"The Sunnah's of the day..."	Reading passage
Assalaam-o-Alaikum / Wa Alaikumussalam	Greeting forms	Oral communication

Findings from Textbook 7

The analysis of Textbook 7 shows that religious vocabulary is organised more systematically than in Textbook 6. In *The Last Sermon of Rasoolullah*, the religious lexical items are arranged under thematic headings such as Life and Property of the Muslims, Blood Revenge and Usury, Rights of Women, Worship of Allah, and The Holy Quran and The Sunnah. This indicates that religious vocabulary is not merely inserted into the passage as individual lexical items. Rather, it is structured into a coherent moral and doctrinal discourse. English is therefore used to communicate religious principles, obligations, and values, not merely cultural references.

The findings also show that Textbook 7 extends religious lexis into while-reading questions, critical-thinking tasks, and oral communication sections. Learners are asked to reflect on items such as *riba, equality in the sight of Allah,* and *the importance of the last sermon*. In the *Eid-ul-Adha* unit, festival-related religious lexis is presented through a family dialogue structure, making ritual vocabulary accessible in conversational form. This means that the textbook not only presents religious vocabulary but also guides learners to process, explain,

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and reproduce it. Therefore, the localisation of English in T7 is both lexical and discursive, and it is stronger and more explicit than in T6.

Analysis of Textbook 8

Religious Lexical Varieties in Textbook 8

Textbook 8 continues the strong religious lexical presence, but the emphasis shifts more toward ethics, justice, leadership, and tolerance. The major lexical items include *Rasoolullah, Rasool, Hazrat Ayesha, Abu Sufyan, Islam, Makkah Mukarramah, Taif, Hazrat Jibrael, Allah, Al-Bukhari, Hazrat Muhammad, Ans Bin Maalik, Haji Usman, Haji Sahib, masjid, Hazrat Umar, Caliph, Faruq, Quraish, Khilafat, Allah Almighty, namaz, Eid,* and *Salam*. These items appear mainly in *Tolerance of the Rasoolullah*, *Hazrat Umar (R.A.)*, and *Settling the Quarrel*.

Table 4.3

Religious lexical varieties and their localisation in Textbook 8

Religious lexical item / variety	Example from textbook	Localisation in textbook
Tolerance of the Rasoolullah	Unit title	Lesson title
Rasoolullah / Rasool	"The Rasoolullah is a model of tolerance"	Title, reading, questions
Hazrat Ayesha	Reported saying	Reading passage
Abu Sufyan	Opponent figure	Reading passage
Islam	"before he became a Muslim" / "preach Islam"	Reading passage
Makkah Mukarramah	Conquest reference	Reading passage
Taif	"went to Taif to preach Islam"	Reading passage
Hazrat Jibrael	"Hazrat Jibrael (Gabriel)"	Reading and questions
Allah	"Allah has heard your people's saying"	Reading passage
Al-Bukhari	Hadith reference	Reading passage
Ans Bin Maalik	Companion reference	Reading passage
Haji Usman / Haji Sahib	Religious-social title	Story lesson
Masjid	"outside the masjid"	Story setting
Hazrat Umar / Caliph / Faruq	"the second Caliph of Islam"	Unit title and reading passage
Quraish	Tribal-religious reference	Reading passage
Khilafat	"during his Khilafat"	Reading passage
Allah Almighty	Equality and justice reference	Reading passage
Namaz	"while Hazrat Umar was offering namaz"	Reading passage
Eid	"I have not seen him since Eid"	Grammar/example sentence
Salam	"Say salam to all at home"	Lexical example

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Findings from Textbook 8

The analysis of Textbook 8 suggests that religious vocabulary is used less for ritual explanation alone and more for the construction of moral-social values. In *Tolerance of the Rasoolullah*, religious lexis is associated with forgiveness, patience, mercy, and compassion. In *Hazrat Umar (R.A.)*, it is linked with justice, administration, equality, and welfare. This means that the role of religion in T8 is not confined to devotional or ceremonial language; it also structures ideas about ethical leadership and social conduct. Thus, English in T8 becomes a medium for presenting religiously grounded civic and moral ideals.

A further finding is that religious lexical items in T8 are diffused across multiple genres and textbook spaces. They appear in lesson titles, narrative prose, comprehension questions, story settings, poetic prefaces, and even grammar/example sentences. This wider diffusion makes the religious layer of T8 more texturally embedded. Unlike a textbook that isolates religious vocabulary in one single religious chapter, T8 allows such vocabulary to recur in narratives of everyday life, community conflict, justice, and learning activities. This suggests a broader form of localisation, in which English is made meaningful through moral and communal life as much as through explicit religious teaching.

Cross-Textbook Analysis

Distribution of Religious Lexical Varieties Across Textbook Parts

A cross-textbook comparison of Textbooks 6–8 shows that religious lexical varieties are consistently localised in several recurrent textbook zones.

Table 4.4

Cross-textbook localisation of religious lexical varieties in Textbooks 6–8

Textbook part	Type of localisation
Unit titles	Religious themes are foregrounded from the start
Reading passages	Highest concentration of religious lexical items
Dialogues / oral communication	Greetings, leave-taking, and interpersonal religious expressions
While-reading / comprehension questions	Reinforcement of religious vocabulary through cognitive tasks
Exercises / grammar examples	Religious items normalised through language practice
Writing tasks / activities	Religious lexis extended into learner production

The table shows that religious lexical localisation is systematic rather than incidental. The strongest concentration occurs in reading passages, but the repeated movement of these items into dialogues, questions, grammar examples, and writing activities demonstrates that religious vocabulary is integrated into the full pedagogic cycle of textbook English. This means that learners do not encounter such vocabulary only as passive reading input. They are also encouraged to repeat it, discuss it, answer through it, and write around it.

Progression Across Grades 6–8

Another clear finding is that the role of religious lexical varieties develops across the three grades. In Textbook 6, religious vocabulary is mainly related to introductory prophetic biography and festival explanation. In Textbook 7, the religious lexical field becomes more doctrinally organised and conceptually dense, especially in sermon and sacrifice-related discourse. In Textbook 8, the lexical layer expands further into ethical behaviour, leadership, justice, and social relations. This suggests a progression from simpler religious-cultural representation to a more ideologically and socially layered use of English.

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This developmental pattern is important because it indicates that religious localisation is not static across school levels. As learners progress through the grades, the religious lexical content becomes broader in conceptual scope and more deeply connected with wider ideas of morality, governance, and community life. Therefore, the localisation of English through religion intensifies both in density and in function across the three textbooks.

The overall findings of this chapter show that religious lexical varieties are a significant and recurring feature of SNC-based English textbooks for Grades 6–8. These lexical items are not occasional insertions into an otherwise neutral English-language environment. Rather, they are systematically embedded across major and minor textbook spaces, including lesson titles, reading passages, dialogues, exercises, questions, and writing tasks. This repeated distribution demonstrates that religion is one of the principal means through which English is localised in these textbooks.

The findings further indicate that English in these textbooks is represented as a language already adapted to the Pakistani Muslim educational context. Through lexical items related to prophecy, prayer, ritual, faith, justice, moral behaviour, and communal life, the textbooks construct a form of English that is culturally and religiously grounded. Consequently, the analysis supports the argument that religious lexical varieties in Textbooks 6–8 play a central role in shaping the localised character of textbook English in Pakistan.

Discussion

The findings of this study show that religious lexical items function as a major resource for the localisation of English in SNC-based textbooks for Grades 6–8. Across the three textbooks, religion is not represented through occasional lexical insertions only; rather, it is systematically embedded in unit titles, reading passages, dialogues, comprehension questions, exercises, and writing tasks. In Textbook 6, religious lexical items are strongly connected with prophetic biography and festival discourse, especially in units such as *Seerat-un-Nabi* and *Eid-ul-Fitr*. In Textbook 7, this lexical layer becomes denser and more conceptually organised through sermon-based and ritual-religious discourse. In Textbook 8, religious vocabulary expands further into ethics, justice, leadership, and social conduct. This pattern suggests that the textbooks do not present English as culturally neutral. Instead, they frame it as a language already adapted to a Pakistani Muslim educational environment.

These findings support Mahboob's (2009) argument that English in Pakistan can embody Islamic values and South Asian Muslim sensitivities rather than functioning only as an imported colonial code. The present analysis extends that argument by showing how such localisation is realised specifically through religious lexical items in school textbooks. The repeated presence of items such as *Hazrat, Rasoolullah, Allah, Ramadan, Zakat, namaz, masjid, Hajj, Eid, Chand Raat* and *Eidi* suggests that English is being used to carry locally meaningful religious concepts rather than merely to translate global textbook content. In this way, the textbooks align with the broader World Englishes view that English becomes locally shaped through the histories, identities, and values of its users (Kachru, 1985; Mahboob, 2009; Schneider, 2007).

The study also confirms that localisation is not limited to lesson themes but extends into classroom interaction. Religious greetings and formulaic expressions such as *Assalaamu Alaikum, Wa Alaikum Assalam, Allah Hafiz,* and *Insha Allah*appear in oral communication sections and dialogues, which means that localisation occurs not only at the level of content but also at the level of spoken textbook English. This is significant because it shows that learners are not simply reading about religion in English; they are also presented with English as a medium for locally familiar ways of greeting, responding, and interacting. Thus, the textbooks localise English both referentially and interactionally.

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In relation to previous textbook research, the findings resonate with studies showing that English language materials often reflect selective ideological and varietal preferences. Tajeddin and Pakzadian (2020) found that global ELT textbooks tend to privilege particular circles and cultures of English, while Lindqvist and Soler (2024) similarly observed that textbook representation remains selective even when policy acknowledges English diversity. The present study differs in an important way: instead of focusing on accent or broad variety representation, it shows that in the Pakistani context, localisation is strongly achieved through religious lexical choices. In this respect, the findings also extend Batool et al. (2023), who identified mixed varietal representation in Pakistani school textbooks, by demonstrating that one particularly strong route of localisation in middle-school textbooks is religious lexis.

Overall, the discussion suggests that religious lexical items are not peripheral to textbook English in Grades 6–8. They are central to how English is culturally situated, morally framed, and pedagogically normalised for learners. Therefore, this study reinforces the view that textbook English in Pakistan should be understood not simply as school English, but as a localised form of English shaped by Pakistani Muslim sociocultural realities.

Conclusion

This study concludes that religious lexical items play a central role in localising English in SNC-based English textbooks for Grades 6–8 in Pakistan. The analysis shows that these items are not included as occasional cultural references; rather, they are systematically embedded across unit titles, reading passages, dialogues, comprehension questions, exercises, and writing tasks. As a result, English in these textbooks is presented not as a culturally neutral or purely external language, but as one shaped by the religious and sociocultural realities of the Pakistani Muslim context. This indicates that textbook English at the middle-school level is deeply connected with local values, beliefs, and identity.

The study also finds that the role of religious lexical items becomes broader across the three grades. In Textbook 6, they are mainly linked with prophetic biography and festival discourse. In Textbook 7, they appear in a more organised and doctrinal way through sermon, sacrifice, and ritual themes. In Textbook 8, they are extended into wider ethical and social domains such as tolerance, justice, leadership, and community life. Therefore, the study shows that religious vocabulary is one of the main ways through which English is localised in these textbooks. It ultimately suggests that English language teaching materials in Pakistan should be understood as culturally situated texts that reflect local religious identity as well as language instruction.

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