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Article

Immersing Islamic Value in English Language Teaching: A Challenge for English Teachers

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A B S T R A C T

Recently the issue of integrating religion view into all life aspects has emerged rapidly. It has something to do with building especially children's character since they were a child. Moreover, cases of students who lack of norms and attitudes are growing immensely. Hence, the integration of religion in this case Islamic value into all subjects at school is urgently needed. In English Language Teaching (ELT), immersing Islamic value has been constrains by English Teachers because of the limitation of knowledge. Therefore, this paper presents and discusses the values and ethics in Islam its forms and sources. It shades more lights on the infusion of Islamic values and ethics in ELT, the role of teachers, challenges faced in embedding Islamic values into English materials. This paper uses qualitative descriptive research. Library research was used by taking into account some journals and sources related with instilling Islamic values in English teaching. The data then is explained by using descriptive analysis. Finally, this study concludes with some recommendations for tracking the challenges such as inserting exercise with Islamic values in the English topics, using Islamic names for person, event or places, connecting the relevant verse of Holy Book or using it as the material to be translated and using English books containing Islamic messages.

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INTRODUCTION

The emerged issues of immersing values of Islam into teaching and learning process has been something of which teacher tries to do. It is one of the efforts to build the students' character whether they are conscious or not. In Indonesia context which has the largest Moslem population, most students live in Islamic societies using Islamic norms. They have done many Islamic practices from parents, close relatives, or neighbour. It is believed that creating students with good character is the duty of

parents to be accountable before God. Islamic education is an alternative education that is currently selected by the Muslim parents. Today, there are growing numbers of private educational institutions nuances of Islam, such as Islamic Elementary School, Islamic Junior High School, Islamic Senior High School and the Islamic university, which presents the lessons with the Islamic approach in response to the increasingly high demand for Muslim parents.

At the school, The Islamic value is shared by teachers directly and also integrate it with the subjects. Many non-

religious subjects, such as science and technology, language, physics presentation is untouched by religious values. The range of subjects presented the teacher to the students with has not much integrated and mentioned how it is the result of the creation and a superior will of God.

It is believed in many research findings that integrating Islamic message into English language teaching can build students' good Islamic character. They can speak and share their ideas about both Islamic knowledge and its implementation in English to other people in their society so that they have both English ability and Islamic knowledge and practice as well.

Some studies were carried out to seek information about integration. Involving Islamic messages in the teaching materials and upgrading teachers' qualification on integration facilitated the students to be open to differences without losing their Islamic identity (Umam, 2014). To advance research on integrating Islamic values, Rohmah (2019) conducted a study focusing on incorporating Islamic messages in ELT materials in Indonesian context as the medium to reduce the tension experienced by students. Meanwhile, research on teachers' beliefs and practices on integration has shown that teachers perceived integrating Islamic values is essential part of teaching process.

In the context of teaching English, most of teachers still think that the students' background of Islamic knowledge is not too important to be exposed in learning teaching process. They focus only to the material and the topic being discussed that is provided in many English books. They do not know how integrate the students' Islamic background knowledge in teaching English. Another reason is because there are limited resources of English textbooks with Islam integration. Therefore, there should be some practices to handle the challenge of immersing Islamic contents and messages in ELT material.

METHOD

Reflecting on the purpose of this paper, descriptive analysis was implemented as the framework of this paper. In this case, the researcher used library research. Library research is a research used library sources to get the data (Zeid, 2004). In this case, journals and books related to Islamic integration in EFL were used as references. After that, finding and result are drawn and conclusion is synthesized. It is also limited on the library research because the data was not from field and the data of research was collected from various references

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The Urgency of Islamic Immersion in ELT

English is an international language that is important to master. English as a representative of Western societies that practice the values of a secular culture in many instances were contrary to Islamic beliefs. Students of English is likely to find this idea in the text they are reading. The next example is a social problem that has so different manners. Conversations in English lessons often contain snippets of everyday interactions between men and women. Attitudes of male and female Muslims are strictly regulated in the teachings of Islam, which are often opposed to Western culture. English learners may later argue that the Western concept of social interaction deserves to be imitated, even though the Islamic concept of keeping the veil between men and women are required to implement. These are some of the reasons why it is important to integrate Islamic values into ELT.

The Challenge of Integrating Islamic Messages in ELT

For English teachers, it has not been an easy way to apply Islamic integration. The challenge would raise a tension since the subject being taught was not easy to be situated with Islamic values. Rambe and Salminawati (2019) find that there has been a conflicting situation on English teaching in Islamic schools since there is a view that learning English as the target language which is totally different from students' cultural norms. This phenomenon influences the effort of integrating Islamic values at EFL teaching.

Immersing Islamic Values in English Language Teaching

Integrating Islamic messages into ELT material can improve both English skill such as listening, speaking, reading and writing and get Islamic knowledge at the same time. In Indonesia, similar to many other Asian countries, the practical importance of English is recognized but the learning of Western values is not desired (Finney, Kirkpatrick and Prescott, 1995). To accommodate the objections from the Islamic school community, writers and teachers need to modify English, which is, an imperialistic language (Phillipson, 1992), into an instrumental language. Teacher has opportunities to integrate any specific contents in line with school mission. For Islamic schools, teacher can design Islamic material with Islamic message while helping the students to master the targeted English language skills and components. The integration can be done by enclosing quotes verses of the Qur'an or hadith relevant to the subject matter. Meanwhile, in the learning activities, the integration is performed by making a list of activities that reflect the Islamic values that will be carried out during the learning process.

There are number of ways to instill Islamic teaching while the students can still acquire their English skill. Firstly, teacher must pay attention not only in the teaching material, but also method in delivering it to students. Class instruction is needed to be based on good teacher-student rapport and emphasizes ethics attribute and integrity in Islamic way (Tuti, 2016). Furthermore, teacher can also apply the Islamic immersion in English class by opening and closing the class by reciting du'a or simply saying Basmallah and Hamdallah. In this way, students especially in early class can be accustomed into the integration in simple way.

Secondly, textbook is important source in the classroom. It provides organized units of work which helps teachers and students to understand the material. A study by Elmy (2016) shows that English textbook contains embedded Islamic character education, namely making friend, tolerance, thanking God, teamwork, loving animals, plants and so on. This kind of book can be excellent tool to teach English while the learning goals of English teaching can be achieved. Teachers can also insert exercises with Islamic values such as using Islamic names for people, for example Ahmad Harun, Annisa, Fatimah, instead of John, George or Kimberly, places or events in doing a task like writing sentences or conversation. Additional material like module written by teachers themselves which enclose relevant verse or quote relevant verse or quote of the Holy Book Qur'an is excellent way to teach English to students by using it as the material to be translated. As mentioned by Elmy (2016), in the textbook which integrate Islamic value, there are materials containing expressions of English which are in accordance with the typical Islamic expressions, such as expression of making good relationship (ukhuwah Islamiyah). Teacher can mix and combine both expressions as part of learning activities. Md Yusof, et. al. (2008) suggest that instead of saying the usual greeting "Good Morning, Good Afternoon, , How Are You?", teachers can teach the students by accustoming it to saying "Assalamu'alaikum, Good Morning, Good Afternoon, Good Evening, How's life, Are you good? Alhamdulillah" Additionally, phrases of asking direction can be adjusted as, "Assalamu'alaikum. Excuse me. Is there a mosque around here?".

"Assalamu'alaikum. Can you tell me how to get to Islamic Center?"

Furthermore, in other assignment such as writing essay, teachers can ask students to write or to search for specific types of text types associated with Islamic values that match the given topics. Meanwhile, the integration of Islamic values in the assessment activities is carried out through informal assessment in the form of oral questions,

observations of teachers, assignments, and reading aloud in that the materials include Islamic values which are integrated. In addition, the integration of Islamic values in assessment activities is also conducted through daily repetition in the form of an oral test and a written test.

The English Book with Islamic Integration is also needed with the themes such as (1) Lessons from the Qur'an and Hadith, (2) the traditional Islamic stories, (3) Life of the Muslim/Muslim women around the world and (4) Biography of Islamic figures for instance life of the Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him), and other important Muslims, including all the prophets of Allah, friends, and family of Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him), scholars, and leaders in various fields.

A study by Elfi (2016) suggests that in Reading class, teachers can do Islamic integration by incorporating Islamic selections, like biographies of important Muslims, both past and present. Many of these biographies can be accessed via the internet. Biographies of the prophets of Allah, especially Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him), His friends, Muslim women, will demonstrate to students the high value placed on moral character, noble conduct, and hard work, and provide students with Islamic role models so that students see the viability of Islam in their communities.

Narratives and parables are excellent teaching tools; as mentioned in the Holy Qur'an:

"We have put forth for men, in this Qur'an. Every kind of Parable, in order that they may receive admonition."[39:27]

Meanwhile, in some regions maybe English material with Islamic content is still very limited. Textbooks which contain of Islamic integration are hardly found. In this case, teachers are demanded to be creative. Teachers can improvise their instruction based on the available resources. Today, in this modern era, technology is easy to grasp. There have been bunches of Islamic English book, songs in form of pdf, video, mp3 can be accessed freely and used as teaching material. This can be authentic material which are available and used in daily life. The material is not originally intended for teaching learning process for example catalogues, novels and short stories, newspapers, magazines, shop flyers, telephone books, calendars, travel brochures, postcards, songs, DVDs, Radio shows and TV shows. Rohmah (2012) says, using authentic materials in the classroom is advantageous such as improving students' motivation, providing authentic cultural information about the target culture, providing exposure to real language, suitable with

students' needs and supporting more creative approach to teaching.

In implementing authentic material, for instance in listening class, teachers can play English song that contains Islamic message such as from Muslim singers (Harris J., Maher Zein, Raef, and so forth.). The students then are asked to retell or to fill in the missing words of the lyric. Interpreting the lyric also can immerse students into Islamic message while it is still able to achieve their English skill.

Aside from teaching English skill by immersing Islam in its process, teachers can make the students get used to Islamic personality by instilling honesty when they do their task, for example in the implementation of no cheating in exam. Students are also taught to be helpful and to considerate when working with group and sharing knowledge to others (Md Yusof, et. al., 2008). Muslim students will understand that learning English is also part of searching for knowledge which is taught by Islam, and it means that it does not hinder them from being a good Muslim.

CONCLUSION

Implementing Islamic knowledge into English material is not easy. Material deprivation and experience may be the main factors that make this task more

difficult. However, to grow and to develop, teachers are not allowed to give up. Increasing knowledge through training or reading literature, educational literature or discussions with other teachers certainly can help to develop competencies. Thus, immersing Islamic values through English teaching means for students, teachers, lecturers, curriculum designers and textbook for continue to be creative and to learn about Islam. Choosing and selecting the appropriate book and other material based on the aim of the curriculum and syllabus are also vital. Teacher must be selective in choosing the material by considering the students' level, the students' interest and the objective of the English subject. Being creative is important in integrating Islamic message into their English teaching in order to build up students' Islamic character and to minimize negative effect of some cultures that are not in line with Islamic value.

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