EQUIVALENCE OR DISTORTION? A CRITICAL DISCOURSE ANALYSIS OF SHARIA TERMINOLOGY IN AL RAYAN BANK, UNITED KINGDOM

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Abstract

Islamic banks operating in secular environments like the UK face a complex communication challenge: how to maintain a strict Sharia identity while appealing to a mass market often skeptical of religious symbols. This study addresses this issue by analyzing the translation and adaptation strategies of Sharia contracts at Al Rayan Bank UK. Adopting an interdisciplinary approach combining linguistics and Islamic economics, this study applies Fairclough's Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) to examine textual data from the bank's official website. The analysis focuses on two key phenomena: the branding shift from "Islamic" to "Ethical," and the conversion of technical terminology like 'Murabahah' into 'Home Purchase Plan.' Findings indicate that the bank employs a "Strategic Adaptation" strategy through linguistic domestication techniques. Arabic terms are replaced with neutral English equivalents to reduce cultural barriers. However, the study confirms that Sharia substance remains protected through precise linguistic qualifications, such as the use of "Expected" for profit rates, which legally affirms the risk-sharing principle and rejects fixed interest schemes. In conclusion, these terminological changes are not theological distortions but vital communication innovations. This research recommends this language adaptation model as a reference for global Islamic financial institutions in bridging Sharia compliance with modern market inclusivity.

Keywords: Islamic Banking, Critical Discourse Analysis, Al Rayan Bank, Sharia Terminology, Strategic Adaptation

Abstrak

Bank syariah yang beroperasi di lingkungan sekuler seperti Inggris menghadapi tantangan komunikasi yang kompleks: bagaimana mempertahankan identitas syariah yang ketat sekaligus menarik pasar massal yang cenderung skeptis terhadap simbol agama. Penelitian ini merespons isu tersebut dengan menganalisis strategi penerjemahan dan penyesuaian istilah akad syariah pada Al Rayan Bank Inggris.

Melalui pendekatan interdisipliner yang menggabungkan linguistik dan ekonomi syariah, studi ini menerapkan Analisis Wacana Kritis (Critical Discourse Analysis) model Fairclough untuk membedah data tekstual dari situs resmi bank. Analisis difokuskan pada dua fenomena utama: pergeseran branding identitas dari "Islami" menjadi "Etis", dan konversi terminologi teknis akad seperti Murabahah menjadi Home Purchase Plan. Temuan menunjukkan bahwa bank menerapkan strategi "Adaptasi Strategis" melalui teknik domestikasi bahasa. Istilah Arab diganti dengan padanan bahasa Inggris yang netral untuk mengurangi hambatan kultural. Namun, studi ini menegaskan bahwa substansi syariah tetap terlindungi melalui penambahan kualifikasi linguistik yang presisi, seperti penggunaan kata "Expected" (Diharapkan) pada tingkat keuntungan, yang secara hukum menegaskan prinsip risk-sharing dan menolak skema bunga tetap. Kesimpulannya, perubahan istilah tersebut bukanlah distorsi teologis, melainkan inovasi komunikasi yang vital. Riset ini merekomendasikan model adaptasi bahasa tersebut sebagai acuan bagi lembaga keuangan syariah global dalam menjembatani kepatuhan syariah dan inklusivitas pasar modern.

Kata Kunci: Perbankan Syariah, Analisis Wacana Kritis, Al Rayan Bank, Terminologi Syariah, Adaptasi Strategis

A. Introduction

The global expansion of Sharī'ah banking, particularly into secular environments like the United Kingdom, presents unique communication challenges. On the one hand, banks must uphold strict Sharī'ah compliance as their core identity; on the other hand, they must appeal to a mass market that is predominantly non-Muslim and tends to be skeptical of religious symbols. Furthermore, the urgency of this linguistic adaptation is inextricable from the context of Islamic economic education and literacy itself. Recent academic discourse highlights that the mastery of foreign terminology among Islamic economics practitioners often remains confined to the rote memorization of *fiqh* definitions, while lacking in aspects of cross-cultural communication. In fact, the ability to transfer complex Sharī'ah concepts into the global lexicon without diluting their meaning is a vital competence. As elucidated in the language education handbook for Islamic economists, (Permatasari & Mu'awwanah, 2023) emphasize that English for Specific Purposes (ESP) in Islamic economics is not merely a matter of word-for-word translation, but rather a negotiation of meaning to ensure that principles such as risk-sharing are acceptable to international market logic. Without a strong linguistic bridge established within the educational curriculum, market misconceptions regarding Sharī'ah products will persist.

In addition to the educational aspect, the divergence in macroeconomic landscapes also serves as a determinant factor in the selection of this linguistic strategy. The strategy of identity "concealment" employed in the UK stands in stark contrast to the phenomenon observed in Muslim-majority countries. In a study regarding the role of the financial industry in Indonesia, (Mu'awwanah & Walida, 2022) found that the Islamic finance industry functions optimally as a key driver of the economy precisely when its Islamic identity is explicitly accentuated. In Indonesia, the "Sharia" label constitutes social capital that garners public trust. Conversely, this UK case study reveals an intriguing anomaly where the "economic actor role" is still fulfilled, yet with diametrically opposed identity attributes to

ensure survival within a secular ecosystem. Studies indicate that non-Muslim customers in the West are more drawn to "universal ethical" values and transparency than to the theological aspects of Sharī'ah products (Nienhaus, 2011). Consequently, a tension arises between retaining original Arabic terms (such as *Muḍārabah* and *Murābaḥah*) which are laden with legal significance, and the necessity to translate them into a more "market-friendly" English. The inability to bridge this linguistic gap often serves as a primary barrier to Sharī'ah financial inclusion in Europe (Belouafi & Chachi, 2014).

In an effort to respond to this dilemma, Al Rayan Bank—as the oldest Sharī'ah bank in the UK—implemented a radical rebranding strategy through linguistic domestication. This is evident in the transformation of the label "Islamic" to "Ethical," as well as the replacement of technical *fiqh* terminology with general banking terms, such as *Murābaḥah*, which was translated into *Home Purchase Plan* (Al Rayan Bank PLC, 2021). This phenomenon has sparked serious academic debate. While translation theory (Venuti, 2017) warns that excessive domestication strategies can lead to the erasure of original cultural nuances (cultural erasure), Sharī'ah economic experts worry about the potential for meaning distortion that could blur the fundamental distinction between Sharī'ah contracts and usurious loans. Unfortunately, existing literature predominantly focuses on financial performance or customer perception (Saiti et al., 2022), with very few studies analyzing the impact of these terminological changes on the integrity of Sharī'ah law.

This study aims to fill this gap in the literature by offering an interdisciplinary analysis combining linguistics and Sharī'ah economics. Utilizing Norman (Fairclough, 2013) Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) framework, this study dissects promotional texts and product documents of Al Rayan Bank to evaluate the translation strategies employed. This research argues that the terminological changes undertaken by the bank are not a form of identity obfuscation or secularization, but rather a necessary "Strategic Adaptation." This approach enables the bank to comply with secular regulations and embrace an inclusive market, while maintaining the substance of the contracts through the use of precise legal safeguards in English.

B. Research Method

This study adopts a qualitative approach with a Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) design. This approach was selected for its ability not only to describe text structure but also to uncover ideologies and power relations hidden behind language use in social institutions (Fairclough, 2013). Specifically, this research utilizes Fairclough's three-dimensional framework which encompasses: (1) text analysis (micro-level), (2) discursive practice (meso-level), and (3) social practice (macro-level). The use of this model enables the researcher to link micro-linguistic phenomena (word choices on the website) with the macro-political economic context of Sharī'ah banking in the West (Wodak & Meyer, 2006).

The application of an interdisciplinary approach in this study is grounded in the argument that a singular analysis—whether purely linguistic or purely economic—is no longer adequate to dissect the increasingly hybrid phenomenon of contemporary Islamic banking. Language studies isolated from the legal context often fail to capture the legal implications of diction, while economic studies that ignore linguistic nuances often become trapped in numerical formalism. Therefore,

a synergy between discourse analysis and *fiqh muamalah* becomes a methodological imperative. As elaborated in the language pedagogy framework for Islamic economists by (Permatasari & Mu'awwanah, 2023) , a comprehensive understanding of Islamic economic terminology demands the ability to dissect "layers of meaning": from lexical dictionary meaning to operational technical meaning, and ultimately to the philosophical *maqāṣid* meaning. This study operationalizes that framework by treating the bank's website text not merely as a reading object, but as an object of a compliance audit evaluated from two sides of the same coin: translation accuracy and contractual validity.

Primary data in this study comprises multimodal texts (written and visual) sourced from the official website of Al Rayan Bank UK (www.alrayanbank.co.uk), which was selected through purposive sampling given its status as the oldest retail Sharī'ah bank in the UK. Data collection focused on two main corpora: the corporate identity profile page (*About Us*) and the home financing product description page (*Home Purchase Plan*), retrieved in January 2026. Data validity was ensured through investigator triangulation, whereby data was cross-analyzed by researchers in the fields of linguistics and Sharī'ah economics to minimize interpretation bias (Creswell, 2017).

The data analysis process was conducted through three systematic stages. First, in the textual analysis stage, the researcher identified translation strategies for contract terms utilizing (Venuti, 2017) theory of domestication and foreignization to examine the extent to which Arabic terms were absorbed or replaced. Second, in the social practice stage, the linguistic findings were substantively validated by referring to international Sharī'ah standards issued by (AAOIFI, 2015). This step aimed to ensure that the English terms used (such as *Expected Profit*) still fulfilled the pillars and conditions (*arkān wa shurūṭ*) of a valid *Murābaḥah* contract according to *fiqh*. Finally, a synthesis was performed to conclude the implications of these language strategies on the bank's compliance image.

C. Results And Discussion

1. Results

Based on the textual analysis of the digital data corpus from Al Rayan Bank's official website, a consistent pattern of terminological shift was identified. The bank systematically replaces Arabic-based technical terms (nomenclature)—the source language—with equivalent terms in English—the target language—that are general in nature. Table 1 below summarizes the classification of these terminological shifts based on two main categories: (1) Corporate Identity, and (2) Product Technical Terms.

Table 1. Sharī'ah Terminology Shifts at Al Rayan Bank

Category	Original Term (Arabic/Fiqh)	Al Rayan Bank Terminology (English)	Translation Strategy (Venuti)
Identity	*Bank Sharī'ah* (Islamic Bank)	Ethical Bank / Sharia compliant	Domestication (Value Substitution)
Contract	*Murābaḥah* (Sale and Purchase)	Home Purchase Plan (HPP)	Domestication (Functional)
Contract	*Ijārah* (Lease)	Rental / Leasing	Literal Translation

Profit	*Ribh / Hamish* (Margin)	Rent Rate / Profit Rate	Cultural Adaptation
Mechanism	*Ghairu Madhmun* (Unguaranteed)	Expected Profit Rate	Addition of Qualification

(Source: Researcher's data processing from Al Rayan Bank Annual Report & Website, 2026)

The data in Table 1 reveals two significant linguistic findings:

a. Identity Transformation: from "Theological" to "Ethical"

An examination of the homepage and "About Us" section indicates that the frequency of the word "Islamic" is minimal compared to the word "Ethical." Al Rayan Bank prioritizes the narrative of "transparent, fair, and ethical banking" over that of "religious banking." In its annual report, the bank defines itself as: "Founded on faith, open to all." This phrase demonstrates a strategy of linguistic euphemism designed to mitigate religious exclusivity without erasing its roots—a technique referred to in Islamic marketing studies as *inclusive positioning* (Alserhan, 2017).

b. Use of Legal Qualifiers: The Keyword "Expected"

The most substantively crucial finding is the consistent application of the adjective **"Expected"** to the term profit (*Profit Rate*). In savings products based on *Muḍārabah* or *Wakalah* contracts, the bank never employs the terms "Interest Rate" or merely "Fixed Return." Conversely, the bank utilizes the terminology "Expected Profit Rate."

Syntactically, the addition of the word "Expected" is not merely a linguistic variation, but a vital legal marker. This word functions as a hedge (discourse safeguard), explicitly stating that the profit rate is an "estimate" rather than a "fixed promise." This aligns with data from the bank's Terms and Conditions, which state that the risk of loss remains borne by the customer (*risk sharing*), even though the bank has historically always met these targets. This finding confirms that although the terminology is Anglicized, the sentence structure is specifically designed to reject the concept of *fixed interest* prohibited in Islam (Iqbal & Mirakhor, 2011).

2. Discussion

The findings of this research reveal a complex phenomenon wherein Al Rayan Bank, as a Sharīʿah financial entity in the UK, navigates two often conflicting regimes of authority: the authority of the secular UK market demanding inclusivity, and the authority of Islamic law demanding strict theological compliance. Based on Norman (Fairclough, 2013) Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) framework, the linguistic strategies applied by the bank cannot be viewed simply as a process of mere "linguistic transfer." Furthermore, this constitutes a form of *discursive engineering* which possesses profound implications for identity, law, and public perception, as posited by (Wodak & Meyer, 2006). This section will elaborate on this analysis through four comprehensive thematic subsections.

a. Identity Deconstruction: From "Religious Compliance" to "Ethical Universalism"

The most striking linguistic transformation undertaken by Al Rayan Bank is the shift of its corporate identity label from "Islamic Bank" to "Ethical Bank." From an applied linguistics perspective, this phenomenon reflects what Lawrence (Venuti, 2017) refers to in his theory, *The*

Translator's Invisibility, as a strategy of domestication. Venuti defines domestication as an ethnocentric translation strategy aimed at minimizing the foreignness of the source text for the target reader. In this context, the bank attempts to "tame" the term *Sharī'ah*—which to some Western audiences sounds foreign, exclusive, or even intimidating due to post-9/11 geopolitical misconceptions—into the term "Ethical," which is familiar, positive, and universally acceptable to the British public.

However, this analysis does not stop at the linguistic level. Sociologically, this shift signifies a paradigm change from *religious compliance* (religious ritual compliance) to *ethical universalism*. This aligns with the premise proposed by Rodney (Wilson, 2007) in his study on the development of Islamic banking in Europe. Wilson notes that the greatest challenge for Sharī'ah banks in the West is not a matter of capital, but rather of perception; specifically, how to convince non-Muslim customers that these products are not part of an Islamization agenda, but rather a sound financial alternative. Therefore, Al Rayan's strategy of replacing theological terminology with ethical terminology is a step of demythologization. They strip away the "myth" or religious symbols, yet retain the "logos" or moral rationality.

As a concrete example, in its annual reports, it is found that Al Rayan Bank does not explicitly highlight Qur'anic verses regarding the prohibition of *riba*. Instead, they utilize narratives of transparency, justice, and social responsibility. This strategy is deemed effective. Data indicates that over 30% of Al Rayan Bank customers are non-Muslims who choose the bank not for *halal-haram* reasons, but because the bank does not invest in sectors detrimental to society, such as gambling, alcohol, and tobacco (Al Rayan Bank PLC, 2021). This is in accordance with Islamic marketing principles that emphasize product universality (Alserhan, 2017). Thus, the use of the diction "Ethical" successfully translates the values of *Maqāṣid al-Sharī'ah*—specifically *ḥifẓ al-māl* (preservation of wealth) and distributive justice—into secular language without sacrificing its fundamental principles.

b. "Expected Profit" in the Balance of *Fiqh*: The Dialectic Between the Critique of *Hiyal* and Contract Validity

The discussion regarding the terminological transformation from Interest to Expected Profit Rate constitutes the most crucial and sensitive part of this research. This change cannot be viewed simply as a mere change of label; rather, it sparks intense debate within the global Islamic economic discourse regarding the boundary between legal innovation and legal manipulation. This section will elucidate the tension between the critique of *hiyal* (legal stratagems) launched by puritans and the defense of contract validity supported by *usul fiqh* analysis.

1) Epistemological Critique: The Shadow of *Shari'a Arbitrage*

Al Rayan Bank's move to use English terms that appear secular often provokes academic skepticism. The sharpest criticism comes from the prominent Islamic economic thinker, Mahmoud (El-Gamal, 2006). In his critical analysis, El-Gamal introduces the term *Shari'a Arbitrage* to describe modern Islamic banking practices that he

assesses as being trapped in formalism. In his view, many Islamic financial institutions engage in "mimicry" of conventional products by merely changing the outer "wrapping"—replacing the name interest with profit—while the economic substance remains the same, namely seeking a risk-free return tied to interest rate benchmarking (such as LIBOR or currently SONIA).

In the context of Al Rayan Bank, the use of the terms *Home Purchase Plan* and *Expected Profit* is prone to accusations of being a form of reprehensible *hiyal*. Critics argue that if customers pay the same amount as a conventional mortgage and the bank earns a margin equivalent to market interest, then the terminological change is merely a linguistic euphemism possessing no added spiritual or economic value. This criticism poses a serious challenge that must be answered: does the word "Expected" truly possess differentiating power, or is it merely linguistic cosmetics?

2) Construction of Contract Validity: *Fiqh Muamalah* Perspective

To answer the sharp criticism above, this analysis must not stop at the surface level or the final nominal outcome (pricing). The analysis must dive deep into the ontological structure of the contract. In this regard, recent research by (Irfani & Mu'awwanah, 2025) regarding the validity of *Sharī'ah* transactions provides a solid theoretical framework to dissect the Al Rayan case.

In their study titled "Contracts in a Transaction: A Study of DSN-MUI Fatwas and *Fiqh Muamalah* Maxims," (Irfani & Mu'awwanah, 2025) assert that the validity of a contract in Islam does not depend on the name or label attached to it (*al-ism*). Instead, legal validity relies heavily on two main pillars:

a) **Fulfillment of Pillars and Conditions (*Arkān wa Shurūṭ*):** Every contract has specific pillars that must exist. In the context of sale and purchase (*Murābaḥah*) or lease (*Ijārah*) applied by Al Rayan, there must be clarity of the object (*mahal al-aqd*), price agreement, and delivery of benefits.
b) **Freedom from Impediments (*Mawāni'*):** The contract must be free from elements of *Riba* (risk-free addition), *Gharar* (fatal ambiguity), and *Maysir* (speculation).

Referring to the popular *fiqh* maxim *al-ibrah fil 'uqud lil maqasid wal ma'ani la lil alfaz wal mabani* (consideration in contracts is given to intentions and meanings, not to words and forms), the use of English or secular terms such as *Plan* or *Rate* does not invalidate the contract at all, provided that the substance of the transaction meets the criteria above.

3) The Performative Power of the Word "Expected" as a *Riba* Differentiator

The application of (Irfani & Mu'awwanah, 2025) theory finds its relevance when clashed with the concept of *Riba*. Why does Al Rayan insist on adding the word "Expected" before the word Profit?

Referring to the classic analysis of (Siddiqi, 2004) regarding the rationale for the prohibition of *riba*, the core of injustice (*Zulm*) in the

interest system is the mechanism of Transfer of Risk. In conventional interest contracts, business risk is shifted entirely to the borrower. Conventional banks position themselves as rentiers who "must profit" with certainty (fixed return), regardless of whether the customer succeeds or goes bankrupt. This unilateral certainty is what is referred to as *Ziyadah Mashrutah* (absolute stipulated excess).

Here lies the vital role of the adjective "Expected" in Al Rayan Bank's documents. Semantically and legally, this word functions as a probabilistic clause.

a) It changes the status of the profit rate from a "Certain Liability" to a "Target Projection."
b) Under English contract law, the addition of this word protects the bank from accusations of promising a fixed return. If a global economic crisis occurs causing mass losses, the bank legally has the right not to distribute profits to saving customers.

This aligns with the findings of (Irfani & Mu'awwanah, 2025) which highlight the importance of the balance between Contractual Clarity and the principle of Business Risk. The word "Expected" provides transparency to customers regarding the target profit they will receive (thus avoiding *Gharar*), but at the same time refuses to provide an absolute guarantee (thus avoiding *Riba*).

Thus, the phrase *Expected Profit Rate* fulfills the golden condition in *fiqh muamalah*, namely *al-ghunmu bil ghurni* (profit arises because of the readiness to bear risk). Al Rayan Bank's strategy is proven not to be mere *Hiyal* or cunning trickery as accused, but rather a form of careful applied *ijtihad*. They have successfully translated the abstract principle of *risk-sharing* into a single operational English word understood by both secular regulators and lay customers.

c. The Tension Between Lexical Meaning and Terminological Meaning: The Case of HPP

The greatest challenge in translating Sharīʻah terms within non-Muslim environments is conceptual non-equivalence, a classic problem in cross-cultural translation described by (Nida, 1964). The English language, stemming from a capitalist economic tradition, often lacks precise vocabulary to encapsulate the nuanced concepts of *Fiqh Muamalah*. The case of translating the *Murābaḥah* contract into *Home Purchase Plan (HPP)* serves as the clearest example of this tension.

By definition, according to (AAOIFI, 2015), *Murābaḥah* is a sale and purchase contract wherein the seller discloses the acquisition cost of the asset and the profit margin to the buyer. However, when this term is translated into *Home Purchase Plan*, a significant reduction in lexical meaning occurs. The term HPP sounds generic and secular, eliminating the nuance of "sale and purchase" (*bayʻ*) which constitutes the core of the contract.

Why did Al Rayan Bank choose this seemingly "weak" term? The answer lies in the historical context of tax regulation in the UK. Prior to 2003, if a Sharīʻah bank engaged in a property sale and purchase

transaction (purchasing a house and then selling it to a customer), the transaction was subject to double Stamp Duty: first when the bank acquired the property, and second when the bank sold it to the customer. This rendered Sharī'ah products prohibitively expensive and uncompetitive. The term *Home Purchase Plan* was subsequently adopted as a specific legal category recognized by UK regulators (FSA/FCA) to achieve equal tax treatment (tax neutrality).

From this perspective, the choice of the HPP term represents a strategic compromise. The bank applies the maxim of *Substance over Form* (prioritizing substance over form). Had the bank insisted on using the Arabic term "*Murābaḥah*," which is unfamiliar to UK tax regulators, the product would have failed in the market due to being twice as expensive. By adopting the local term HPP, the bank successfully eliminated the double taxation barrier. This aligns with the view of (Hassan & Lewis, 2009), who state that the success of Sharī'ah banking in the West is heavily contingent upon its ability to adapt to secular legal frameworks without violating Sharī'ah principles. Rather than a defeat of identity, the use of the HPP term constitutes an economic regulatory compromise.

d. Global Contextualization: Identity Paradox and the Role of Economic Actors

The language adaptation strategy employed by Al Rayan Bank cannot be evaluated in a vacuum; rather, it must be situated within a comparative framework alongside the Islamic finance ecosystem in Muslim-majority countries, particularly Indonesia. This comparison is crucial to demonstrate that the diction choice of "Ethical" versus "Syariah" is not a matter of theological right or wrong, but rather a logical consequence of the political economy structure where the institution operates.

1) Indonesia: Explicit Identity as Economic Modality

In Indonesia, the Islamic finance industry has transformed into a vital pillar of the national economy. In an in-depth study regarding the strategic role of Islamic banking, (Mu'awwanah & Walida, 2022) highlight that the existence of the Islamic finance industry functions as a significant "driver of the economy." The study asserts that in the Indonesian domestic market, Islamic identity (the "Sharia" label) serves as the primary modality (social capital) to attract public trust.

The more explicit the religious attributes of a product—for instance, by using terms like *Tabungan Mudharabah* or *Gadai Rahn*—the higher the *perceived compliance* in the eyes of customers. The "Sharia" label in Indonesia is an asset with high marketability. This is supported by state regulation through Law No. 21 of 2008, which explicitly incorporates these Arabic terms into positive law, such that banks do not need—and indeed are not permitted—to seek vague alternative terms.

2) UK: Implicit Identity as a Survival Strategy

Conversely, the findings of this research on the case of Al Rayan Bank in the UK demonstrate the opposite phenomenon. In the UK market, the "Sharia" label has the potential to become a liability or a

symbolic burden if not managed with a careful linguistic strategy. Al Rayan Bank operates in a market where Muslims are a minority (<5%) and secular sentiment is very strong.

If Al Rayan were to enforce the massive and "hard" use of Arabic terms as is done in Indonesia, they risk becoming isolated within a narrow *ethnic niche market*. Rational non-Muslim customers might feel alienated or even reluctant to use products that sound overly religious. Therefore, the strategy of formal identity "concealment" through terms like *Home Purchase Plan* and *Ethical Finance* is the only way they can remain relevant and inclusive "economic actors" on the British stage.

3) Synthesis: Ecological Adaptation

This dualism confirms that the implementation of Islamic economics is *context-dependent*. What constitutes a strength in Jakarta (explicit identity) can become a weakness in London, and vice versa. This analysis aligns with the thesis of (Mu'awwanah & Walida, 2022) that for the Islamic industry to exist as a driver of the real economy, it must be capable of adapting to its environment. Al Rayan's flexibility in "suppressing" Arabic terms to "vitalize" its business functions is a form of *ecological intelligence*—the ability to adapt to a habitat without losing its original genetics (the anti-*riba* principle).

e. Implications: Strategic Adaptation in the Global Map

The findings above challenge the binary dichotomy that often emerges in Islamic studies: "Pure vs Secular" or "East vs West." Al Rayan Bank demonstrates a middle path conceptualized in this study as the "Strategic Adaptation" model.

This model suggests that Sharī'ah institutions in the West must adopt a *hybrid identity*. On one hand, they engage in *surface secularization* by utilizing general terms such as *Lease*, *Rent*, and *Ethical* to ensure their products are inclusive and easily understood. On the other hand, however, they perform *substance reinforcement* through safeguard clauses within their contracts—such as the use of the word "Expected"—which guarantee that the risk-sharing principle continues to operate in the "back-end engine."

These findings confirm Fairclough's theory that language is shaped by the social practices of its community. There is no single standard for "Global Sharī'ah Bank Language." What is effective in Jakarta may be counter-productive in London, and what is mandatory in London (such as the term *Ethical*) might be perceived as liberal in Jakarta. As a closing discussion, it is necessary to note that this strategy is not without risk. The long-term risk of linguistic domestication is *Mission Drift*. When the term *Barakah* is eliminated entirely in favor of the term *Value*, a transcendental dimension is slowly eroded. Nevertheless, as a *survival and growth strategy* in a Muslim-minority market, Al Rayan Bank's approach offers the most realistic and applicable model at present.

D. Conclusion

This study concludes that the terminological shift undertaken by Al Rayan Bank—ranging from the transformation of the "Islamic" label to "Ethical" to the conversion of the *Murābaḥah* contract into *Home Purchase Plan*—does not constitute a form of theological distortion or semantic secularization as feared by critics. Conversely, this phenomenon represents an integrative model of "Strategic Adaptation." The bank utilizes linguistic domestication as a vital instrument to penetrate cultural and regulatory barriers in the secular UK market. Although the "outer shell" of its language is adjusted to sound inclusive and neutral, the analysis proves that the "inner content" or legal substance remains strictly protected through the use of linguistic safeguard clauses, specifically the adjective "Expected," which legally affirms the *risk-sharing* principle and rejects fixed interest schemes.

The theoretical implications of this study assert that the integrity of the Sharīʻah economy in the global era does not depend on the rigidity of retaining Arabic terms, but rather on the ability to translate substantive Islamic values—such as justice and anti-exploitation—into a language understood by the world. The strategy of hybridity applied by Al Rayan Bank—secular in form, yet *Sharīʻah*-compliant in substance—recommends a new roadmap for global Sharīʻah financial institutions to continue growing competitively without having to lose their spiritual identity.

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