

Islamic Literacy in Education: A Comprehensive Analysis of Linguistic and Curriculum Practices

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Abstract

Islamic institutions that teach English as a foreign language (EFL) face the dual challenge of maintaining religious values while enhancing global communication skills. This study applies the Spiral Andromeda Philosophy a multilevel framework encompassing supra, macro, meso, and micro levels to explore the integration of Islamic literacy into EFL instruction. Employing a qualitative document analysis method, data were collected from curriculum guides, lesson plans, and educational texts used in Islamic learning settings. Thematic findings reveal that incorporating Islamic elements such as Quranic passages, historical narratives, and ethical discussions not only supports language development but also strengthens moral awareness. Key strategies include curriculum integration, contextualized learning, interactive pedagogical practices, and assessments aligned with Islamic values. The results show that aligning EFL teaching with Islamic principles enhances student engagement, ethical communication, and identity formation, offering a holistic educational experience within Islamic institutions.

INTRODUCTION

Language and culture are deeply intertwined, as language serves not only as a tool for communication but also as a carrier of cultural and ideological values. In today's world, English has become the predominant global language utilized in areas such as education, commerce, and media across various countries (Crystal, 2020). In Indonesia, the teaching of English begins in middle school and continues through tertiary education, including in Islamic educational institutions. Nevertheless, adopting English as a global medium of instruction poses significant challenges. The cultural and moral values embedded within English-language learning materials often reflect Western ideologies, which may conflict with the Islamic values that form the foundation of many educational institutions.

Several studies have raised concerns about the use of English materials that are not aligned with Islamic perspectives. For instance, Harmaini (2024) and Anggarini et al. (2022) both highlight that students especially younger learners are vulnerable to absorbing secular ideologies and Western moral narratives subtly conveyed through language, media, and entertainment. These materials, although appearing neutral, can influence students' worldviews in ways that diverge from Islamic ethical teachings. This raises a critical question: how can Islamic educational institutions ensure that students acquire global language skills while remaining rooted in their religious and cultural identity?

While researchers have explored culturally responsive pedagogy, there is still a notable gap in practical models that integrate Islamic literacy into English language education in a systematic and structured way. Many existing approaches either emphasize linguistic competence or general moral instruction without fully connecting to the epistemological and pedagogical foundations of Islamic education. Additionally, the dominance of English textbooks produced in secular contexts presents challenges for value alignment. This condition underscores the urgent need for models that integrate faith-based principles with effective language instruction across different levels of educational planning.

One promising approach is the Spiral Andromeda Philosophy, which offers a multilevel pedagogical model encompassing supra, macro, meso, and micro dimensions. Although this model is still relatively new and evolving, it is grounded in long-standing Islamic educational values, including *tawhid* (unity of knowledge), *ta'dib* (discipline), and *tarbiyah* (comprehensive development). It is designed to promote a recurring, integrative, and transformative learning process, where language instruction is embedded within spiritual and moral growth (Harmaini, 2024; Azmi & Salam, 2022). As an emerging framework, Spiral Andromeda encourages educators to design curricula that not only foster language proficiency but also nurture ethical awareness.

A practical implementation of this philosophy is through English for Specific Purposes (ESP). ESP allows teachers to contextualize language instruction around particular fields or learner needs. In Islamic education, ESP materials can be tailored to include Islamic history, ethical vocabulary, and concepts relevant to religious discourse. Alfian, Yusuf, & Nafiah (2022) affirm that ESP supports learners in engaging with English while retaining their cultural and spiritual identity, which enhances learning motivation and relevance.

Moreover, integrating Islamic perspectives into English as a Foreign Language (EFL) teaching should occur across all curriculum levels. At the supra level, attention must be paid to global trends and intercultural competencies. The macro level relates to national education policy; the meso level focuses on institutional missions and curriculum interpretation; and the micro level centers on classroom strategies and teacher practices (Nation & Macalister, 2020). Rahman (2019) emphasizes that such alignment helps students not only develop communicative competence but also internalize values such as *akhlaq*, *tazkiyah*, and *al-'ilm*.

Classroom techniques that merge Islamic literacy with EFL instruction include selecting culturally resonant materials, embedding Islamic narratives into reading and writing tasks, and facilitating ethical discussions through speaking and listening activities. For example, Ahmed (2017) recommends using Quranic passages, prophetic guidance, and biographies of Islamic figures in literacy exercises. Similarly, (Khan 2020; Ali and Hassan 2021) argue that moral dilemmas and values-based themes can enhance both language ability and character formation.

Despite its potential, the integration of Islamic values into EFL education faces several practical obstacles. Teacher preparedness is a major concern; many instructors lack training in delivering value-based instruction in foreign language contexts. Moreover, most available textbooks do not reflect Islamic viewpoints. Anggarini et al. (2022) underscores the need for continuous professional development and curriculum renewal to address these gaps. Still, the integration of Islamic literacy into EFL is not only possible it is essential for maintaining cultural integrity and nurturing students' moral compass in the context of global education.

This study aims to explore the integration of Islamic literacy into EFL instruction within Islamic educational institutions in Indonesia. Drawing upon the Spiral Andromeda Philosophy and the principles of ESP, this research investigates curriculum strategies and linguistic practices that support both spiritual identity and global communication skills. By analyzing educational materials and practices across multiple curriculum levels, this study seeks to provide a model for holistic, values-based language education.

METHOD

This study employed a qualitative document analysis to investigate how Islamic principles are integrated into English for Specific Purposes (ESP) teaching in Islamic educational settings in Indonesia. The data were collected from various documents, including curriculum guides, lesson outlines, educational resources, and academic papers that reflect the use of language teaching grounded in Islamic values.

The documents were selected based on their relevance to English instruction in Islamic contexts and their explicit or implicit reference to Islamic educational goals. While the exact number of documents is not the central focus, the selection encompassed multiple institutional sources and scholarly perspectives to ensure a broad view of the issue.

The analysis was carried out through comparative and thematic procedures. In the comparative phase, the documents were examined in terms of how they align with Islamic educational goals such as *akhlak* (character), *ta'dib* (discipline), and *tazkiyah* (spiritual purification). In the thematic phase, recurring concepts and pedagogical patterns were identified and grouped into broader themes, including the integration of religious content, moral-based instruction, and the application of the Spiral Andromeda Philosophy as a guiding framework for curriculum alignment.

This methodological approach enabled the researchers to identify consistent strategies such as intentional code-switching, alignment of lesson content with Islamic values, and the use of culturally relevant examples that reinforce students' Islamic identity. These findings offer insights into how Islamic literacy can be meaningfully embedded in ESP instruction to foster both language skills and moral development

FINDINGS

The results of this research indicate that effectively combining Islamic literacy with English language instruction can be accomplished through various strategic methods. These strategies not only improve students' linguistic competencies but also reinforce their moral and religious values. The following are key approaches identified through document analysis, along with practical examples that illustrate their classroom implementation:

- a. Inclusion in Curriculum: Islamic elements such as Quranic verses, stories of the prophets, and ethics-based themes were embedded into English language materials. For example, one English reading module included a passage on the story of Prophet Yusuf (Joseph) that students analyzed for narrative structure and moral lessons. In another module, vocabulary activities were based on Quranic terms like *sabr* (patience), *amanah* (trust), and *ikhlas* (sincerity), which were followed by writing reflections using the new vocabulary in personal contexts. This strategy helped students connect linguistic forms to Islamic values in a meaningful way.
- b. Learning Through Context: Thematic instruction was designed around real-life Islamic experiences. In one lesson plan, learners were tasked with writing a short essay in English describing their family's Ramadan traditions, which not only practiced writing skills but also reinforced identity and cultural expression. Listening exercises included sermons or public speeches from respected Islamic scholars (translated or simplified), which exposed students to authentic language use grounded in religious discourse.
- c. Engaging Teaching Methods: Ethical discussions were used as the basis for speaking and critical thinking activities. For example, students engaged in structured debates on topics such as "Is it ever acceptable to lie?" or "What does honesty mean in daily life?", drawing on Islamic teachings to support their arguments. In one lesson, learners were asked to role-play conflict-resolution scenarios based on Hadiths about interpersonal ethics, enhancing both their communicative ability and moral reasoning.
- d. Assessments Aligned with Islamic Principles: Assessments were not limited to grammar and vocabulary mastery but also included reflective components. One writing task involved composing a personal letter to a friend advising them on a moral issue, guided by relevant Islamic values. Peer

assessments focused not only on language accuracy but also on respectful tone and clarity of moral reasoning. Rubrics included descriptors like "uses examples aligned with Islamic ethics" to promote deeper awareness.

Table 1: Strategies for Integrating Islamic Literacy in English Education

Strategy	Practical Implications
Curriculum Integration	Embedding Quranic stories and values-based vocabulary enriches both content and ethics.
Contextualized Learning	Tasks such as Ramadan essays or listening to sermons foster identity and comprehension.
Interactive Pedagogical Practices	Moral debates and ethical role-plays enhance speaking skills and moral reasoning.
Assessment Methods	Reflections and peer feedback promote awareness of respectful and ethical communication.

Each component in Table 1 represents a deliberate instructional strategy intended to cultivate both language proficiency and Islamic identity. For instance, curriculum integration allowed students to explore language through familiar Islamic themes, increasing their emotional and cognitive engagement. Contextual learning helped students relate classroom content to lived experiences, while interactive practices encouraged peer collaboration and ethical reflection. The use of values-based rubrics and reflective assignments emphasized not only academic success but also character formation.

These insights emphasize the need for Islamic educators to design materials that resonate with their students' cultural and religious identities. By incorporating such approaches, Islamic educational institutions can nurture learners who are both linguistically capable and ethically grounded, prepared to navigate global contexts without losing their faith-based values.

DISCUSSION

Integration of Islamic Literacy into EFL Instruction

Incorporating Islamic literacy into English as a Foreign Language (EFL) instruction serves a dual purpose: it builds linguistic proficiency while cultivating ethical and spiritual awareness among students. This approach reflects the foundational goals of Islamic education, which aims to form individuals who are not only knowledgeable but also morally upright (Daud, 2023). In this context, the integration of religious content and values is not an added component but an essential part of the educational experience. The Spiral Andromeda Philosophy, proposed by Harmaini et al. (2024), plays a key role in this process. As a model still in development, it offers a cyclical and multilevel framework for structuring curriculum and instruction from broad philosophical principles (supra level) to classroom practices (micro level). The philosophy supports the idea that language learning can and should go hand in hand with spiritual growth, ensuring that students are intellectually capable and morally aware, (Mahmud, Ridwan, & Syafa'at, 2024)

This framework is grounded in traditional Islamic concepts such as *tawhid* (unity of knowledge), *ta'dib* (discipline of the self), and *tarbiyah* (holistic development). By rooting English instruction in these values, the teaching process becomes a medium for moral formation. Ethical discourse, as a part of language instruction, reinforces students' understanding of right and wrong from an Islamic lens. Moreover, this integration responds to learners' psychological and cultural needs. According to Anggarini et al. (2022), students are more engaged when they recognize their identity in learning materials. For Muslim learners, especially in Islamic institutions, this means seeing Islamic figures, terms, and values reflected in English texts and discussions. The content becomes not only educational but also affirming of their faith.

The implementation of such integration can vary widely. Ahmed (2017) suggests embedding moral messages in reading materials, while Khan (2020) emphasizes discussions on ethical dilemmas to build critical thinking. Ali and Hasan (2021) argues that communicative activities should include character-building aspects, such as practicing honesty or resolving conflicts based on Islamic teachings. These strategies help move beyond rote grammar instruction and foster meaningful, values-oriented language learning. Azmi and Salam (2022) note that the spiral model, which emphasizes revisiting and reinforcing key concepts, strengthens retention and moral reasoning. This matches Sidqurrahman's (2024) view of education as a holistic cycle that nurtures both intellect and akhlaq. In sum, the integration of Islamic literacy into EFL should be viewed not as an adjustment to conventional English teaching, but as a transformative framework for shaping the whole student.

Curriculum Development in Islamic Educational Contexts

Developing a language curriculum in Islamic institutions requires educators to align linguistic goals with the moral and spiritual mission of the school. According to Ahmed (2020), curriculum content should reflect Islamic principles, not merely in topic selection but also in the formulation of learning outcomes, teaching strategies, and assessment rubrics. Language cannot be treated as neutral; it carries cultural and ideological messages that must be carefully examined. Rahman (2019) insists that curriculum design must encourage ethical discourse, enabling learners to think critically and act responsibly. This is supported by Khan (2020), who argues that moral competence should be developed alongside language fluency. Without this integration, language education risks producing technically proficient speakers who lack the ethical grounding expected in Islamic education.

Smith's (2018) constructivist learning model, which promotes the cyclical exploration of themes, can be adopted to integrate spiritual and linguistic elements. By revisiting concepts through different linguistic skills reading, writing, listening, and speaking students deepen their understanding while reinforcing key moral messages. In practice, curriculum content might include themes like trustworthiness, environmental stewardship, or social justice, all of which are deeply rooted in Islamic teachings. For instance, a writing task might ask students to compose an argumentative essay on the importance of charity (zakat), or a reading text could analyze the biography of an Islamic scholar like Imam Al-Ghazali. These topics are not only culturally appropriate but also intellectually enriching.

Ali and Hasan (2021) emphasizes that purposeful communication in English should support fairness and respect, echoing the broader Islamic view of language as a tool for fostering good character. Khan (2021) similarly notes that moral development through language helps students build balanced identities both spiritually aware and globally literate. Nation and Macalister (2020) provide a comprehensive framework for curriculum design that is particularly useful when adapted for Islamic settings. They stress that educational planning must be context-sensitive, taking into account institutional missions, national values, and learners' cultural backgrounds. This view aligns with Crystal (2020), who reminds educators that language policy cannot ignore identity and culture.

Practical curriculum development in Indonesia has also been influenced by the Merdeka Belajar policy, which emphasizes flexibility. However, Mulianah (2023) reminds educators that this flexibility must be anchored in strong moral foundations. Incorporating digital platforms for language learning while maintaining religious coherence, a view supported by Pahrudin, Wakidi, & Anggini, (2023), who call for training programs that prepare curriculum designers to implement Islamic philosophies into EFL materials. Trianita et al. (2025) underscore the importance of collaboration between religious scholars and language specialists to ensure balance and depth in curriculum reform.

Pedagogical Strategies for Harmonizing Language and Faith

Curriculum, no matter how well designed, must be accompanied by effective pedagogy. Teaching methods that support the integration of Islamic values into language learning are crucial to ensuring that students engage actively and meaningfully. Pradana, Mahfud, & Priyanto, (2023) propose inclusive and student-centered approaches that foster respect and reflection both

academically and spiritually. Khodijah and Supriadi (2024) highlight pedagogical techniques such as storytelling, role-playing, and project-based learning that align with Islamic principles. For instance, storytelling based on the lives of the Prophets can be used in reading and listening exercises, while group projects can involve presentations on Islamic historical figures or ethical case studies.

Ahmed (2017) encourages the use of Islamic proverbs and parables to embed moral lessons into reading comprehension. In speaking classes, Khan (2020) recommends discussing real-life ethical situations, such as honesty in business or respect for parents, which naturally incorporate both fluency and character building. Rahman (2019) supports reflective assessments like journals and portfolios that help students connect language use with personal growth. Smith (2018) emphasizes formative feedback that encourages students not only to be accurate but also thoughtful and values-conscious in their language choices.

Educators should also model Islamic communication etiquette in the classroom. Ali and Hasan (2021) stresses the importance of honesty, constructive disagreement, and avoiding harmful speech as part of everyday interaction. This not only promotes linguistic politeness but also reflects sincerity (*ikhlas*) and justice (*'adl*), core values in Islamic ethics. Making content locally relevant also enhances engagement. For example, lessons on Hajj can be used in procedural writing, or discussions about zakat can become part of persuasive speaking tasks. These examples allow learners to process complex language while reinforcing identity and faith.

Multiscalar Approach: From Supra to Micro-Level Planning

A multiscalar approach ensures that the integration of Islamic literacy is coherent across all levels of educational planning. Ahmed (2020) explains that the supra level must align global competencies like intercultural communication with Islamic perspectives. This helps students navigate global interactions while remaining anchored in their religious worldview. At the macro level, policies should promote bilingualism with a strong moral foundation. Ministries of education can support this by encouraging textbooks and syllabi that are explicitly faith-integrated (Khan, 2021). The national curriculum should not only allow but incentivize the inclusion of religious content in EFL education. The meso level involves institutional commitment. Rahman (2019) argues that Islamic schools and universities must embed religious values in their academic vision and mission. Programs should be structured to reflect this identity in both goals and daily operations.

At the micro level, teachers become the key agents. Nation and Macalister (2020) emphasize that lesson planning, classroom interaction, and assessment practices must reflect both academic rigor and ethical awareness. Smith (2018) supports this view, advocating for instructional cycles that revisit moral concepts to build both fluency and virtue.

Teachers can design tasks such as debates on moral issues, storytelling using Quranic references, or personal narratives centered on spiritual growth. These not only develop communicative competence but also deepen students' reflection on ethical living. Across all levels, consistency and intentionality are crucial. Without this, integration risks becoming fragmented or superficial. A multiscalar approach enables educators to align vision, design, and action ensuring that Islamic literacy is not merely decorative but transformative.

CONCLUSION

The integration of Islamic values into English language learning materials is crucial for fostering a holistic educational experience within Islamic institutions. This study underscores the necessity of developing resources that are not only linguistically sound but also theologically accurate and culturally relevant. By incorporating strategies such as code-switching, contextualized examples from Islamic history and teachings, and culturally appropriate narratives, educators can create engaging materials that support both language acquisition and the preservation of students' religious and cultural identity. Further research should focus on the development of effective frameworks for creating and evaluating these materials, ensuring their alignment with the specific needs and learning styles of students within diverse Islamic educational contexts.

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