



INNOVATIVE: Journal Of Social Science Research

Volume 5 Nomor 4 Tahun 2025 Page 913-926

E-ISSN 2807-4238 and P-ISSN 2807-4246

Website: <https://j-innovative.org/index.php/Innovative>

## Principles of EFL Instruction with an Islamic Perspectives

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### Abstrak

Penelitian ini membahas prinsip-prinsip pengajaran Bahasa Inggris sebagai Bahasa Asing (EFL) yang diselaraskan dengan perspektif Islam. Dalam konteks pendidikan Islam, pengajaran EFL tidak hanya bertujuan untuk meningkatkan kompetensi linguistik, tetapi juga membentuk karakter peserta didik sesuai dengan nilai-nilai keislaman. Artikel ini mengeksplorasi integrasi antara prinsip pedagogis EFL — seperti meaningful learning, communicative competence, dan learner-centeredness — dengan nilai-nilai Islam seperti kejujuran (ṣidq), tanggung jawab (amānah), kerja keras (ijtihād), dan adab (etika). Melalui pendekatan ini, pembelajaran EFL dapat menjadi sarana untuk menanamkan akhlak mulia, memperkuat identitas keislaman, serta membuka jendela pemahaman antarbudaya secara kritis dan selektif. Hasil kajian ini menunjukkan bahwa prinsip pengajaran EFL dapat dikontekstualisasikan secara harmonis dalam kerangka pendidikan Islam yang holistik dan transformatif.

Kata Kunci: *EFL, Prinsip Pengajaran, Perspektif Islam, Pendidikan Karakter, Integrasi Nilai*

## Abstract

This study examines the principles of English as a Foreign Language (EFL) instruction through the lens of Islamic perspectives. In Islamic educational contexts, EFL teaching goes beyond linguistic proficiency to also promote moral and spiritual development aligned with Islamic values. This article explores how core EFL pedagogical principles—such as meaningful learning, communicative competence, and learner-centeredness—can be integrated with Islamic values such as honesty (ṣīdīq), responsibility (amānah), diligence (ijtihād), and ethical behavior (adab). Through this integrated approach, EFL instruction can serve as a vehicle for character building, strengthening Islamic identity, and fostering critical intercultural awareness. The findings suggest that EFL teaching principles can be harmoniously contextualized within a holistic and transformative Islamic educational framework.

*Keywords: EFL, Teaching Principles, Islamic Perspective, Character Education, Value Integration*

## INTRODUCTION

English as a Foreign Language (EFL) has become a critical component of education systems around the world, including in Muslim-majority countries. Mastery of English is often viewed as a gateway to global knowledge, communication, and participation in international contexts. However, within Islamic education, EFL instruction must be aligned with the values, ethics, and overarching goals of Islamic pedagogy.

Islamic education emphasizes not only intellectual achievement but also the cultivation of moral character and spiritual awareness. Thus, the principles of EFL instruction should be integrated with Islamic values to ensure that learners develop both linguistic competence and ethical integrity. This approach reflects the holistic vision of Islamic education, which seeks to nurture the physical, intellectual, and spiritual dimensions of human beings. As Syed Muhammad Naquib al-Attas (1980) stated, the goal of Islamic education is not merely to produce skilled individuals but to cultivate virtuous human beings by nurturing the intellect (‘aql) and purifying the soul (tazkiyat al-nafs).

According to Hashim (2004), integrating Islamic values into language education does not mean rejecting the English language; rather, it involves using it as a tool for da’wah (the propagation of Islamic teachings), global communication, and strengthening Islamic identity in a modern world. Language, in this context, serves as a means to convey and internalize universal Islamic values such as honesty, responsibility, compassion, and mutual respect. Through EFL instruction, students can learn how to communicate ethically and respectfully in accordance with Islamic teachings, for example, by avoiding harmful speech like ghibah (gossip), and promoting constructive dialogue.

Wan Mohd Nor Wan Daud (1998), a contemporary Muslim scholar and educational thinker, emphasizes the importance of a holistic educational approach that integrates religious and worldly sciences within a unified ethical framework. This concept is highly applicable to EFL instruction, where content selection, pedagogical methods, and evaluation strategies should reflect Islamic values. Instead of adopting a secular or value-neutral model, EFL educators in Islamic contexts should aim to incorporate spiritually and culturally appropriate themes, encourage collaboration and shura (consultation), and assess not only linguistic competence but also moral attitudes and behaviors.

Ultimately, the principles of EFL instruction informed by an Islamic perspective seek to produce learners who are not only linguistically competent but also spiritually conscious and ethically responsible. This integrative approach ensures that language learning contributes to the formation of balanced individuals—those who embody the Islamic ideal of being ‘abid (servants of God) and khalifah (stewards of the Earth), while navigating the global world with confidence and faith

This paper aims to explore key principles of EFL instruction—such as learner-centered learning, meaningful communication, and intercultural awareness—and how these can be contextualized within an Islamic framework. By adopting this integrative approach, EFL instruction can serve not only as a tool for global communication but also as a medium for character development and Islamic moral education.

## RESEARCH METHOD

This research adopts a qualitative library research method to investigate the principles of English as a Foreign Language (EFL) instruction from an Islamic perspective. The library method is particularly suitable for conceptual studies, as it involves the systematic collection, analysis, and interpretation of textual data from various credible sources (George, 2008). According to Zed (2004), library research focuses on developing theories and insights by examining existing knowledge in documents, books, journals, and other written sources.

Primary data were obtained from academic publications related to EFL methodology, second language acquisition, Islamic pedagogy, and educational philosophy. These include scholarly books, peer-reviewed journals, classical Islamic texts (such as the Qur'an, Hadith collections, and works of prominent Islamic scholars), and contemporary writings on Islamic education.

The data collection process involved the identification and selection of relevant literature based on key criteria such as academic credibility, relevance to the research topic,

and alignment with the research questions. As suggested by Creswell (2013), qualitative research emphasizes the importance of purposeful sampling in selecting materials that provide rich and meaningful data.

The analysis followed a content analysis approach, aiming to identify recurring themes and concepts within the literature. This method allows the researcher to categorize and interpret educational principles, instructional strategies, teacher roles, and learner engagement both in general EFL contexts and within the framework of Islamic values.

To ensure academic rigor, the researcher followed the triangulation of sources, comparing perspectives from Western educational theorists—such as Brown (2007), who emphasizes communicative competence and learnercentered teaching—with Islamic scholars like Al-Ghazali and Ibn Khaldun, who stress the integration of ethical values and spiritual development in education.

By synthesizing these perspectives, this study aims to establish pedagogical principles that uphold the effectiveness of modern EFL instruction while remaining consistent with Islamic teachings. The approach reflects what Halstead (2004) refers to as “values education through faith-based paradigms,” ensuring that language instruction contributes not only to linguistic proficiency but also to moral and spiritual growth.

## RESULT AND DISCUSSION

### Integrating Islamic Values in Learning Materials and Activities

Education in the Islamic world is an important matter. Education is the first duty of a Muslim, man or woman. Education is the foundation of human development since it shapes people's moral, intellectual, and spiritual growth while also influencing the direction of society. In the Islamic religion, education is valued since it is considered a means of gaining knowledge as well as a means to achieve moral and spiritual enlightenment. Islamic education encompasses many different things, such as religious teachings, intellectual pursuits, practical skills, and moral instruction. Based on the teachings of the Prophet Muhammad and the Quran, the holy book of Islam, Islamic education is a holistic approach that aims to develop well-rounded individuals who possess moral principles and a strong sense of purpose. Even though much research has been done on many facets of Islamic education, there is a significant lack of literature about a thorough investigation of its core.

The goal of Islamic education is to advance an individual's moral, intellectual, social, and spiritual development. It is solidly grounded in Sunnah and Quranic teachings.

According to study, emphasize that Islamic education is important to human development, shaping ethical, moral, spiritual and intellectual growth.

In Islamic education, values can be defined as principles that guide individuals in their actions and interactions. These values are sourced from the teachings of the Qur'an and the Sunnah of Prophet Muhammad. They include various moral and ethical standards that shape a person's character and behavior in an Islamic context. Islamic education focuses on the all-round development of the individual, which includes intellectual, moral, social and spiritual aspects. The aim is to create individuals who not only possess knowledge, but also good character and a sense of responsibility towards themselves as well as society. As explained in the referenced document, "Islamic education adopts a holistic approach to help students become balanced individuals, rather than simply transferring knowledge" (Mahmudulhassan et al., 2024). This approach emphasizes the importance of instilling values that promote ethical behavior, social responsibility, and spiritual awareness among students.

Integrating Islamic values into learning materials and activities is essential for creating a meaningful educational experience, particularly in contexts where students share a common religious background. This integration not only enhances the relevance of the learning process but also significantly impacts student engagement and motivation. Furthermore, learning materials can be developed to explicitly incorporate Islamic principles through various means. This may involve adding examples or exercises that reflect Islamic values, using Islamic names for people or places, and linking topics with relevant verses from the Qur'an. Assignments that prompt students to explore topics through the lens of Islamic values further reinforce the integration of religious teachings into the curriculum (Irawan, 2020; Sulaiman, 2019).

Therefore, integrating Islamic values into ELT involves a multifaceted approach that includes a variety of instructional strategies, material development, and practical activities aimed at fostering religious and moral development in addition to language proficiency, thus clarifying student motivation and engagement as well as Islamic values in learning activities:

a. Enhancing Student Motivation and Engagement

When discussing the integration of Islamic values, it is vital to recognize how this can enhance student motivation and engagement. When learning materials resonate with the values that students hold dear, they are more likely to engage emotionally in the learning process. As highlighted in the study, "students' emotional engagement increases when they

perceive the relevance of the material to their lives as Muslims." This emotional connection is crucial, as it can lead to increased motivation to learn and participate actively in class.

Furthermore, integrating Islamic values makes learning more relatable for students. They can draw connections between their studies and their daily lives as Muslims, which enhances their interest in the material. The research emphasizes that "the relevance of learning materials to Islamic values can spark greater enthusiasm among students." This connection not only enriches their learning experience but also reinforces their identity as Muslims.

#### b. The Role of Islamic Values in Learning Activities

In addition to enhancing motivation, integrating Islamic values into learning activities can also facilitate a deeper understanding of cultural diversity. By incorporating these values, educators can help students appreciate the richness of their own culture while also recognizing and respecting the beliefs of others. This is particularly important in a globalized world where intercultural dialogue is essential. As noted in the research, "healthy intercultural dialogue can flourish through the integration of Islamic values in education." This dialogue not only enriches the learning experience but also prepares students to engage thoughtfully with diverse perspectives (Alfian et al., 2022)

Integrating Islamic values into English language teaching presents a range of unique challenges that require innovative approaches to address them. One suggested method, as proposed by Rohmah, Fitriyah, and Hanifiyah (2019), involves re-evaluating the way subjects are taught to align more closely with Islamic values. This may necessitate a reassessment of curriculum content and teaching methodologies to ensure that lessons can be framed within an Islamic context without compromising academic integrity. However, despite the importance of this integration, many English teachers in Islamic schools often struggle to incorporate these principles into their teaching materials (Maesaroh, Aridah, & Rusmawaty, 2022). This difficulty may stem from various factors, including a lack of adequate resources and training, as well as challenges in aligning English language instruction with Islamic values.

Moreover, students' openness to embracing differences while maintaining their Islamic identity is crucial for the success of this integration (Umam, 2014). Educators need to foster an environment that encourages critical thinking and appreciation for diversity, allowing students to engage with various perspectives without compromising their religious beliefs. Addressing the challenges faced by teachers in integrating Islamic values requires a

multifaceted approach. Hawanti (2016) highlights several issues related to these integration challenges. First, educators must possess a deeper understanding of Islamic values and how to incorporate them into language teaching. This may involve professional development programs that provide training on Islamic pedagogy and relevant curriculum development.

Second, teachers need to enhance their knowledge of the cultures and values of the target language to effectively contextualize language learning within an Islamic framework. This can be achieved through ongoing learning and engagement with diverse cultural perspectives. Conflicts with teaching objectives may arise when attempting to integrate Islamic values, underscoring the need for careful alignment between educational goals and religious principles. Educators must strike a balance between meeting curriculum requirements and fostering spiritual and moral development.

Hawanti (2016) also argues that effective integration of Islamic values requires thorough teaching preparation, which can pose challenges for educators with limited time and resources. Therefore, support from school administrators is crucial, such as providing adequate resources, time for planning, and opportunities for professional development focused on Islamic pedagogy.

Additionally, teachers' personal beliefs and attitudes toward integration can influence their willingness to incorporate Islamic values into their teaching. Addressing misconceptions and promoting the benefits of this integration can help educators overcome resistance and foster a supportive learning environment. Finally, teachers' linguistic competence plays a significant role in their ability to effectively integrate Islamic values into English language teaching. Educators must have a strong command of the target language to provide clear explanations and facilitate meaningful discussions on religious and cultural topics.

By addressing the challenges faced by educators and creating a supportive learning environment, schools can successfully integrate Islamic principles into language instruction while empowering students to navigate the complexities of a diverse and interconnected world.

### Using English As A Tool To Spread Islamic Values

The use of English in da'wah has become increasingly important in the digital age. Many Islamic scholars and preachers use English to communicate with a global audience through various online platforms, including YouTube, Instagram, and podcasts. By presenting Islamic teachings in a language that is widely understood, da'wah efforts can

reach non-Muslims who may be curious about Islam as well as Muslims living in non-Arabic-speaking countries.

A study by (binti Anuar, binti Mohd Noor Be, & binti Azmin, 2024) emphasizes the importance of using polite and respectful language in English when conveying Islamic messages. The research highlights how the degree of politeness in online interactions plays a crucial role in engaging audiences and fostering meaningful discussions about Islam. Using courteous language aligns with the Islamic principles of wisdom (hikmah) and kindness (ihsan) in da'wah. The study also suggests that effective communication strategies, such as avoiding confrontational language and focusing on common values, can enhance the impact of Islamic messages on diverse audiences

Furthermore, social media influencers and content creators who promote Islamic values in English have gained significant followings. Their ability to present Islamic teachings in an engaging and relatable manner makes it easier for younger audiences to connect with the message. By using English, they can break down cultural and linguistic barriers, making Islam more accessible to people worldwide.

Beyond the digital space, English has also become a vital tool for embedding Islamic values in formal education. Many Islamic schools and universities incorporate English into their curriculum to prepare students for both academic and religious discourse. The integration of Islamic teachings into English language learning ensures that students develop not only linguistic proficiency but also a strong moral foundation.

According to research by (Saud, Otoluwa, & Assifa, 2023), embedding Islamic values in English language education at IAIN Manado has proven to be effective in shaping students' ethical and spiritual growth. English classes do not only focus on grammar and vocabulary but also incorporate discussions on Islamic teachings, ethics, and cultural understanding. This approach helps students develop critical thinking skills while remaining rooted in their religious beliefs.

For example, teachers may use Islamic texts, stories of the Prophet Muhammad (PBUH), and discussions on ethical dilemmas as part of language learning exercises. By doing so, students can improve their English skills while internalizing Islamic principles such as honesty, compassion, and patience. This method ensures that the process of learning English aligns with the broader goal of character development in Islamic education.

Using English to spread Islamic values requires effective communication strategies that consider both linguistic and cultural aspects. Some key strategies include:

1. **Cultural Sensitivity:** When using English to convey Islamic messages, it is essential to be mindful of cultural differences. Expressions that are common in Islamic discourse may not always be easily understood by non-Muslim audiences. Therefore, adapting the language to ensure clarity and avoiding potentially offensive terms can make da'wah efforts more effective.
2. **Engaging Digital Content:** In the age of social media, attention spans are short, and messages must be conveyed in a concise and appealing manner. Creating visually engaging posts, short videos, and interactive content can enhance the reach and impact of Islamic teachings. English content creators should focus on storytelling and real-life applications of Islamic values to make the message more relatable.
3. **Integration in Education:** English teachers in Islamic schools and universities can incorporate Islamic values into language lessons by selecting reading materials that reflect ethical principles. Encouraging discussions on moral dilemmas and ethical decision-making in English classes can help students develop both their language skills and their understanding of Islamic teachings.

By employing these strategies, the use of English in spreading Islamic values can become more effective, ensuring that the message is communicated with clarity, respect, and wisdom.

### Developing Students' Ability to Communicate Effectively in Different Cultural and Religious Contexts

Religious and civic education can be an effective means of instilling values of tolerance. Research by Fanani and Aziz shows that classroom activities using communicative methods can promote religious tolerance among students. Employing dialogical and inclusive teaching approaches enables students to understand different viewpoints and appreciate diversity. Furthermore, integrating case studies and historical examples into the curriculum offers students real-life illustrations of successful intercultural communication and conflict resolution. Educational institutions should also include cultural sensitivity training, focusing on fostering empathy and open-mindedness.

Schools should reflect inclusive values and serve as a model for intercultural interactions. Affandi's study underscores the importance of multicultural communication in education to address diversity challenges. Schools that foster a culture of inclusivity encourage students to interact harmoniously with peers from different cultural and religious

backgrounds. Schools can also host cultural exchange programs, language immersion initiatives, and multicultural festivals to promote deeper understanding among students.

Teachers are crucial in instilling values of tolerance and cross-cultural communication skills. Meltareza and Poedjadi emphasize that cultural awareness and adaptability in communication styles are vital for educators. Professional development programs that focus on intercultural competencies can improve teaching effectiveness in diverse classrooms. Additionally, partnerships with international educational institutions can offer teachers a wider range of perspectives on cross-cultural education.

Understanding verbal and non-verbal communication is crucial in cross cultural and interfaith interactions. Rahim, Fitrya, and Hidayat emphasize that verbal elements, such as word choice and intonation, as well as non-verbal aspects, like gestures and facial expressions, play a significant role in effective communication across cultural boundaries. To enhance these skills, schools can implement role-playing activities, debates, and collaborative projects with students from diverse backgrounds.

Despite various efforts, challenges remain in fostering effective cross cultural communication. Prejudices, stereotypes, and ethnocentrism are common barriers. Haryanto, Kurnia, and Paryanto found that cultural interactions positively influence students' awareness of tolerance, but differences in perception and limited cultural understanding can hinder communication effectiveness. Language barriers, socio-economic differences, and ideological conflicts further complicate communication in multicultural settings. Addressing these challenges requires targeted interventions at the institutional and policy levels.

Moreover, media and digital platforms can both promote and hinder cross-cultural understanding. While digital communication provides greater cultural exposure, misinformation, biased narratives, and echo chambers can perpetuate stereotypes and deepen misunderstandings. Educational institutions are essential in equipping individuals with intercultural competence through curricula that focus on global awareness, empathy, and open dialogue. Additionally, religious communication can encounter challenges when varying theological interpretations cause miscommunication or conflict. Promoting interfaith dialogue and inclusive discussions can help bridge divides and foster mutual respect.

Structural inequalities also create communication barriers, as marginalized groups often lack access to platforms where their voices can be heard. Governments, organizations, and community leaders must collaborate to develop policies that ensure equal

representation, linguistic inclusivity, and cultural sensitivity. By cultivating an environment where diverse perspectives are respected, societies can work towards more effective and harmonious cross-cultural and religious communication.

### Strategies to Overcome Communication Barriers

#### a. Increasing Cultural Awareness

Promoting cultural awareness among students and teachers can play a key role in reducing prejudices and stereotypes. Exchange programs, group discussions, and extracurricular activities that involve diverse cultural and religious groups can strengthen mutual understanding. Schools and universities can also invite guest speakers from various cultural and religious backgrounds to share their experiences, creating a more inclusive learning environment. Additionally, offering diversity training for educators can help them develop effective strategies to address cultural misunderstandings.

#### b. Virtual reality (VR) and digital simulations can also be leveraged to immerse students in different cultural settings, enhancing experiential learning.

Active learning methods, such as group discussions and simulations, can improve students' communication skills and cross-cultural understanding. Sitohang highlights that religious education can enhance communication abilities through interactive and contextually relevant teaching methods. Virtual reality (VR) and digital simulations can also be leveraged to immerse students in different cultural settings, enhancing experiential learning.

Role-playing exercises, storytelling, and case studies can further encourage students to see issues from multiple perspectives, strengthening their empathy and critical thinking skills. Furthermore, encouraging peer-to-peer teaching, where students from diverse backgrounds share their knowledge and experiences, can create a dynamic learning atmosphere.

#### c. Encouraging Interfaith and Cross-Cultural Dialogue

Establishing platforms for open dialogue between students of different religious and cultural backgrounds can help break down barriers and misconceptions. Schools and universities can organize interfaith forums, debate competitions, and cultural fairs where students exchange ideas and learn about each other's beliefs and traditions. Such initiatives foster respect, reduce prejudices, and create a more harmonious educational environment.

## Discussion

The findings of this study demonstrate that the principles of English as a Foreign Language (EFL) instruction can be harmoniously contextualized within a holistic and transformative Islamic educational framework. The main results are as follows:

1. Integration of Islamic Values in EFL Instruction

EFL instruction that incorporates Islamic values—such as honesty (ṣidq), responsibility (amānah), diligence (ijtihād), and ethical conduct (adab)—effectively supports students' character development in addition to enhancing their linguistic proficiency.

2. Enhancing Student Motivation and Engagement

Integrating Islamic values into learning materials and activities increases students' emotional engagement, which in turn boosts their motivation and active participation in class.

3. Challenges and the Need for Innovative Teaching Approaches

Despite its benefits, many educators face difficulties integrating Islamic values into EFL instruction due to limited resources, lack of training, and curriculum constraints. This highlights the need for institutional support and professional development.

4. Using English as a Medium for Da'wah (Islamic Outreach)

English serves as a valuable tool for spreading Islamic teachings globally, especially through digital platforms. Effective communication strategies rooted in politeness, wisdom (ḥikmah), and compassion (iḥsān) enhance the impact of Islamic messages.

5. Developing Intercultural and Interfaith Communication Skills

EFL instruction guided by Islamic values helps students develop the ability to communicate effectively across cultural and religious boundaries. Dialogical teaching methods, case studies, cultural sensitivity training, and digital media usage foster greater intercultural competence and empathy.

This study emphasizes the importance of an integrative approach to EFL instruction—one that addresses both linguistic goals and the spiritual-ethical dimensions of Islamic education, ultimately cultivating morally grounded and globally competent learners.

## CONCLUSION

The integration of Islamic values into English as a Foreign Language (EFL) instruction presents a holistic approach to education that nurtures both linguistic competence and moral character. By embedding principles such as honesty (ṣidq), responsibility (amānah), diligence (ijtihād), and ethical behavior (adab) into EFL pedagogy, educators can foster

student engagement, motivation, and identity development aligned with Islamic teachings.

Despite facing challenges—such as limited resources, lack of training, and curriculum alignment—effective strategies like culturally responsive materials, dialogical teaching, and digital engagement can help overcome these barriers. Furthermore, English serves not only as a tool for global communication but also as a powerful medium for da'wah, enabling the dissemination of Islamic values across diverse cultural contexts.

Ultimately, EFL instruction rooted in Islamic perspectives promotes intercultural competence, character education, and spiritual growth, preparing students to become morally grounded and globally aware individuals.

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