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# **ROLE OF LANGUAGE MIXING IN RELIGIOUS SONGS**

### **Abstract:**

Language mixing refers to "the merging of characteristics of two or more languages in any verbal communication" (Odlin, 1989, p. 6). It may be used as a cover term for the merging of languages in contact situations in general, which takes the forms of transfer, borrowings, code-switching and mixing (Odlin, 1989, pp.7, 140). Mixing languages in conversation is different than mixing languages in songs. In conversation, mixing languages is naturally used. Often speakers may not be aware of the fact that they are using and integrating two languages in their conversations. Whereas mixing languages within the songs' lyrics is conscious, and to some extent words are prearranged and typically composed and modified to serve certain purposes (Davies & Bentahila, 2008). The objective of this paper is to discuss the communicative functions of language mixing in religious songs, more specifically modern Islamic ones; those of Sami Yusuf. Sami Yusuf is a British singer-songwriter from Iranian Azerbaijani descent, recognized by The Independent as the "Voice of Islam". Amongst Sami Yusuf's hits songs this paper considers three particular songs: "Al-Mu'allim" "My Ummah" and "Healing". Findings indicate that mixing between two languages English and Arabic mainly occurred for two reasons. First reason is to address different audience from various linguistic backgrounds. Second reason is to draw the attention of the listeners (Malik, 1994). In the lyrics of these songs English and Modern Standard Arabic (MSA) languages are presented alongside each other. Even though MSA is the formal written language and not the everyday spoken language, yet the language has a strong appeal among Muslims from different backgrounds. While English is as a lingua Franca, MSA is considered the language of the Islam religion as well as the way to understand Quran. Hence, Arab and Muslim people from non-Arabic background have the ability to fully understand the language. Nevertheless, mixing languages draws the listeners' attention and enhance their motivation to scrutinize the message sent

### **Keywords:**

language mixing, communicative functions, religious songs, English, Modern Standard Arabic.