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Embedding Islamic Values in Indonesian English Classroom: A Possibilities for English Teachers

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Abstrak

Artikel ini mengkaji peluang dan tantangan dalam mengintegrasikan nilai-nilai Islam ke dalam kelas bahasa Inggris Indonesia. Di negara dengan mayoritas penduduk Muslim, menggabungkan ajaran Islam ke dalam Pengajaran Bahasa Inggris (ELT) menawarkan siswa kesempatan untuk mengembangkan keterampilan bahasa dan karakter moral mereka. Makalah ini membahas bagaimana nilai-nilai seperti kejujuran, toleransi, dan rasa hormat terhadap keberagaman dapat diintegrasikan ke dalam kurikulum bahasa Inggris, meningkatkan kesadaran budaya siswa dan mendorong pertumbuhan etika. Namun, tantangan seperti sifat sekuler pendidikan bahasa, keragaman latar belakang agama siswa, dan kurangnya sumber daya pengajaran khusus menimbulkan kendala. Untuk mengatasi tantangan ini, artikel ini menyarankan strategi bagi guru, termasuk penggunaan materi autentik (seperti teks-teks Islam), mendorong diskusi kelas tentang nilai-nilai moral, dan mencontohkan etika Islam dalam interaksi guru-siswa. Studi ini menggunakan pendekatan penelitian deskriptif kualitatif, memanfaatkan penelitian perpustakaan dengan meninjau berbagai jurnal dan sumber yang terkait dengan penggabungan nilai-nilai Islam ke dalam pengajaran bahasa Inggris. Akhirnya, dengan menanamkan nilai-nilai Islam, siswa tidak hanya meningkatkan kemahiran bahasa Inggris mereka tetapi juga memperkuat identitas mereka sebagai Muslim dalam masyarakat global.

Kata Kunci: *Nilai-Nilai Islam, Pengajaran Bahasa Inggris (ELT), Pendidikan Indonesia*

Abstract

This article examines the opportunities and challenges of integrating Islamic values into the Indonesian English language classroom. In a country with a predominantly Muslim population, incorporating Islamic teachings into English Language Teaching (ELT) offers students a chance to develop both their language skills and moral character. The paper looks at how values such as honesty, tolerance, and respect for diversity can be integrated into the English curriculum, enhancing students' cultural awareness and promoting ethical growth. However, challenges such as the secular nature of language education, the diversity of students' religious backgrounds, and a lack of specific teaching resources pose obstacles. To address these challenges, the article suggests strategies for teachers, including the use of authentic materials (like Islamic texts), fostering classroom discussions on moral values, and exemplifying Islamic ethics in teacher-student interactions. This study employs a qualitative descriptive research approach, utilizing library research by reviewing various journals and sources related to the incorporation of Islamic values into English language teaching. Finally, by embedding Islamic values, students not only improve their English proficiency but also strengthen their identity as Muslims in a globalized society.

Keywords: Islamic Values, English Language Teaching (ELT), Indonesian Education

INTRODUCTION

Learning a language isn't just about mastering skills like listening, reading, writing, and speaking; it's also about understanding the culture. This shows that language and culture are closely connected (Brown, 2007). Therefore, it's important to highlight cultural values in the language classroom to help students become more aware of their own culture and the cultures of others.

The integration of Islamic values into English language teaching (ELT) in Indonesia is an essential initiative aimed at aligning global education with local cultural and religious principles. English, as a global lingua franca, is pivotal for accessing international knowledge and opportunities. However, embedding Islamic values into ELT creates a framework where students not only learn a new language but also strengthen their spiritual and moral character (Amelia, 2012).

This effort is particularly significant in Indonesia, the world's largest Muslim-majority nation, where Islamic teachings play a central role in societal norms. Teachers in English classrooms are uniquely positioned to balance linguistic goals with the infusion of values such as honesty, respect, and compassion, which are central to Islam. However, practical challenges such as curriculum limitations, teacher training, and resource availability must be addressed to realize this vision (Umam, 2014).

The implementation of this integration has been explored through various methods, such as the design of textbooks with Islamic content, curriculum adaptation, and the use of culturally relevant teaching materials. For instance, educators have developed specialized resources, such as "English for Muslim Learners" and "Islamic Learning in English Academic Purposes," which explicitly embed Islamic themes and values (Irwansyah, 2015). Such resources help students engage with texts that reflect their beliefs while learning key language skills like grammar and vocabulary (Rohmah, 2012).

Despite its potential, the practice is not without challenges. The lack of suitable teaching resources, teacher training, and institutional support often limits the successful integration of Islamic values in ELT. However, these obstacles also present opportunities for innovation. Developing teacher training programs and adapting Western ELT models to align with Islamic educational philosophies, such as the concept of tawhid (oneness of God), can further enhance this practice.

This paper examines the practical strategies and resources available for embedding Islamic values in Indonesian ELT classrooms, focusing on the possibilities for English teachers. By doing so, it offers insights into creating a holistic educational environment that prepares students for both local and global contexts and aims to provide actionable insights for educators seeking to harmonize language instruction with faith-based education. (Sakrani, 2018).

RESEARCH METHOD

To achieve the objectives of this paper, a descriptive analysis framework was employed. This approach was chosen because it allows for a comprehensive examination of the topic through qualitative data, providing a detailed understanding of how Islamic values can be integrated into English as a Foreign Language (EFL) instruction. A library research method was applied, which involved reviewing various scholarly sources, including academic journals, books, conference proceedings, and other relevant literature.

Library research is a well-established method that allows researchers to gather and analyze secondary data from existing resources. According to Zeid (2004), this method is particularly useful in fields like education and language teaching, where extensive research is already available in written form. The researcher systematically selected sources that specifically addressed the integration of Islamic values in the context of English language teaching (ELT) and English as a Foreign Language (EFL). These sources were chosen based

on their relevance to the research questions, credibility, and scholarly contribution to the subject matter.

The sources reviewed were carefully analyzed to identify key themes and findings related to the main topic of embedding Islamic values in the English language classroom. Particular attention was given to studies that examined the practical strategies used by teachers to incorporate Islamic values into language instruction, as well as the challenges and opportunities faced by educators in the Indonesian context. Journals that focused on both language teaching and Islamic education were prioritized to ensure a balanced perspective on the integration of religious values and language development.

Through this method, the study seeks to build a comprehensive framework for teachers who wish to incorporate Islamic values into their English language classrooms, while also highlighting the challenges and potential benefits of such integration in the broader context of Indonesian education.

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

The Significance of Integrating Islamic Values in ELT

Integrating Islamic values into English language teaching is valuable because it connects language learning with personal growth and moral development. Hidayati (2016) explains that in Indonesia, Islamic education is not just about teaching religious subjects, but also about helping students become well-rounded individuals who succeed academically while staying true to their faith and values. By including Islamic values in English lessons, teachers help students grow intellectually and morally.

Rohmah (2012) states that adding Islamic messages to English teaching helps students link their religious beliefs with what they learn in the classroom. This makes learning English more than just an academic task; it becomes a tool for self-improvement and for contributing to the community. When teachers include Islamic values such as honesty, integrity, and kindness in their lessons, they help students grow both in language skills and moral awareness.

Additionally, these values help students develop respect for diversity and improve their ability to communicate across cultures. Ali (2018) stresses the importance of teaching moderate Islamic values to prepare students for the challenges of the modern world. By including these values in language lessons, teachers can encourage students to appreciate different cultures while staying connected to their own religious and cultural traditions.

Challenges in Embedding Islamic Values

While there are many benefits to including Islamic values in English lessons, there are also several challenges that need to be addressed to make this integration effective. One of the main challenges, according to Hasyim and Suhono (2017), is the conflict between the secular nature of language education and the inclusion of religious content. In Indonesia, the national curriculum focuses on developing language skills, and adding religious content could be seen as shifting away from the main goal of teaching English. This raises concerns about whether including Islamic values might interfere with the secular approach to English teaching.

Another challenge is the diversity of students in Indonesian classrooms. While most students are Muslim, there are also students from other religious backgrounds, especially in multicultural urban areas. Teachers need to be careful when including Islamic values to ensure that non-Muslim students do not feel excluded or marginalized. As Suyatno, Pambudi, and Mardati (2019) mention, teachers must be sensitive to the different beliefs and cultures of their students, creating an inclusive classroom environment that respects all students' perspectives while still promoting Islamic values.

A further challenge is the lack of appropriate teaching materials that combine Islamic values with English language learning. Rohmana (2020) points out that most English textbooks in Indonesia focus mainly on language skills and often do not include culturally relevant content, like Islamic values. Because of this, teachers have to find ways to adapt existing materials or create their own resources, which can be time-consuming and may require extra effort and expertise. This can be a challenge for some teachers, especially if they lack the resources or experience to do so effectively.

Strategies for Integrating Islamic Values in English Lessons

To overcome these challenges, several strategies can be employed to effectively integrate Islamic values into the English classroom.

1. Incorporating Islamic Stories and Literature

One approach is to incorporate authentic materials that reflect Islamic culture and values, such as Islamic texts, stories from the Quran, and Islamic literature in English. As Sakrani (2023) suggests, using authentic resources can help students not only improve their language skills but also gain insight into their religious heritage. For example, reading stories of the Prophet Muhammad in English provides an opportunity for students to practice language skills while reflecting on Islamic principles such as kindness, patience,

and justice. Teachers can ask students to analyze the moral lessons in these stories and discuss the values of patience, empathy, charity, and honesty. This strategy allows students to practice their reading, listening, and speaking skills while simultaneously learning about Islamic values. Additionally, English translations of Islamic literature, such as poetry, biographies, or folktales, can be used to promote cultural awareness and ethical reflection.

2. Promoting Ethical Discussions Through Debate and Reflection

Additionally, teachers can create opportunities for students to discuss Islamic values in the context of language learning. This can be done through group discussions, debates, and role-play activities that encourage students to express their views on topics like respect, honesty, and tolerance. These activities not only provide language practice but also promote critical thinking and ethical reflection. As Hidayati (2016) notes, engaging students in discussions about their values in relation to the English language helps them develop a deeper understanding of how language and culture intersect. For instance, teachers can initiate a debate on the topic, "What does it mean to be fair in a society?" or "How can we show kindness to others, even in difficult situations?" These types of discussions promote critical thinking, language skills, and moral reasoning. Students can express their views using English, while simultaneously reflecting on Islamic values such as fairness, kindness (rahmah), and justice (adl). This also helps students understand how Islamic values can be applied to real-world situations and global issues.

3. Role-Playing Activities to Demonstrate Islamic Ethics

Role-playing is another interactive strategy that helps students practice English while applying Islamic values. Teachers can design role-playing scenarios where students take on different roles that require them to demonstrate specific Islamic values. For example, students can act out situations that require them to practice patience (sabr), respect (ihsan), or cooperation (ta'awun).

A role-play scenario could involve a situation where one student helps another who is struggling with their studies, or where students practice resolving a conflict based on Islamic principles of forgiveness and mutual respect. These activities help students not only improve their speaking and listening skills but also reinforce Islamic values in a practical, hands-on way. Teachers can give feedback on both language use and how well students embody the Islamic principles in their actions.

4. Using Islamic Vocabulary and Expressions in Context

Language learning is not only about grammar and syntax; it also involves understanding the cultural and moral dimensions of the language. Introducing Islamic vocabulary in context is a great way to integrate Islamic values into English lessons. Teachers can introduce Islamic terms and phrases related to ethics and values, such as "sadaqah" (charity), "salams" (peace), "hikmah" (wisdom), "akhlaq" (character), and "tawakkul" (trust in God).

These terms can be explained in the context of their meanings and how they reflect key Islamic teachings. Teachers can create language exercises where students use these terms in sentences, role-plays, or discussions. By using these terms in daily language practice, students become more familiar with Islamic values and learn how to express them in English.

5. Creating a Classroom Environment that Reflects Islamic Values

Teachers can also promote Islamic values through classroom management and interaction. As Hasyim and Suhono (2017) suggest, teachers can model behaviors such as patience, respect, and empathy during class, creating a positive learning environment that reflects Islamic teachings. This can be done by encouraging students to collaborate, helping each other, and showing respect for differing opinions. Additionally, teachers can display Islamic quotes or verses from the Qur'an in the classroom, particularly those that highlight values like kindness, justice, and humility. For example, a verse such as "And speak to people in a good manner" (Quran 2:83) can be displayed to remind students of the importance of respectful communication, both in their language and in their actions. By fostering an environment where Islamic values are embodied in teacher-student interactions, teachers can reinforce the importance of these values in everyday communication.

Impact on Students' Moral and Academic Development

Integrating Islamic values into the English language classroom has a strong positive effect on both students' moral and academic growth. Ali (2018) points out that students who are taught with a focus on Islamic values not only improve their academic skills but also develop a strong sense of ethics. Values like honesty, respect, and responsibility help students communicate better, work well with others, and handle social situations with understanding and kindness. These qualities are important for success in both school and life.

Moreover, including Islamic values helps students feel more connected to their learning and their identity. Sakrani (2023) explains that when students see their cultural and religious values reflected in their education, they feel more involved in the learning process. This connection can increase their motivation and pride, not only in their language learning but also in their cultural background. By adding Islamic values, teachers help students take pride in their identity as Muslim learners, while also encouraging an appreciation for other cultures and perspectives.

In addition, integrating Islamic values helps promote social harmony and understanding in classrooms with students from different backgrounds. Suyatno et al. (2019) argue that teaching values like moderation and respect for diversity helps students form good relationships with their peers. This is especially important in diverse classrooms, where students from various backgrounds work together. By learning to respect different opinions while staying true to their own values, students gain the skills they need to engage with others thoughtfully and respectfully.

The Role of Teachers in Promoting Religious Moderation

A key part of integrating Islamic values is promoting religious moderation, which is a core principle in Indonesian Islamic education. Ali (2018) highlights the importance of teaching moderate Islamic values, which focus on tolerance, balance, and respect for diversity. In today's globalized world, where understanding and communicating with people from different cultures is essential, English teachers have a unique opportunity to teach these values. By creating a classroom environment based on respect and open dialogue, teachers can help students manage the challenges of modern life while staying true to their Islamic beliefs.

To encourage religious moderation, teachers can guide students to think about global issues, such as human rights, climate change, and peace, from an Islamic perspective. This helps students understand how their religious values can be applied to current global problems. As Munandar (2024) points out, combining Islamic values with global issues helps students feel responsible and empowered, preparing them to make positive contributions to society.

CONCLUSION

The embedding of Islamic values in the Indonesian English classroom offers significant possibilities for enhancing both language proficiency and moral

development. While challenges such as curriculum constraints and diversity in the classroom exist, teachers can employ various strategies to successfully integrate these values into their lessons. By using authentic materials, promoting discussion, and modeling values in classroom interactions, teachers can foster an environment where both academic and ethical growth are prioritized. Ultimately, this integration helps students not only become proficient in English but also develop a strong moral foundation that prepares them to engage thoughtfully and respectfully in the global community.

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