

The Integration of Islamic Values in English Language Teaching Context: Practices and Challenges

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Abstract

Studies on the integration of moral, cultural, and religious values in the non-religion subject have been greatly raised in these recent years. This research aims to find out the teachers' strategy and challenges encountered in integrating Islamic values in English language teaching. The descriptive method with a qualitative approach is employed in this research. The subject of this research consists of three English teachers who teach in different grades from seventh to ninth at SMP Pesantren Modern IMMIM Putra Makassar. The data of this research are obtained from the observation sheet and interview guide. The data analysis technique in this research uses three steps, namely identification, classification, and explanation. The result of this research shows that there are four strategies employed by English teachers in integrating Islamic values in ELT. First, the teachers give direct advice to the students. Second, the teachers associate the lesson topic with pertinent Islamic teaching by quoting verses from the Qur'an and/or Hadith. Third, the teachers get the students used to worship through the habituation of religious activities. Fourth, the teachers refer to someone, or themselves to introduce some Islamic values to the students. The teachers also encounter several challenges in integrating Islamic values in ELT. First, the limited availability of English textbooks integrated to Islamic values. Second, the teachers have limited knowledge of how to optimally integrate Islamic values into the teaching and learning process. Third, the teachers have a limited time to provide and prepare the English learning materials associated to Islamic values. Further studies such as research and development of English textbooks that integrated to Islamic values for high school students are expected to be conducted in an attempt to solve the teachers' challenges revealed in this research.

Keywords: Value integration, Value education, Islamic values in ELT.

INTRODUCTION

These recent years, the study on the integration of moral, cultural, and religious values in non-religion subject have been greatly raised. It is shown by a number of studies which have been

conducted to discuss this topic, including the teaching of English as a foreign language context (Rohmah, Hanifiyah, Fitriyah, & Ningsih, 2019). Currently, the issues on character building have gained public attention. It is caused by a big number of cases corporate to character and moral value, such as corruption, theft, sexual abuse, bullying, and violence. These cases make most of the public highlight the character building in education to be emphasized.

However, taking a look at the history, character building has been echoed from the start and has become the goal of national education which listed in the chapter 3 of UU SISDIKNAS 2003. Moreover, in formal school education level, the current curriculum of K-13 has included the integration of character and religious values as been stated in KI (core competency). KI 1 or core competency 1 is about the spiritual competency and KI 2 is social competency (Alfian, Yusuf, & Nafiah, 2022). Both of these competencies seek to develop students' strong character and religious aspect as the outcome of the learning process. This is line to what Socrates stated in 2500 year ago that the fundamental goal of education is to make ones become good and smart (Majid & Andayani, 2011). In other words, besides to make someone be knowledgeable, education also has the goal to have a good behavior and attitude.

In shaping the students' character and religious aspect, it is not merely the responsibility of the teacher who teach religious subject, but also become the responsibility of whole elements at school, including the educators and education staffs. This means that all the teachers also have to be actively participated in building the students' character and religious aspect in the teaching and learning activities. In other words, whatever the subject of study, the aspect of character and religious must be included. Thus, the teachers must be able to incorporate character and religious values in the subject they are teaching.

Religion as one of the aspects of students' background, plays an important role as it could influence the students' behavior (Kilp, 2011). Recently, the study on the relationship between pedagogy and religion is greatly increased. A study by Wong, Kristjansson and Dornyei (2013) demonstrates the result that the teaching and learning process in the classroom may be impacted by the teachers' moral and religious beliefs. Moreover, one crucial element that needs to be considered in the instructional design is the students' ethnoreligious background. (Liyanage, Barlett, & Grimbeek, 2010). In addition, Shahjahan (2010) stated that all religions can be included in the classroom by integrating spirituality into education.

The diversity of Indonesia's cultures, ethnic groupings, and religions is well known and acknowledged. (Widodo & Fardhani, 2011). A number of recognized religions exist in Indonesia, i.e., Islam, Christianity, Buddhism, Hinduism, and Confucianism. Islam is the majority religion in Indonesia since the big number of its adherents. Moreover, Islam has entered in Indonesia around the 7th century. The spread of Islam has at least influenced aspects of Indonesian's people lives. Furthermore, the development of Islam in Indonesia has penetrated the education aspect. This can be seen on the emergence of Islamic based school, such as Pesantren and Madrasah. Over the time, the number of Pesantren in Indonesia has reached 26.975 and Madrasah has reached 82.418 which ranged from kindergarten up to senior high school level.

As one of Indonesia's Islamic-based educational institutions, Pesantren has made a significant contribution to the growth of the country's educational system. The profile of Indonesian Muslims, who are frequently classified as moderate Muslims, has been formed by their education at Pesantren. This is in part due to Pesantren's advocacy for multicultural education. (Alwasilah, 2009). The later development of Pesantren in Indonesia, some of them are becoming responsive

to the modern globalization challenges. Thus, some of Indonesian Pesantrens adopt modern system in management, curriculum, as well as evaluation, which later these Pesantrens are called Modern Pesantren (Umam, 2014).

The teaching of English has not yet been contextualized in Indonesian EFL classrooms. Teachers tend to rely on textbooks provided and less integrating the Islamic and local values (Rohmah, Fitriyah, & Hanifiyah, 2019). Moreover, studies have revealed that the cultural practices and beliefs of Westerners as shown in textbooks and other reliable sources have an impact on pupils' thinking and behavior. (Cahyo, Vitasari, & Sucipto, 2017). Since the culture of western people and Indonesian different each other and sometimes is contradicted to Islamic and local value, the teaching of English subject must consequently combine Islamic and regional values, particularly in Islamic based school such as Pesantren and Madrasah. This is done in an effort to dispel any misconceptions that the pupils may have about the cultural and religious diversity of westerners. Therefore, the academic learning aims of English language instruction and learning are combined with the development of students' personalities and spirituality for future lives.

Regarding the Islamic values integration in ELT, several studies have been conducted to advance the information. Rohmah (2012) conducted a research entitled *Incorporating Islamic Messages in the English Teaching in the Indonesian Context*. A study by Umam (2014) gave information about how to maintain the Islamic values in ELT in Indonesian's Pesantren. Moreover, Sakrani (2018) employed a study entitled "Integrating Islamic values in English classes at MTs Al Islamiyah Bebidas", this study aimed to demonstrate the Islamic values which integrated in the ELT at Madrasah. The current study by Rohmah et al. (2019) revealed the teachers' beliefs and practices in integrating the Islamic values in English lesson at Madrasah Tsanawiyah.

These studies have already given a number of information on the integration of Islamic values in ELT. However, there is still a little information regarding the teachers' practices and challenges of integrating the Islamic values in ELT particularly in Islamic based school at Makassar. Therefore, referring to the issue mentioned above, this study aimed to explore the teachers' strategies and challenges in integrating the Islamic values in ELT at SMP Pesantren Modern IMMIM Putra Makassar.

METHOD

This research employed descriptive method with qualitative approach. According to Gay, Mills, and Airasian (2005), descriptive research is a method of conducting research which tries to determine and describes the way things are. This research aimed to determine the Islamic values which are integrated into the English teaching and learning process; and describe the teachers' practices and challenges in integrating the Islamic values in English teaching and learning process.

The subjects of this research consisted of three English teachers at SMP Pesantren IMMIM Putra Makassar. From the previous observation of the researcher, there are five English teachers teaching in this school from the grade seventh to ninth. However, in this study, the researcher only selected three teachers to participate as a subject of the research who taught in different grade from grade seventh to ninth.

The instruments used by the researcher in this study were observation sheet and interview guide. These instruments were expected to fulfill the information needed in this study. According to Gay & Mills (2016), observation is a way to obtain the data by watching the participants. In observing the participants, the researcher must put emphasis on the natural environment as lived

by the participants without manipulating it. Moreover, interview is a planned conversation where the goal is to learn information from the subject being interviewed. (Gay & Mills, 2016). In this study, the researcher used a structured interview with open-ended questions since they enabled the interviewee to elaborate on the questions and provide a response. Thus, the researcher is able to obtain in-depth information on the teachers' practices and challenges in integrating the Islamic values in ELT at SMP Pesantren IMMIM Putra Makassar.

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSIONS

Teachers' Strategy in Integrating the Islamic Values into the English Language Teaching

The findings of this study reveal the teachers' understanding and strategies related to Islamic values integration in ELT. Referring to the findings, the teachers' answer on the relationship between the English lesson and religion are all the same, it is "Dialog". According to Barbour as cited in Meliani, Natsir, and Haryanti (2021) there are four levels typology of the relationship between science and religion, i.e. conflict, independence, dialogue, and integration. Dialog offers a relationship between science and religion with a more constructive interaction. It is acknowledged that between science and religion there are similarities that can be dialogued, and can even support one another. The dialogue that is carried out in comparing science and religion emphasizes similarities in prediction methods and concepts (Meliani *et al.*, 2021). The teachers all agree upon the dialog relationship as they mentioned that the some of the concepts in English lesson can be associated to religious values, in this term is Islamic values.

Related to the teaching Islamic values to the students, the findings show that all the teachers agree that teaching the Islamic values to the students are not merely the responsibility of the Islamic education teacher. This means all the teachers have the same responsibility in cultivating the Islamic values to the students. Besides, the teacher also convey that it becomes the responsibility of all the teachers to teach the religious values since the Indonesian educational curriculum system has required the teachers to develop the students' spiritual and religious potential. Thus, cultivating the Islamic values into the teaching and learning process becomes one way to reach the goal of education. This result demonstrates the same level of interest as the earlier study Putra *et al.* (2021), and most teachers concur that it is not the sole job of Islamic education teachers to incorporate Islamic values into the teaching and learning process.

Related to the strategies in integrating Islamic values, it is found that there are three different types of Islamic values which are integrated by teachers in the English language teaching process. The Islamic values are, the values of faith, the values of worship, and moral values. Based on the findings, it is found that the teachers tend to employ similar strategies in integrating the Islamic values. For the ease of understanding, the teachers' strategies in integrating Islamic values will be illustrated in the table below.

Table 1. The Teachers' Strategies in Integrating Islamic Values

No.	Islamic Values	Strategies Employed by Teachers
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1.	Values of Faith (<i>Aqidah</i>)	a. Give direct advice
2.	Values of Worship (<i>Ibadah</i>)	a. Give direct advice b. Associate the lesson topic to the pertinent Islamic teaching by quoting verses from the Al-Qur'an and/or Al-Hadith c. Get the students used to worship through the habituation of religious activities
3.	Moral Values (<i>Akhlaq</i>)	a. Give advice to students b. Associate the lesson topic to the pertinent Islamic teaching by quoting verses from the Al-Qur'an and/or Al-Hadith c. Refer to someone, or themselves (teacher) to introduce the values

Based on the table 1 as illustrated above, it is found that there are various strategies employed by English teachers in integrating the Islamic values into the teaching and learning process. In integrating the values of faith (*Aqidah*), the teachers give direct advice to the students. This is one of a common method which used to instill the values since the teacher can convey the message directly to the students. This strategy, which can be used to integrate the values into the teaching and learning process, is also known as the advising method or moralizing.

The advising method (moralizing), according to Atmadi in Zakiyah & Rusdiana (2014), is a form of integrating value education where the teacher directly teaches a number of values that must be the guide of the students' life. In this method, teachers can give speeches, give advice, or give instructions to students to accept only a number of values as a guide to life. As its name suggests, this method is typically used to promote the moral values to the students. Referring to the findings of this study, teacher 1 states that when the topic is relevant and is considerable to be associated to Islamic values, he would give some advice in the classroom. For instance, the topic of the text is about bullying, he would explain the negative impact of bullying from the Islamic perspective.

In integrating the values of worship (*Ibadah*), the teachers employed three different strategies. First, the teachers give direct advice to the students. Second, the teachers associate the lesson topic to the pertinent Islamic teaching by quoting verses from the Al-Qur'an and/or Al-Hadith. Based on the interview with the teacher 1, he mentions that when the topic of the lesson can be associated to Islamic values, he would give advice to the students and strengthen his statement by quoting some related verses of Qur'an. Third, the teachers get the students used to worship through the habituation of religious activities. The worship values observed in the classroom are greeting and praying activities which are always carried out at the beginning and the end of the learning process. Another value of worship is called Qur'an literacy, an activity which is routinely carried out before the learning process is conducted, and this is done to get the students used to reading the Holy Qur'an.

This result is relevant to the previous study by Irawan (2020), revealing that there are four methods can be used to incorporate Islamic values into the English language instruction. First, apply code-mixing or code-switching between English and Islamic expressions depending on the

context. Second, connect the topic under discussion to the pertinent Islamic teaching by quoting verses from the Al-Qur'an and/or Al-Hadith or by elaborating on the pertinent Islamic teaching. Third, substitute the Islamic names for people like Ahmad instead of George, place like Mecca, or events when creating examples for sentences or dialog scripts. Fourth, assign students with writing or research tasks that are related to texts about Islamic principles that are pertinent to the lessons being taught. In addition, the previous study by Alfian *et al.* (2022) also revealed that the integration of Islamic values in English language teaching was done at the particular section of the teaching and learning activities. For instance, greeting and praying activities which are always carried out at the beginning and the end of the learning process.

In integrating the moral values (*Akhlaq*), there are three strategies employed by teachers. First, the teachers give direct advice to the students. Second, the teachers associate the lesson topic to the pertinent Islamic teaching by quoting verses from the Al-Qur'an and/or Al-Hadith. Third, the teachers refer to someone, or even themselves to introduce some values to the students. This strategy is also employed by some of the teachers to integrate the Islamic values. During the observation in a class handled by teacher 2, the researcher discovered that the teacher used this strategy in the classroom. When the teacher asked the students regarding the topics, one student answered it correctly but then he changed the answer because no one had the same answer. Turns out the student did not confident on his answer. The teacher stopped teaching for a moment and gave some advices on the importance of having a good self-confidence from Islamic views. Besides, the teacher also told her old story related to self-confidence and told the story of one of the successful alumni she ever taught in that school. This form of strategy is also known as the modeling method as proposed by Atmadi in Zakiyah & Rusdiana (2014). This method is integrating value education where the teacher tries to convince the students that certain values are indeed good by giving an example of him/herself.

Teachers' Challenges in Integrating the Islamic Values into the English Language Teaching

The findings of this study reveal that the integration of Islamic values in English language teaching has been practiced by the English teachers. The practices have been done as the teachers aware of the need to fulfill the national goal of education which brings the students to become *Insan Kamil*. According to Tafsir as cited in Farabi (2021), *Insan Kamil* refers to human being who is intellectually, spiritually, socially, and emotionally mature. Therefore, in teaching the students, the teachers do not merely teach the subject matter itself, but also other values including the religious values to the students. In addition, Tafsir as cited in Farabi (2021) suggests three main personal qualities of *Insan Kamil*: First, physically healthy and strong including having skills; second, intelligent mind and clever; and third, his heart is full of faith in Allah.

However, in fact, the teachers are not very optimal in integrating Islamic values in the English subject. This is due to the teachers facing some challenges in integrating the Islamic values in English teaching and learning process. The challenges are, first, the limited availability of English textbooks which integrated to Islamic values. In fact, the textbooks play a vital role in teaching and learning process (Umam, 2014). Moreover, Umam (2014) mentions the textbooks often determine the objectives of language learning and often function as a lesson plan and working agenda for teachers and learners.

Second, the teachers have limited knowledge on how to optimally integrate the Islamic values into the teaching and learning process. Based on the findings, one of the teachers admits that she

does not optimally integrate the Islamic values in her English lesson due to limited knowledge on the concept of the integration. This is reasonable since all the teachers have not been participated in any workshops related to Islamic values integration in the teaching and learning process. Thus, the teachers only integrate the Islamic values into their teaching and learning process based on their own understandings. The result of this study is relevant to the previous study by Alfian *et al.* (2022) revealed that teachers lack the information necessary to execute integrated learning, as well as knowledge of Islamic principles, as well as knowledge of integrated learning and self-awareness of integrated learning. Therefore, Umam (2014) mentioned one of the strategy to maintain the Islamic values in English instruction is by preparing the teachers who have multiple qualifications. The teachers who have multiple qualifications refer to teachers who can teach English and provide Islamic lessons be present when English is being taught in a *Pesantren* setting.

Third, the teachers have a limited time to provide and prepare the English learning materials which associated to Islamic values. Since the limited availability of English textbooks which is integrated to Islamic values, the teachers have to be creative in providing the learning materials. The teachers have to provide the learning lesson himself/herself and modify it to integrate the Islamic values. Thus, this work is quite time-consuming because is not supported by the available textbooks. However, in fact, there are a number of studies conducted to enrich the information on English learning sources which is integrated to Islamic values. Such a study by Rohmah (2012) suggests that the Islamic values can be integrated into learning English in three ways: First, by writing and/or using English course-books loaded with Islamic teaching. Second, by using authentic material that contains Islamic messages, and the third, by using available English textbooks and supplementary materials focusing on Islamic teachings, such as ELTIS Islamic Life Resource Pack.

CONCLUSIONS

In integrating the Islamic values into the teaching and learning process, there are four strategies employed by English teachers. First, the teachers give some direct advice to the students. Second, the teachers associate the lesson topic to the pertinent Islamic teaching by quoting verses from the Al-Qur'an and/or Al-Hadith. Third, the teachers get the students used to worship through the habituation of religious activities. Fourth, the teachers refer to someone, or themselves to introduce some Islamic values to the students.

The teachers encounter several challenges in integrating the Islamic values in English teaching and learning process. First, the limited availability of English textbooks which integrated to Islamic values. Second, the teachers have limited knowledge on how to optimally integrate the Islamic values into the teaching and learning process. Third, the teachers have a limited time to provide and prepare the English learning materials which associated to Islamic values.

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