

RELIGIOUS IDENTITY IN TV SERIES *RAMY* SEASON ONE

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Degree in English Department



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Atas perhatiannya, kami mengucapkan terima kasih.

Wassalamu'alaikum Wr. Wb

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A FINAL PROJECT STATEMENT

I certify that this graduate paper is definitely my own work. I am completely responsible for the content of this graduating paper. Other researcher's opinion or finding included in this research is quoted or cited in accordance with ethical standards.

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MOTTO

No, you're not perfect but you're not your mistakes

-Kanye West



DEDICATION

I dedicate this graduating paper to:

My family,

And myself



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Assalamualaikum Wr. Wb.

All glory be to Allah SWT, who has blessed me with possibilities and benefits so that I may finish my graduation paper “The Construction of Religious Identity in Ramy TV Series Season One” on time. Then, may peace and salutations are sent to our Prophet Muhammad; peace be upon Him, who has guided us out of the darkness.

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I hope this graduating paper can be helpful for the readers.

Wassalamu'alaikum Wr. Wb.

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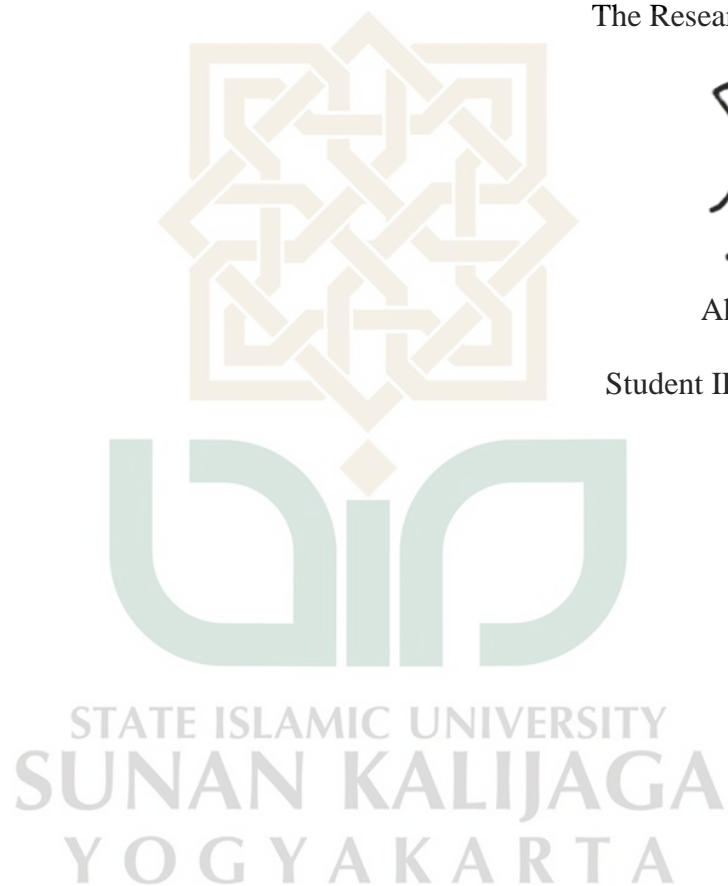


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ABSTRACT

People are constantly developing their identities throughout their lives. This research uses a TV series, *Ramy*, season one, consisting of 10 episodes, as the object of analysis. The main character, Ramy, constructs his religious identity through language, shown in his conversation with his speech partner. This research explains how Ramy builds his religious identity with language and identity theory by Joanna Thornborrow and also explains the use of English as a reference to religious terminology that represents Ramy as Muslim with George Yule's reference theory. This research also analyzes the influential factors that make Ramy use English instead of religious terminology with the ethnography of communication theory by Dell Hymes. This research uses the qualitative and identity methods to analyze the data, and Joanna Thornborrow's language and identity theory is the leading theory. Ramy's religious identity is constructed through personal identity, group identity, and linguistic variation. In constructing personal identity, names and naming practices and a system of address show Ramy as a Muslim. The construction of group identity consists of the identity and representation and in-groups and out-groups. The identity and representation will be explained with reference theory by George Yule and ethnography of communication theory by Dell Hymes. In in-groups and out-groups, analyzes code-switching and the behaviors of Ramy that show he is a Muslim. There is an explanation about style-shifting that constructs Ramy's religious identity through code-switching for the linguistic variation.

Keywords: *language, identity, religious identity, Ramy TV series*

RELIGIOUS IDENTITY IN TV SERIES *RAMY* SEASON ONE

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ABSTRAK

Orang akan terus mengembangkan identitas mereka sepanjang hidup mereka. Penelitian ini menggunakan serial TV *Ramy* musim satu yang terdiri dari 10 episode sebagai objek penelitian. Tokoh utama yaitu *Ramy* mengkonstruksi identitas keagamaannya melalui penggunaan bahasa yang ditunjukkan dalam percakapannya dengan mitra tutur. Penelitian ini menjelaskan bagaimana *Ramy* mengkonstruksi identitas keagamaannya dengan teori bahasa dan identitas oleh Joanna Thornborrow, serta menjelaskan penggunaan bahasa Inggris sebagai referensi terminologi keagamaan yang merepresentasikan *Ramy* sebagai Muslim dengan teori referensi George Yule. Penelitian ini juga menganalisis faktor-faktor yang mempengaruhi *Ramy* menggunakan bahasa Inggris daripada terminologi keagamaan dengan teori etnografi komunikasi Dell Hymes. Metode kualitatif dan metode identitas digunakan dalam penelitian ini untuk menganalisis data, dan teori bahasa dan identitas Joanna Thornborrow sebagai teori utamanya. Konstruksi identitas keagamaan *Ramy* ditunjukkan melalui identitas personal, identitas kelompok, dan variasi kebahasaan. Dalam konstruksi identitas personal, nama dan praktik penamaan serta sistem sapaan menunjukkan *Ramy* sebagai seorang Muslim. Konstruksi identitas kelompok terdiri dari identitas dan representasi serta kelompok dalam dan kelompok luar. Untuk identitas dan representasi akan dijelaskan dengan teori referensi oleh George Yule dan teori etnografi komunikasi oleh Dell Hymes. Dalam kelompok dalam dan kelompok luar akan menganalisis alih kode dan perilaku *Ramy* yang menunjukkan bahwa dia adalah seorang Muslim. Untuk variasi kebahasaan, terdapat penjelasan tentang perubahan gaya yang mengkonstruksi identitas keagamaan *Ramy* melalui alih kode.

Kata Kunci: *bahasa, identitas, identitas keagamaan, Ramy serial TV*

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background of Study

In everyday life, people often encounter a group of people talking about something toward each other. It can be understood if they use language as a medium to communicate with each other in that case. According to Kridalaksana (as cited in Chaer, 2014, p. 32), language is a system of arbitrary sound symbols used by members of social groups to work, communicate, and identify themselves. According to Chaer (2014, p. 45), what is meant by the term arbitrary is the absence of a mandatory relationship between the language symbol, which is in the form of the sound and the concept or meaning referred to by the symbol. Then every sound that appears is agreed upon by the community and becomes the daily language.

Language both directly and indirectly affects society's life, especially in constructing their identity. People cannot put aside the fact that language and identity have a connection and complete each other because both are parts that construct their life. The way people talk, dress, and act is part of constructing their identity. Speakers may borrow features from other languages or linguistic variations to reflect parts of their identity, and speakers create language patterns to resemble or differentiate themselves from specific social groupings, according to Le Page and Tabouret-Keller (as cited in Swann et al., 2004, p. 4). Because language is so essential in building individual and social identities, it may also be a potent tool for social control, according to Thornborrow (as cited in Thomas et al., 2004, p. 158).

Thornborrow (as cited in Thomas et al., 2004, p. 158) states that identity is something people constantly develop and negotiate throughout their lives due to their relationships with others, whether on an individual, societal, or institutional level. In a society, believe it or not, people often make some interactions with each other in everyday life. Even though it is just small talk, it would affect some part of their life. Thornborrow (as cited in Thomas et al., 2004, p. 158) states that many elements of identity influence how people modify their roles in society. One aspect of social identity is religious identity. Jumana explains that religious identity is a social code that distinguishes one religious group from other religious groups, and an individual uses religious language to express their religious identity (2019, p. 1). Islam is one of the religions in the world that has its own religious identity. Islam has been talked about in different areas of life and the media, such as print media, television, movies, and many more.

TV series are one form of media that contains Islamic life. According to topmeaning.com (n.d.), TV series is a series of episodes of a television show in regular intervals with a considerable pause between each group, generally one year between the beginning of each. Since technology nowadays has become more sophisticated, people can watch TV series through streaming services on the internet, such as Hulu. *Ramy* (2019) is one of the TV series streaming on Hulu. *Ramy* (2019) is a comedy-drama streaming television series that premiered on April 19, 2019, on Hulu.

Ramy (2019) is a TV series about an American-Egypt guy based in New Jersey who struggles in life, especially his religious life. He makes an effort to live

a decent Muslim life, but many obstacles are to pass (Dabis et al., 2019). Season one, which consists of 10 episodes, talks about Ramy's journey to be a good Muslim but does not go well since Ramy's environment is not that supportive, and that is why it always ends up bad. The exciting part of this series is that Ramy uses English to reference religious terminology when he tries to tell some terms in Muslim to others. It represents him as part of a Muslim. As a Muslim in the United States, Ramy has to live as a minority and preserve his identity. So, he uses English instead of religious terminology when he has a conversation about religious things with others, leading to the construction of his religious identity.

The researcher finds that the main character in this TV series, Ramy, uses English to communicate with others, especially when he talks about religious things. It leads to the construction of his religious identity. Here is an example of how Ramy uses English as the reference for religious terminology when he has a conversation about religious things with others.



Fig 1. 1 Shawn approaches Ramy

Shawn: Listen, man, what-what is this you guys are doin'? Is that that, um... that prayer shit that you do?

Ramy: Yeah, you know, it's Ramadan, so...

Shawn: Ramadan.

Ramy: ... we were just eating before the sun rises, and prayin'.

(E5. 00:08:05-00:08:16)

From the conversation above, Ramy tries to explain *suhoor* and *salat fajr* by using the English phrases “eating before the sun rises” and “praying.” *Suhoor* is an Islamic term that refers to the meal eaten early in the morning by Muslims before fasting or *sawm*, and *salat fajr* or *fajr* prayer is one of the five obligatory *salat* in Islam. So, it can be seen that the use of English by Ramy refers to the Islamic activity of having a meal before fasting named *suhoor* and also Islamic daily prayers named *salat*. It leads to constructing his religious identity since the use of English above represents him as part of Islam.

The researcher chooses Ramy (2019) as the object because this has not been analyzed in the linguistic study. Ramy TV series season one is relatively new since it was released in 2019. This TV series is also interesting because the main character does not use religious terminology when he has a conversation about religious things with others, leading to the construction of his religious identity since it represents him as part of Islam. The researcher employs Thornborrow's identity theory as the leading theory to explain the construction of religious identity and combines it with Yule's reference theory to demonstrate the use of English as a reference for religious language. The last one is Dell Hymes' ethnography of communication as a supporting theory to explain the influential factors that make Ramy the main character, using English instead of religious terminology when he has a conversation about religious things with others.

1.2 Research Question

1. What types of construction constructs Ramy's religious identity?
2. How does language construct Ramy's religious identity?
3. Why does Ramy use English instead of religious terminology?

1.3 Objective of Study

Based on the research questions, here are three objectives of the study. The first is to show what types of construction construct Ramy's religious identity. The second is to discover how language constructs Ramy's religious identity. The last one describes the factors why Ramy uses English instead of religious terminology when he has a conversation about religious things with others.

1.4 Scope of Study

The goal of this research is to discover what types of construction construct Ramy's religious identity and how language constructs the Ramy's religious identity by identifying his and his speech partner's utterances, also describing the factors that influence the Ramy to use English instead of religious terminology when he has a conversation about religious things with others.

1.5 Significance of Study

Theoretically and practically, This study will most likely be helpful. Theoretically, this study aims to provide information about the types of construction that constructs Ramy's religious identity and how language constructs the Ramy's religious identity, and also describe the factors that influence the Ramy to use

English instead of religious terminology when he has a conversation about religious things with others. In terms of application, this study will likely help people interested in learning more about identity construction, especially religious identity construction through language.

1.6 Literature Review

Several prior studies address some similarities to this one. The researcher compares and contrasts the findings of such studies with this study. The variations discovered by the researcher indicate that this study has never been researched.

The first research is “The Use of Language in Constructing Religious Identity Found in Abu Dhabi Romance Webtoon” by Lia Jumana (2019). This research discusses the use of language in constructing the religious identity of the characters in the Abu Dhabi Romance webtoon that tries to reveal their identity as Muslims using Thornborrow's linguistic identity theory. This research concentrates on explaining language usage to establish the Arab Muslim characters' religious identity.

The second research is “Religious Expression of The Main Character in No Sex in the City Novel by Randa Abdel-Fattah” by Sita Dian Pratiwi (2021). This study looks at how language is used to establish the religious identity of the main character in the novel No Sex in the City. Esma, the main character, does not utilize any religious terminology to express her identity as a Muslim. The researcher uses Thornborrow identity theory and George Yule's reference theory to reveal Esma's religious identity. This research explains how language constructs the main character's religious identity, and Esma's religious identity is constructed in English.

Both of the researches above have similarities and differences to this research. This research is different from those researches since the researcher discusses how language constructs the main character's religious identity and also the factors why the main character uses English instead of religious terminology when he has a conversation about religious things with others. Also, this research uses TV series *Ramy* season one that has not been studied before by incorporating Thornborrow's language and identity theory, George Yule's reference theory, and the ethnography of communication theory by Dell Hymes.

1.7 Theoretical Approach

The researcher analyses *Ramy's* language that constructs his Muslim identity using Joanna Thornborrow's identity theory, George Yule's reference theory, and Dell Hymes' ethnography of communication theory. The first theory is the language and identity theory by Thornborrow. This theory explains how important is language in constructing individual or social identity. However, linguistic identity is more than only choosing one dialect or code over another or one accent over another. Moreover, it is also about how people utilize language with others or communicate and engage with each other through speech, according to Thornborrow (as cited in Thomas et al., 2004, p. 159).

Thornborrow states that three things influence the construction of identity. Those are personal identities, which contain name and naming practices and system of address, group identities consist of identity and representation and in-group and out-group, and the last is linguistic variations that have stylistic variation and language choice and power and linguistic imperialism.

In personal identities, Thorborrow states that one of the most apparent linguistic means of establishing people's identity is giving and using names (as cited in Thomas et al., 2004, p. 160). Name and naming is not the only way to establish people's identity. The way how people address names can also establish people's identity. Group identities tell how people can construct their social identity by categorizing themselves or being categorized by others as belonging to a social group through particular types of representation (as cited in Thomas et al., 2004, p. 164). Thornborrow on in-group and out-group tells that social identity is not something people can always determine independently. It is also linked to how other people perceive them (as cited in Thomas et al., 2004, p. 165). Last but not least, in linguistic variation, Thornborrow tells how people may switch between different speaking patterns, modifying the elements of their accent and dialect, which all contribute to the creation of a specific social identity at different times and in a different context (as cited in 2004, p. 168).

Reference theory by George Yule is the second theory, especially the names and referents. This theory demonstrates that Ramy's religious identity is represented by his language, which is English. The researcher employs this theory to determine the main character's religious identity representation, including in the construction of group identities.

The factors why the main character, Ramy, uses English when he has a conversation about religious things with others are also explained in this study. So, the researcher uses Dell Hymes' ethnography of communication theory as the last theory. Hymes (as cited in Wardhaugh, 2006, pp. 247–248) states that Hymes'

theory has eight different features. The situation, participant, end, act, key, instrumentality, norm, and genre. Each one demonstrates the reasons why people use language. Taking advantage of these three theories, The researcher wants to elaborate on the main character and his speech partner's utterances that can construct his religious identity. Also, the factors why Ramy uses English when he has a conversation about religious things with others lead to the construction of his religious identity.

1.8 Methods of Research

1.8.1 Type of Research

A qualitative method is used in this study since the researcher analyses the utterances of the main character and his speech partner in Ramy (2019) TV series, season one. According to Creswell (2009, p. 4), qualitative research is researching and understanding the significance that individuals or groups attach to a social or human issue.

1.8.2 Data Sources

The researcher employs two data sources in this study. The first as data source is the TV series Ramy (2019), season one directed by Cherien Dabis, Christopher Storer, Ramy Youssef, Harry Bradbeer, Johane Noujaim, and Desiree Akhavan. The secondary data source is the subtitle of the TV series included on Hulu, the streaming portal for Ramy (2019) TV series.

1.8.3 Data Collection Technique

The researcher employs the documentation technique in this study. According to Sugiyono (2013, p. 240) document is a written record of a particular event that happen in the past. The document is divided into text, pictures, and art. Because this research uses TV series as the object, it will be part of arts containing pictures, statues, films, and many more. There are steps to collect the data used by the researcher, such as watching and paying attention to Ramy (2019) repeatedly to understand every context of the movie, especially the utterances from the main character and his speech partner.

1.8.4 Data Analysis Technique

The researcher employs identity method to analyze the data. Zaim (2014, p. 98) states that identity method is a way of determining the identity of a language using instruments from outside the language. It can be said that the instruments are not included in the data or texts that the researcher analyzes. According to the instruments, there are five methods: referential, phonetic, translation, orthography, and pragmatic method. This research focuses on the pragmatic method since the researcher analyzes the utterances between the main character and his speech partner.

There are several steps to analyze Ramy (2019),

1. Identifying the utterances between the main character with his speech partner,

2. Using the classification included in the theory to classify the phrases or utterances that indicate the construction of the main character's religious identity,
3. The researcher describes the construction of the main character's religious identity in detail.

1.9 Paper Organization

There are four chapters in this study. The first section includes the study's background, research question, objective, scope, significance, literature review, theoretical approach, and research methods, including the type of study, data sources, data collection technique, data analysis technique, and paper organization. The researcher's theory is explained in the second part. The study findings and discussions are presented in the third part. The conclusion and suggestion are included in the fourth section.

CHAPTER IV

CONCLUSION AND SUGGESTION

4.1 Conclusion

The researcher analyses the construction of someone's religious identity. The researcher uses Thornborrow's identity theory as the leading theory to establish the main character of Ramy (2019) TV series religious identity and combines it with Yule's reference theory to demonstrate English usage as a reference of religious language that represents his religious identity. Furthermore, Dell Hymes's ethnography of communication theory is the supporting theory to explain the influential factors that make the character use English instead of religious terminology.

From the research in the previous chapter, the researcher found 72 data cases and focused on analyzing the main character, Ramy, in how he constructs his religious identity with personal identity, group identity, and linguistic variation. In this research, from the construction of personal identity, the researcher finds that names and naming practices and the system of address affect Ramy's identity since others know his name as a Muslim name, and how people address Ramy uses the Arabic term such as *Habibi*.

For the construction of group identity, English is used to reference religious terminology that explains the representation. The researcher also finds that the ethnography of communication factors influences the main character using English to reference religious terminology. It is shown that the ethnography of

communication theory by Dell Hymes influences the use of English. Ramy uses English as a reference to religious terminology is influenced by setting, scene, participants of the conversation, the goal of the conversation, the situation in which the conversations occurred, the mood created by the participants, what kind of media the participants use to have conversations, the kind of relationship between the participants, and also the genre of the conversations that the participants had.

For in-group and out-group, there is code-switching that Ramy does while he speaks to a Muslim that also an Arabic native speaker, and the behaviors that show Ramy as part of Muslim are shown with his religious activity such as praying or *salat*, fasting or *sawm*, and the will to avoid forbidden things such as avoid to consume ecstasy and alcohol.

The last, the linguistic variation, Ramy switches his speaking style through code-switching. It also applies linguistic convergence since he adjusts his speech pattern to match the audience who is a native Arabic speaker. It can be understood that the construction of Ramy's religious identity is established by several things, as explained in the previous chapter, and the type of construction that shows most of Ramy's religious identity is the construction of personal identity through the use of a system of address.

4.2 Suggestion

From this research, the researcher finds this research lacks several things. So, some aspects can be researched even more by using the language and identity theory by Joanna Thornborrow. There are linguistic convergence, divergence, and

maintenance in the linguistic variation. This research applies style-shifting through code-switching, which is considered linguistic convergence since the main character changes his speech pattern to fit more closely with the person he has a conversation with, as already explained in the previous chapter.

The researcher suggests that the next researchers that will research more about the construction of identity can explain more about linguistic convergence, divergence, and maintenance. Therefore, the next researcher can show more knowledge to others about the construction of someone's identity through linguistic variation. The next researcher can apply this topic to other objects for further research, such as a novel, short stories, and others.

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