Situating Islamic Values in English Language Teaching: Documenting the Best Practices in Indonesia

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ABSTRAK. Kajian tentang integrasi nilai-nilai moral, budaya dan agama dalam pembelajaran bahasa akhir-akhir ini menunjukkan peningkatan. Hal ini ditandai dengan banyaknya terkait topik tersebut. Indonesia sebagai negara dengan penduduk mayoritas muslim terbesar di dunia harus berperan dalam pengintegrasian nilai-nilai keislaman di dalam pembelajaran, khususnya dalam pembelajaran bahasa inggris sebagai bahasa asing. Meskipun demikian, dalam prakteknya ditemukan banyak masalah terutama tidak semua ahli setuju jika topik yang terkait dengan agama didiskusikan dalam pembelajaran bahasa. Tulisan ini bertujuan untuk mendiskusikan secara komprehensif tentang urgensi dan strategi secara dalam mengintegrasikan nilai islam dalam pembelajaran bahasa inggris di Indonesia. Secara umum, Pengintegrasian nilai Islam dalam pembelajaran bahasa dapat dilakukan melalui pengintegrasian konten dan topik pada kurikulum, materi ajar, dan kegiatan pembelajaran. Dengan dilaksanakannya hal tersebut diharapkan siswa akan sadar akan nilai-nilai keislaman dalam kehidupan sehari-hari mereka di masyarakat untuk menyaring budaya yang tidak relevan dan dalam waktu yang bersamaan dapat memperoleh keterampilan bahasa asing dengan baik.

ABSTRACT. Studies on the integration of moral, cultural, and religious values in language learning have recently increased. This is characterized by the number of these research topics. Indonesia as the world's largest Muslim-majority country must play a role in integrating Islamic values into learning, especially in learning English as a foreign language. However, in practice, there are many problems especially not all experts agree if topics related to religion are discussed in language learning. This article aims to discuss comprehensively the urgency and strategies in integrating Islamic values in English language learning in Indonesia. In general, the integration of Islamic values in language learning can be done through the integration of content and topics into the curriculum, teaching materials, and learning activities. Through the implementation of this, it is expected that students will be aware of the Islamic values in their daily lives in society to filter out irrelevant cultures and at the same time be able to acquire foreign language skills properly.

Kata kunci: ELT, Islamic, values, practices,

INTRODUCTION

The success of learning a language is not only indicated by the ability in mastering language skills (listening, reading, writing, and speaking), but also cultural ability. It implies that language and culture are closely interconnected (Brown, 2007). Therefore, emphasizing the cultural values in the language classroom is required to developing students' awareness toward their own or other cultures. Consequently, Language teachers not merely focus on teaching students' language skills but also must pay big attention to students' backgrounds (value and belief systems) since these factors shape their attitudes towards the language (Widodo, Perfecto, and Buripakdi, 2018., Mohd-Asraf, 2005).

As one of the students' backgrounds, religion plays an important rule since it influences human behavior (Kilp, 2011; Sasaki & Kim, 2011; Aldashev & Platteau, 2014). Recently, the interest to study the relationship between religion and pedagogy is significantly increasing (Wong, Kristjansson, & Dörnyei, 2013). The research results demonstrate that teachers' moral and religious viewpoints will affect the teaching and interaction process. (Johnston, 2003) and (Wicking, 2012)). Besides, one of the important aspects to be incorporated into the instructional design is students' ethnoreligious backgrounds (Liyanage, Bartlett, and Grimbeek, 2010). Moreover, in embracing spirituality into education either general or language education, all religions are possible to be situated into the classroom (Shahjahan's 2004, 2010). Also, it is fine for incorporating religious values in the learning process as long as the language materials are taught effectively (Foye, 2004).

However, in some Islamic countries, EFL is facing some challenges. English is often accepting a less positive attitude because of several reasons. For instance, the Muslim country experience colonialism, the anxiety that English may replace their native languages, and more important the apprehension about losing their identity and cultural value as a result of using English and Western coursebooks used in learning English (Pennycook&Coutand-Marin, 2003). For example, when the topics or issues provided in textbooks are insensitive toward local belief and culture (e.g., prostitution, woman exploitation, free sex), it might influence the community's way of life in some countries such as Brunei Darussalam, Indonesia, and Malaysia (Widodo, Perfecto, and Buripakdi, 2018). To solve this problem, it was suggested to accommodating the need for socio-cultural factors in teaching English for Muslim students by providing appropriate literature to be used in the classroom concerning religious beliefs and value. Besides, giving them the comprehension that English is not a threat to their identities as Muslims and the importance of learning English to acquire contemporary knowledge (Mohd-Ashraf, 2014).

Indonesia is known as the home of cultural, ethnic groups, and religious diversity (Widodo & Fardhani, 2011). there are five officially recognized religions in Indonesia namely Islam, Christianity, Hinduism, Buddhism, and Confucianism. Among these religions, Islam is known as has the biggest one. The big number of Islam adherents in Indonesia makes it the world's biggest Muslim population. Therefore, the influences of Islam in many aspects of Indonesian life is very affected. In the educational aspect, this situation potentially benefitted in educational activities by situating the Islamic values in all lessons, especially English.

The integration of Islamic values in English language learning is essential to be conducted since the Muslim teachers also play a role in maintaining religious values through their classroom activities. Related to the integration of Islamic values into English teaching, a framework has been proposed that can be used to study the relationship between local Islamic values and the English language in other contexts (Mahboob, 2009). In other words, Islamic values and local culture can be situated in the teaching of a foreign language, like English. In this regard, this paper will demonstrate the discussion on the importance of situating Islamic values into foreign language learning especially English, what values should be situated and suggests the strategies to situate the Islamic values into the teaching of a foreign language, and further, to provide the best practices based on the empirical research that has been conducted by some practitioners/teachers in incorporating Islamic values in a particular level of education.
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THE IMPORTANCE OF TEACHING ISLAMIC VALUES

Values refer to something valuable, qualified, and useful to human beings. Besides, Values are beliefs about what is right and wrong and what is important in life (Hornby, 2000). Furthermore, a consensus proposed on five common features of values: values are (a) concepts or beliefs, (b) about desirable end states or behaviors, (c) that transcend specific situations, (d) guide selection or evaluation of behavior and events, and (e) are ordered by relative importance (Van der Weide et al, 2009). In other words, Islamic values can be defined as a set of Islamic community beliefs as guidance to behave.

Islamic values are significant to be incorporated into all subjects in schools, including English because of several reasons. First, the rise of problems in Indonesia such as juvenile, bullying, violence, intolerance, corruption, and so forth requires educational stakeholders to take a part in solving these problems by implementing value education into their instruction. The concept of 'value education' refers to the teaching of good values in any aspects such as social, political, cultural, and aesthetic values (Veugelers & Vedder, 2003). These values are covered in religion because it is where everything is ruled. Second, it aimed to build religious and spiritual characters for students and as guidance to behave and reconstruct an adaptive and flexible educational system to the development of students' abilities that are colored by Islamic spiritual or ethical values in guiding their activities. And finally, the integration of Islamic values has been seen as a way to build the students' character as the description of KI (core competence) 1 and KI 2 in English subject. And it is also one way to build an Islamic spirit that can strengthen students in their behavior.

The next question is what are so-called Islamic values? Indonesian cultures are a mixture of different ethnic cultures and religious identities (Widodo, Perfecto, and Buripakdi, 2018). It is implied that the character values as formulated and promoted on the 2013 curriculum are relevant to the Islamic values that embrace (1) religiosity, (2) honesty, (3) tolerance, (4) self-discipline, (5) hard work, (6) creativity, (7) independence, (8) democracy, (9) curiosity, (10) patriotism, (11) nationalism, (12) respect for others, (13) friendliness, (14) peace-loving, (15) love to read, (16) environmental sensitivity, (17) social awareness, and (18) responsibility (Pusat Kurikulum, 2010). Furthermore, based on the values mentioned above, it implies that teaching of value becomes the basis for citizenship and the maintenance of the democratic nation.

STRATEGIES TO SITUATE ISLAMIC VALUES IN EFL CLASSROOM

The integration of Islamic values in the EFL classroom is considering complicated to be conducted in Indonesia. It is not as easy as some foreign languages commonly learned, for instance, the Arabic language. The Arabic language is closely linked to the Islamic religion since it is the language of Al Qur'an. Thus, incorporating Islamic values in Arabic language instruction is considered easy to be conducted. Therefore, mastering the Arabic language is suggested to be learned as a requirement to improve the comprehension and understanding of Islam (Mat & Wan Abas, 2016). In other words, Arabic learning will not face any significant obstacles in integrating Islamic values. However, what about learning other foreign languages such as English, Mandarin, and even Korean?

Some researchers have done some studies and practices. For instance, (Rohmah, 2012) suggests some ways in situating Islamic values in ELT. First, developing a special English

textbook with Islamic contents. In this way, the textbook's writer provides and explore an English book which contains Islamic messages, topics, or texts. For example, the topics or texts related to 'How to Perform Wudhu', 'Economic Concept in Islam' openly display the message of Islam. Thus, students can express their opinion and ideas related to Islamic content in English. Besides, 'implicit' ways, providing the Islamic messages indirectly through images, names, buildings, activities, language, and so on. The images used in the book should adjust to the reality of Muslim society, for example, pictures of veiled women, pictures of mosques, etc. Further, it is found some practical ways to do this integration as follows:

Curriculum

By adapting the curriculum development model proposed by Kerr's, it would be very practical for an educational institution is willing to deal to design, implement and implement the English curriculum developed by determining the existing challenges and the advantages of the Islamic education model based on tawhid (Shah, Muhamad, and Ismail, 2012)
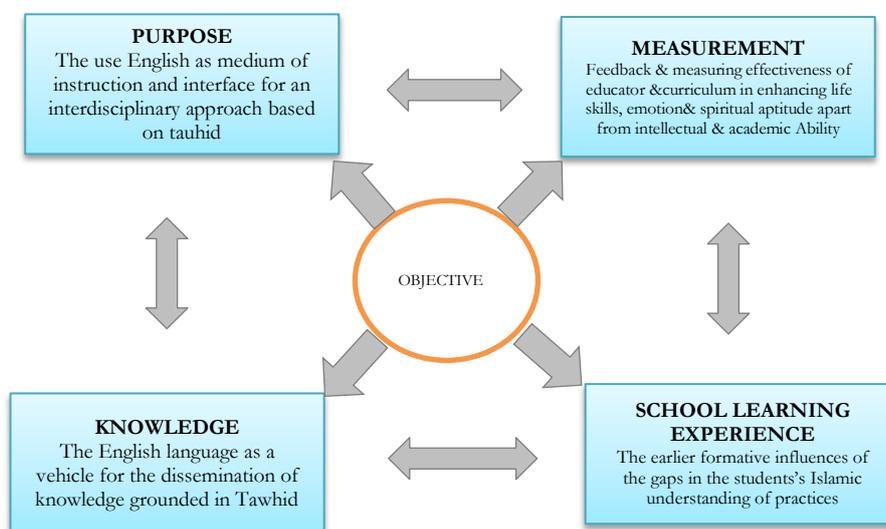

Figure.1 Shah's Adaptation of Kerr's Curriculum development model

Through adapting this model, the "western" models can be Islamized and support the development of an Islamic English language curriculum. Figure 1 above shows that the aspects of the curriculum with Islamic messages are the explanation of the vision and mission of the Islamic institutions. In other words, when the schools are not Islam-based, teachers are probably not encouraged to incorporating Islamic values.

Furthermore, in ELT the teacher can choose a topic or theme, text, and tasks, which contain Islamic values by adapted genre-based approach. For example, a teacher can teach a recount text using "The Life of Al-Khawarizmi" one of the prominent Islamic mathematicians. Teachers and students can discuss moral and Islamic values in the text. The teacher can also provide students with various texts that expose students to the different moral values and virtues of Islam.

Learning materials

The integration of Islamic content in teaching materials has rooted in the education system in Indonesia and not surprised anymore. Interest related to the relationship between religion and

language learning is growing. In this respect, to address value aspects in language learning especially in designing materials in ELT in a particular situation, therefore, needs to pay attention to contextual aspects of learners, teachers, classrooms, and institutions (McDonough et al. 2013). Religious values can be reflected in the material used for teaching. In the Islamic education context, ELT can be incorporated with Islamic values that are the life guidance of Muslim communities. Therefore, negative issues related to ELT inappropriate topics can be avoided. The studies and practice in recent years show the integration between Islamic Value and English language learning material as explained below.

First, (Rohmah, 2012) provided learning materials that reflected the amalgam of the Islamic messages in English language teaching. One of the available course books is "English in Context" trainers under the Islamic Schools English Language Project (ISELP). This book is used by the teachers in pesantren. In this book, the Islamic messages are included in two ways: 1) directly mentioning Islamic topics like "How to wudhu", "Muslim to Muslim" and so forth. 2) incorporating the Islamic messages in the materials indirectly through pictures, names, building, language activities, messages, etc. In pursuit of finding the Islamic values instilled in English textbooks. It was found that the integration of Islamic values in Indonesian especially in pesantren could be conducted by using the existing textbooks containing Islamic values (Umam, 2014). According to this research, there are some books; for instance, "English for Muslim Learners" (Irwansyah, 2015) and "Islamic Learning in English Academic Purpose (Oktradiksa, 2015).

The other alternative was using value-based authentic materials. Today it eases for teachers and students to find authentic material from newspapers, TV programs, menus, magazines, the internet, movies, songs, brochures, comics, literature (novels, poems, and short stories), and many others. Moreover, today's learning context, using the kind of ICT-based media is highly recommended (Shyamlee & Phil, 2012) since the learners are very familiar with technological devices. Since it is also easy to get the materials containing Islamic values from the internet, the teachers should consider using this for teaching foreign languages with Islamic values in a fun way. Further, some changes in materials have to be examined. For example, some learning materials once used to be appropriate and effective might not apply to the current digital classroom anymore. by examining values presented in ELT materials, a teacher would be able to assist students in maintaining their identities and Islamic values prevailing in the society.

Learning activities

To situate the Islamic values in English language teaching also can be conducted through the learning activities in four ways i.e. (1) by performing code-mixing or code-switching between English and the Islamic expressions based on the particular context; (2) by linking the topic discussed to the relevant Islamic teaching which is done either by quoting the verses of Al-Qur'an and/or Al-Hadith, or by explaining the relevant Islamic teaching; (3) by using the Islamic names for persons like Ahmad instead of John, places like Mecca, or events in making the example of sentences or dialog script; (4) by giving students tasks to write or find a kind of text related to the Islamic values relevant to the being taught (Khamdan, 2018., Amelia 2012)

BEST PRACTICES

Even though the situating of Islamic values into English language learning is quite challenging, there are many successful works in their implementation and practices as follow:

In the junior high school level, the Islamic values in the English language teaching reflected in lesson plans in the section of the learning materials and the learning activities of SMP Islam Al-Azhar 15 Cilacap. The integration was done by embedding the Islamic values supported by verses of Al-Qur'an and/or Al-Hadith which are relevant to the main materials selected based on predetermined learning objectives (Khamdan, 2008). In addition, Islamic and value and Jambi local wisdom also incorporated in MTs Laboratorium Kota Jambi through implementing The English module based on Islamic values and Jambi local wisdom (Nafiah, 2020).

Furthermore, in the Senior high school context, all English teachers in SMA Negeri Banjarbaru integrate the values of existing characters in English learning that is honest, responsibility, discipline, cooperation, hard work, curiosity, likes to read. It was implemented through various methods in every meeting, for instance, discussion, demonstration, lecture, and question and answer. With the existence of Islamic character values that have been integrated into every subject in school, especially in English lessons then it is expected that students can apply the values of Islamic character in daily life (Irveanty, 2013). The other practice was conducted in MAN Model Palangka Raya. The English English teacher is implementing developed learning material intended to provide a set of learning materials to accommodate the Islamic characteristics and the needs of the students through adopted and adapted from some Islamic textbooks and Islamic reading websites (Qamariyah, 2015).

Moreover, the practice was the use of Islamic magazines in teaching reading comprehension for the students of the English Education Department of IAIN Batusangkar. Because of more colorful, made with quality papers, layout attractiveness, and accessible by the students, the magazine was motivating. After being this researched, this teaching strategy proves that the articles in the Islamic magazine empirically enhanced the students reading comprehension and built their character values (Munir & Hartono, 2016).

SOME CHALLENGES

Situating Islamic values in foreign language teaching which can be included in the term "value education" always has some challenges as mentioned below.

The Teacher's Capability

Teachers are role models for their students. Therefore, when teaching they should share their good character (Lumpkin, 2008). One of the reasons why Muslim teachers should situate Islamic values while teaching is because there must be a different method and materials when teaching Muslim students. In other words, an English teacher in Madrasah Aliyah, differing from general or non- Islamic schools, should be able to creatively integrate Islamic values so that the Muslim students feel familiar with the content of the material and in the same time develop their ability in a foreign language. This is challenging since not all teachers can do since not all Muslim teachers have such good knowledge of Islam and know how to effectively deliver it in instructional activities. Hence, decision-makers in schools need to pay big attention to this issue when they are hiring a new teacher. Their status at both institutional and national levels, teacher's profile in terms of training, teaching experiences, mother tongue, attitudes to their job, and expectations will play an important role in value cultivation issues in English language programs. The success of language programs, to some degree, depends on how much teachers are capable of equipping themselves with the right tools for attaining an achievable goal.

What values should be taught?

Islam covers wide aspects in human's life; and therefore it is challenging the teacher to see what kind of Islamic values that they should teach to their students. This is task of the teachers and stakeholders to decide since it is impossible to integrate all Islamic values in the learning process. In Indonesian context, especially 2013 curriculum, Indonesian cultures are a mixture of different ethnic cultures and religious identities. Widodo.

It is imples that the character values as formulated and promoted on 2013 curriculum are relevant to the Islamic values that embrace (1) religiosity, (2) honesty, (3) tolerance, (4) self-discipline, (5) hard work, (6) creativity, (7) independence, (8) democracy, (9) curiosity, (10) patriotism, (11) nationalism, (12) respect for others, (13) friendliness, (14) peace-loving, (15) love to read, (16) environmental sensitivity, (17) social awareness, and (18) responsibility (Pusat Kurikulum, 2010). These 18 character values are included in Islam.

When to teach Islamic values in classroom?

Some questions raising from the teachers are about the time of teaching values in learning process. Since the teaching and learning process in the classroom consists of pre-teaching, while-teaching and post-teaching, the teachers sometimes get difficulties to allocate time to teach the Islamic values. They are willing to teach the values but, at the same time, they are worried of overlapping the learning materials. To answer this question, prefer to apply integrated approach by which the teachers both stimulate certain values and teaching language skills to better communicate on values, andalso improve the active participation of students. However, using this approach, some teachers confused in what part of learning they should situate the Islamic values (Veugelers & Vedder, 2003).

CONCLUSION

Today's English language teaching is not only teaching English as a language but also fostering students' understanding of how to use recognized English as a language that appropriates with situating religious values both theoretically and practically. In Indonesian, situating religious values especially Islamic values in teaching English as a foreign can be implemented in various ways, for instances, adapting the integrated language curriculum with an Islamic approach, situating Islamic contents on learning materials, and incorporate meaningful activities related to the integration of Islamic value in the learning process. Based on the explanation above, the are some considerable recommendations to be useful for the authors, English teachers, and the school's stakeholders to situating Islamic values.

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