

CHALLENGES AND OPPORTUNITIES FOR EFL INSTRUCTION WITH AN ISLAMIC PERSPECTIVES

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Abstrak: Penelitian ini membahas integrasi nilai-nilai Islam dalam pengajaran Bahasa Inggris sebagai Bahasa Asing (EFL) di Indonesia, sebuah negara dengan mayoritas penduduk Muslim di mana perkembangan moral dan spiritual menjadi bagian penting dari tujuan pendidikan. Studi ini menyoroti tantangan dan peluang yang dihadapi para pendidik EFL dalam menggabungkan prinsip-prinsip Islam ke dalam pengajaran bahasa. Temuan utama menunjukkan bahwa meskipun integrasi nilai-nilai Islam dapat memperkuat karakter moral dan identitas budaya siswa, masih terdapat berbagai hambatan seperti keterbatasan bahan ajar, pelatihan guru yang kurang memadai, dan ketidaksesuaian budaya. Melalui analisis literatur, studi ini mengidentifikasi beberapa pendekatan strategis seperti perancangan kurikulum berbasis karakter, penggunaan teks-teks Islam yang autentik, pedagogi yang sensitif secara budaya, serta pemanfaatan teknologi untuk menciptakan pengajaran EFL yang bermakna dan kontekstual. Studi ini berargumen bahwa integrasi yang seimbang antara nilai-nilai keagamaan dan keterampilan berbahasa dapat membentuk siswa yang tidak hanya kompeten secara linguistik tetapi juga memiliki landasan etika, sehingga memberikan pengalaman pendidikan yang holistik sesuai dengan tujuan nasional dan keagamaan.

Kata Kunci: Nilai-Nilai Islam, Pengajaran EFL, Pendidikan Karakter, Integrasi Kurikulum, Pengajaran Yang Responsif Budaya, Bahasa Dan Agama, Perkembangan Moral, Indonesia.

***Abstract:** This study explores the integration of Islamic values into English as a Foreign Language (EFL) instruction in Indonesia, a Muslim-majority country where moral and spiritual development is deeply embedded in educational goals. The study highlights both the challenges and opportunities faced by EFL educators in incorporating Islamic principles into language teaching. Key findings show that while integrating Islamic values strengthens students' moral character and cultural identity, various obstacles such as limited teaching materials, inadequate teacher training, and cultural misalignment persist. Through literature analysis, this study identifies strategic approaches including character-based curriculum design, the use of authentic Islamic texts, culturally sensitive pedagogy, and the incorporation of technology to create meaningful and contextualized EFL instruction. The study argues that a balanced integration of religious values and language skills can foster students who are not only linguistically competent but also ethically grounded, offering a holistic educational experience that aligns with both national and religious objectives.*

Keywords: Islamic Values, EFL Instruction, Character Education, Curriculum

Integration, Culturally Responsive Teaching, Language And Religion, Moral Development, Indonesia.

INTRODUCTION

English as a Foreign Language (EFL) plays an important role in global communication and education. In Indonesia, where the majority of the population is Muslim, English instruction is expected not only to develop language skills but also to support students' character and moral development. However, English materials often reflect Western cultural values that may differ from Islamic teachings. This creates a challenge for teachers to find a balance between language instruction and the moral values held by students.

Integrating Islamic values into EFL instruction is seen as a way to maintain students' cultural and religious identity while learning English. Islamic values such as honesty, respect, and responsibility can be embedded in teaching materials and classroom activities. Many researchers argue that this integration helps students become not only competent in English but also morally responsible individuals. Therefore, exploring how Islamic values can be included in EFL teaching is important for improving both the quality and relevance of English education in Islamic contexts.

RESEARCH METHODS

This study used a library research method by collecting and reviewing books, journal articles, and previous studies related to the integration of Islamic values in English language teaching. The materials were studied to understand common themes, ideas, and strategies relevant to EFL instruction in Islamic contexts

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

A. Overcoming Opportunities to improve the quality of EFL instruction

1. The Concept of Integrating Islamic Values in EFL Instruction

Islamic values are a set of moral and ethical principles derived from the Qur'an and Hadith that serve as a guide for human behavior in everyday life. These values include honesty (ṣidq), discipline (iḥtisāb), respect (adab), compassion (raḥmah), and responsibility, which are essential in shaping one's character and behavior (Hasibuan et al., 2024). In the context of English as a Foreign Language (EFL) instruction, these values are not just moral teachings, but they function as guiding principles in developing students' attitudes during learning.

Integrating Islamic values into EFL means connecting the content of language teaching with Islamic principles to develop students' character alongside their language skills (Madkur & Albantani, 2017). Astuti et al. (2024) emphasize that Islamic values are important to be embedded into English learning due to the cultural differences between Western content often found in English textbooks and the local Islamic values of Indonesian students. Therefore, Islamic values in this context act as cultural filters that help students retain their identity and morality while learning a foreign language. Furthermore, Islamic values are not limited to religious rituals but also include universal moral teachings that support holistic education. They guide behavior, promote good interaction, and foster a sense of responsibility and ethics among students (Irawan, 2020).

2. The Importance of Integrating Islamic Values into EFL Instruction

Integrating Islamic values into English as a Foreign Language (EFL) instruction is crucial for shaping students' character and ensuring that language learning aligns with their moral and religious background. In Indonesia, where the majority of the population is Muslim, incorporating Islamic principles in education is a form of character education that supports students' spiritual and social development (Irawan, 2020). Astuti et al. (2024) argue that learning English often exposes students to Western cultural values that may conflict with Islamic teachings. For example, topics involving liberal views on gender relations or secular ideologies in textbooks can potentially challenge students' Islamic identity. Therefore, integrating Islamic values helps students maintain their moral compass and filters out irrelevant or inappropriate cultural elements in language materials. The integration of these values promotes a balanced approach to education. It allows students to learn English not only as a communication tool but also as a medium for spreading positive messages, such as tolerance, honesty, and respect, which are in line with Islamic teachings (Rohmana, 2020). This integration also helps students apply their Islamic knowledge in real life contexts, using English to express ideas related to faith, ethics, and community values. As a result, they become not only linguistically competent but also morally grounded individuals who can contribute positively to society (Madkur & Albantani, 2017).

3. Community Engagement and Service Learning

Language and culture are deeply interconnected. When students learn a new language—especially English, which often represents Western culture—they are not just learning

vocabulary or grammar. They are also being introduced to a set of cultural norms, values, and perspectives that might differ from their own. This is why integrating Islamic values into English instruction becomes important, particularly in Muslim-majority contexts like Indonesia (Madkur & Albantani, 2017). According to Buttjes (1990, as cited in Madkur & Albantani), language teaching is essentially culture teaching. That means English teachers are not only transferring language skills but also—directly or indirectly—exposing students to foreign cultural ideas. If not filtered properly, these ideas can conflict with local or religious values. For example, common themes in Western textbooks such as dating, individualism, or liberal gender roles may not align with Islamic teachings on modesty and community. Without guidance, students might adopt these foreign perspectives without critical thinking. By integrating Islamic values into lessons, teachers can help students engage with English language materials in a way that strengthens their identity, not weakens it (Astuti et al., 2024). This approach doesn't mean rejecting English culture entirely. Instead, it's about teaching students how to negotiate meaning—to understand and respect differences while holding firmly to their own values. As Irawan (2020) notes, Islamic values can act as a moral foundation that guides students in evaluating which cultural elements are worth adopting and which should be questioned or rejected.

4. Previous Studies on the Integration of Islamic Values in ELT

Several studies have highlighted the importance and various approaches to integrating Islamic values in English language teaching (ELT), particularly in Indonesia, where Islamic education plays a significant role in the national curriculum. Rohmana (2020) pointed out that many English teachers struggle with integrating Islamic values due to limited understanding and the lack of appropriate teaching materials. Despite acknowledging the importance of moral education, some teachers still focus solely on language skills without incorporating students' Islamic identity into classroom interaction. A study by Damayanti et al. (2022) conducted at IAIN Madura explored the strategies used by EFL teachers to integrate Islamic values in their teaching. The research found that teachers applied both holistic and specific integration methods. Holistic methods included using Islamic texts for reading and listening practice, while specific methods involved modeling good character traits such as honesty, patience, and discipline during classroom interactions. These strategies helped make the learning process more meaningful and aligned with students' beliefs. Astuti et al. (2024) took the discussion further by analyzing the integration of Islamic values in the digital era. Their literature review

revealed that challenges not only come from teachers' readiness but also from students and parents. However, the use of digital tools and media offers new opportunities to create engaging, Islamic-based English materials—such as video content about tolerance, religious moderation, and humanitarian values. Moreover, Hasibuan et al. (2024) emphasized that the Merdeka Curriculum supports character education through its flexible, student-centered approach. Their study showed that reflective practices, ethical discussions, and collaborative learning can serve as effective ways to embed Islamic principles in language education while still developing critical thinking and communication skills.

5. Challenges in Integrating Islamic Values into EFL Instruction

Although integrating Islamic values into English language teaching has great potential, many teachers still face significant challenges in making this integration effective. These challenges arise from various factors, including the teacher's background, material availability, and the broader educational environment.

a. Limited Teacher Knowledge and Training

Many EFL teachers feel unprepared to integrate Islamic values into their teaching due to a lack of training or understanding of how to connect language learning with religious content. Rohmana (2020) noted that some teachers are unsure about how to include Islamic values in lessons without disrupting the core language objectives. This lack of confidence often results in English being taught in a purely secular manner, even in Islamic institutions.

b. Inadequate Teaching Materials

Another major challenge is the scarcity of English textbooks or resources that include Islamic content. Most commercially available materials are based on Western contexts, which may include themes or values that do not align with Islamic teachings—such as free relationships, alcohol, or secular ideologies (Irawan, 2020). Without access to appropriate materials, teachers often have to create their own, which adds to their workload and requires additional skills.

c. Cultural and Religious Misalignment

English language instruction often includes cultural components that reflect Western lifestyles and values. While exposure to global perspectives is important, some of these values may conflict with Islamic teachings. For instance, common scenarios in textbooks might normalize behaviors that are inappropriate from an Islamic viewpoint (Astuti et

al., 2024). Teachers need to act as cultural mediators to help students navigate these differences while maintaining their Islamic identity.

d. **Challenges from Students and Parents**

In some cases, the resistance doesn't only come from teachers or the system, but also from students or even parents. Astuti et al. (2024) observed that in the digital era, students are heavily influenced by online content, which can make them less receptive to religious or moral messages in class. Similarly, some parents might question why religious values are being brought into a language subject, showing a misunderstanding of integrated character education.

B. Develop Opportunities To Improve The Quality Of EFL Instruction With An Islamic Perspectives

English as a Foreign Language (EFL) instruction in Muslim-majority nations like Indonesia should take into account Islamic principles as an essential component of students' identities in addition to emphasizing language proficiency as a means of international communication. This presents a calculated chance to incorporate Islamic principles into English language instruction with the goal of developing students who are both linguistically and morally capable.

Rahmah (2014) asserts that there are a number of ways to incorporate Islamic values into EFL instruction, including choosing educational resources that mirror Islamic teachings, introducing Islamic themes into speaking and writing assignments, and integrating moral lessons into reading and listening exercises. Without sacrificing the caliber of language acquisition, these techniques not only enhance the subject matter of EFL classes but also strengthen students' Islamic identities.

Islamic value-based EFL training presents a chance to establish a more significant and contextually relevant learning environment, according to Latif (2016). Through English language exercises, teachers can serve as facilitators, fostering virtues like integrity, tolerance, accountability, and teamwork. This strategy advances the aims of Islamic education as well as national educational goals. However, Syahputra (2017) points out that there are still issues, such as the scarcity of educational materials that combine Islamic principles with EFL subject and the readiness of educators to create and carry out such integrated instruction. To guarantee the successful implementation of EFL instruction from an Islamic perspective, it is therefore essential to create teacher training programs and suitable teaching materials.

With this method, learning English is seen as a way to enhance Islamic character education rather than just as a worldwide competency. Therefore, the creation of Islamic-based EFL training offers a great chance to raise the standard of education while striking a balance between spiritual values and global capabilities. Integrating Islamic principles into the teaching materials is one of the primary chances for creating English as a Foreign Language (EFL) instruction from an Islamic perspective. This integration can be achieved by choosing educational materials that uphold students' moral and spiritual principles while simultaneously improving their language proficiency. Alavi and Ebrahimi (2016) assert that religiously-informed language instruction allows students to engage in a cognitive, emotive, and spiritual learning process. For Muslim students to become globally competent while maintaining their commitment to Islam, this is crucial.

This method also makes it possible to create educational materials that are pertinent to the cultural and religious backgrounds of the students. For example, teachers may include reading materials with admirable Islamic characters or provide discussion topics that address moral dilemmas from a Qur'anic standpoint. A localized or "glocalized" approach to studying English allows Muslim students to do so without sacrificing their morals and beliefs, as noted by Mahboob (2010). Additionally, technology offers a great chance to improve EFL training from an Islamic perspective. Islamic-based English-language resources, including video lectures, English-language Islamic publications, and educational applications that incorporate Islamic prayers or Qur'anic verses into practice exercises, can be disseminated via online learning platforms. Technology use in Islamic EFL classrooms can boost students' enthusiasm and engagement, especially when paired with student-centered approaches, according to Hidayati and Nur (2020).

Cooperation between local and foreign language learning organizations and Islamic educational institutions can also create chances. EFL teachers can learn how to create curricula and instructional strategies that strike a balance between language proficiency and the assimilation of Islamic values through these partnerships. To make language instruction more meaningful, Al-Tamimi and Shuib (2009) emphasize the significance of religiously sensitive teacher preparation. Improving educational quality requires incorporating Islamic viewpoints into English as a Foreign Language (EFL) instruction, especially in settings with a majority of Muslims. This method places a strong emphasis on developing moral and ethical principles that are consistent with Islamic beliefs in addition to language competency. Teachers can give

pupils relatable information that stresses moral teachings by including Islamic content into the curriculum, such as stories from the Quran and Hadith. Additionally, language acquisition can be made more meaningful by defining specific learning objectives that incorporate ethical reasoning and critical thinking. A more dynamic and captivating learning environment can also be produced by utilizing technology and implementing student-centered teaching approaches. Students' engagement is increased and collaboration is encouraged through cooperative learning and interactive techniques like role-playing and debates. Respect and discipline are upheld while taking into account the varied backgrounds of the children through effective classroom management that is based on Islamic teachings. All things considered, this all-encompassing method not only gets kids ready for communication on a global scale but also helps them grow into morally upright, religiously based adults.

A number of strategic opportunities can be found and utilized in order to improve the quality of English as a Foreign Language (EFL) instruction in an Islamic context. In addition to enhancing language proficiency, these options make ensuring that learning English is consistent with the moral and spiritual principles that are maintained in Islamic education. Key chances to more effectively and comprehensively incorporate Islamic ideas into EFL training are outlined in the sections that follow:

1. Including Islamic principles in the EFL curriculum

By incorporating Islamic ideals into the curriculum, Islamic-based EFL instruction can be developed. It is possible to include values like accountability (*amānah*), honesty (*ṣidq*), and compassion (*rahmah*) into learning objectives and teaching resources. For example, while instructing story literature, educators could use Islamic tales that are full of moral teachings. According to Sari and Sofwan (2018), an EFL program that incorporates Islamic principles will improve students' character development and make learning more meaningful.

2. Using Real Islamic Sources in English

Students' vocabulary can be expanded and Islamic principles instilled by using authentic materials including English-language prophetic stories, sermons, lectures, and Islamic publications. Students gain better reading and listening comprehension as well as the ability to articulate their Islamic viewpoints in English. In order to make learning more relevant and meaningful, Rosyada (2004) highlights the significance of creating instructional materials that are in line with students' cultural and religious backgrounds.

3. Teachers' Function as Professional Muslim Roles Models

Teachers in an Islamic-based EFL school serve as moral and behavioral role models in addition to being language facilitators. Students' attitudes toward learning will be positively impacted by a teacher who incorporates Islamic beliefs into classroom interactions. Teachers who adhere to Islamic principles and professionalism are powerful change agents in contemporary Islamic education, as noted by Hashim and Langgulong (2008).

4. Establishing a Character-Based and Islamic Learning Environment

One important tactic for raising the caliber of EFL training is creating a classroom atmosphere that is courteous and values-based. This can be accomplished by using courteous language, showing consideration for the viewpoints of students, and using appropriate discussion etiquette. According to Zuhdi (2005), multiculturalism and tolerance should be encouraged in varied English-speaking classrooms as part of high-quality Islamic education.

5. Cooperation Between EFL Professionals and Islamic Educational Institutions

There are many chances to create more contextualized teaching strategies and resources when Islamic schools and EFL specialists work together, both domestically and abroad. Teachers can obtain professional development and pertinent training that is suited to the requirements of Islamic education through these collaborations. The significance of a democratic and dialogic approach to education, which incorporates cross-disciplinary synergy, is emphasized by Alwasilah (2007).

6. Creation of Interactive and Islamic EFL Learning Resources

Technology is a very powerful tool for EFL instruction, particularly when paired with Islamic content. Applications for language learning that incorporate Qur'anic verses, daily prayers, or English-language Islamic lectures might increase student motivation and engagement. Digital media with Islamic themes can be creative instruments for meaningful and value-based EFL learning, according to Hasan and Rafiq (2018).

C. Using Technology and Media to support EFL Instruction with an Islamic Perspective

1. Integrating Islamic Values in Teaching English: Lessons Learned from an Integrated Islamic School.

Alfian, Yusuf, and Nafiah (2021) investigated the incorporation of Islamic values in

English language instruction at an Integrated Islamic School in Indonesia. Their findings indicate that, although teachers are aware of and committed to embedding Islamic teachings in their lessons, the actual implementation remains minimal. This is evidenced by the review of lesson plans, which shows that Islamic values have not been consistently or systematically integrated into classroom activities.

a. The Need for a Structured and Islamic Curriculum

A key finding of the study was the absence of a well-defined framework for incorporating Islamic values into teaching. Many educators tend to include religious elements in an unplanned or impromptu manner, rather than through intentional and structured design. As a result, there is a pressing need to create an English curriculum and syllabus that clearly embeds Islamic values—reflected in thematic content, assignment types, and assessment methods.

b. Encouraging the Exploration of Islamic Teachings Through English

Learning English can serve as a meaningful platform for exploring Islamic teachings in a contextual manner. For instance, students might be assigned to write narrative texts based on the lives of the prophets or deliver short speeches in English focused on themes such as noble character. These kinds of tasks help develop students' language proficiency while simultaneously deepening their understanding of Islamic values.

c. Cultivating Character Through Classwork

Islamic character learning such as honesty, responsibility, and empathy can be developed through communicative learning methods. One of the suggested methods is role-playing, where students play roles in situations that illustrate Islamic values, such as dialoguing about the importance of sharing, manners to parents, or resolving conflicts peacefully.

2. Systematic Literature Review: Integrating Islamic Education in English Language Teaching.

Djamdjuri et al. (2023) conducted a systematic literature review on the integration of Islamic education within English language teaching. The study emphasized that a deep understanding of cultural and social contexts is essential for effectively incorporating Islamic principles into language instruction. Educators who are knowledgeable about Islamic values, traditions, and cultural sensitivities are better equipped to provide holistic teaching that

resonates with students' religious beliefs. The findings underscore the significance of cultural and societal awareness as a foundational element in harmonizing language education with Islamic values. By adopting this approach, teachers can present English lessons that are not only academically and communicatively effective, but also aligned with the moral and spiritual identities of Muslim learners.

a. **Integration of Islamic Principles in Language Learning**

A key finding emphasizes the importance of embedding Islamic values like honesty, modesty, and discipline into English language learning activities. For example, students can enhance their understanding of sentence structure and vocabulary by crafting dialogues or stories that embody these values. These principles can be incorporated into various text types, including descriptive, narrative, and expository forms.

b. **Contextual Curriculum Development with Local Muslim Communities**

The English curriculum should not be generic or one-size-fits-all; it must consider the cultural context, local values, and religious practices of the local Muslim community. This involves incorporating themes that are relevant to the lives of Muslim students, such as activities during Ramadan, proper manners, or stories of the Prophet's companions, as the foundation for reading, writing, and speaking exercises in English.

c. **The Importance of Teacher Training in Religious-Cultural Pedagogy**

Teachers play a crucial role in integrating Islamic education into English Language Teaching (ELT). Therefore, specialized training is essential to ensure that teachers are equipped to present English materials using a pedagogical approach that honors religious and cultural values. This training should cover strategies for choosing suitable teaching resources, creating an Islamic learning environment, and designing assignments that align with faith-based values.

3. **The Integration of Islamic Perspective in Teaching English as a Foreign Language: A Systematic Literature Review.**

Sidqurrahman (2024) conducted a literature review on integrating Islamic perspectives into EFL (English as a Foreign Language) teaching. The findings indicate that using an Islamic-based approach in EFL not only helps achieve language proficiency but also boosts student engagement by promoting ethical awareness and fostering intercultural respect. The

study highlights that while English is often taught as a global skill in Muslim education, disconnected from spiritual values, incorporating Islamic principles into the learning process can make the experience more meaningful, relevant, and impactful for Muslim students.

a. Application of Islamic Pedagogical Model in EFL

The Islamic educational approach promotes comprehensive learning that goes beyond cognitive development to include emotional (attitudinal) and spiritual dimensions. In the context of EFL (English as a Foreign Language) teaching, this approach is reflected through methods such as wisdom-based learning (*hikmah*), purification-oriented instruction (*tazkiyah*), and respectful, ethical interaction (*adab*). These methods encourage students to see language learning not only as acquiring skills, but also as a way to embody and practice virtuous values.

b. Developing Materials that Reflect Worldviews and Islamic Morals

Teaching materials in EFL (English as a Foreign Language) classes are frequently derived from Western cultures that reflect secular values, which may not always align with the beliefs of Muslim students. As a result, there is a growing need for contextualized content—such as reading passages, dialogues, and stories—that incorporate Islamic themes like social justice, compassion, honesty, and the lives of the Prophets. Integrating these elements supports students in developing their English proficiency while reinforcing their understanding of Islamic morals and values.

c. Balance between Religious Themes and Secular Education Goals

One key challenge is finding a balance between incorporating religious values and meeting the requirements of the national curriculum or international standards in language education. Teachers need to develop materials that effectively target the four language skills—listening, speaking, reading, and writing—while also embedding spiritual values in a manner that is respectful and not overly rigid. Achieving this balance demands both creativity and a strong grasp of secular teaching methods as well as Islamic principles.

d. Adapting to the Global Context Without Losing Islamic Authenticity

In today's globalized world, it is essential for educational materials and teaching methods to align with the global context, particularly when preparing students for international competitiveness. However, this should not come at the expense of their Islamic identity. Therefore, teachers must adapt content in a way that promotes

inclusivity and universal values, while still upholding Islamic principles. For instance, global topics like environmental conservation or peace can be explored through an Islamic perspective using the English language as a medium

CONCLUSION

This study shows that including Islamic values in English as a Foreign Language (EFL) teaching helps students in Indonesia learn English while keeping their religious and cultural identity. It supports not only language skills but also moral growth.

There are some challenges, like the lack of suitable teaching materials and limited teacher training. However, there are also good opportunities through using Islamic content, technology, and working together among educators to improve teaching quality.

Since this study is based on reviewing existing literature, it may not fully represent what happens in real classrooms. Future research should involve direct observations or interviews with teachers and students to get a clearer picture. It is important for schools and policymakers to create clear guidelines and training for teachers. This will help students become not only better English speakers but also responsible and ethical individuals.

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