Journal of Innovative and Creativity
Journal Homepage: https://joecy.org/index.php/joecy
e-mail: journaljoecy@gmail.com

Faculty of Education
University of Pahlawan Tuanku Tambusai
ISSN 2775-771X (Online)
ISSN 2962-570X (Printed)
5 (2) 2025, Page: 5815-5820

Islamic Perspectives in EFL Teaching

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Published: June, 2025

ABSTRACT

This study delves into the integration of Islamic values within English as a Foreign Language (EFL) instruction, offering a comprehensive examination of how religious and cultural principles from the Qur'an, Hadith, and Islamic pedagogical philosophy can enrich language education. Rather than viewing language acquisition as a standalone objective, this paper advocates for a more holistic approach—one that incorporates Islamic ethics, communication norms, and cultural identity into the curriculum. Central areas explored include the infusion of Islamic cultural narratives into teaching practices, the adaptation of instructional materials to ensure alignment with religious principles, and the nurturing of language skills framed within ethical and spiritual dimensions. The paper also examines the essential role of educators as moral guides and curriculum developers across various levels of educational structure. Ultimately, this paper argues that by embedding Islamic values into EFL instruction, educators can produce learners who are linguistically proficient and spiritually grounded, preparing them to navigate both global communication and Islamic ethical life.

Keywords: *EFL, Islamic Pedagogy, Moral Education, Islamic Communication Ethics, Value-Based Curriculum*

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INTRODUCTION

In today's globalized world, the English language serves as a dominant medium for international discourse in areas such as education, commerce, diplomacy, and media (Abdullah & Hashim, 2016). This growing prominence has led to its widespread adoption in academic curricula, including those within predominantly Muslim contexts (Althafullayya & Akbar, 2024). However, the adoption of English in Islamic educational institutions presents a unique challenge: how to promote global linguistic competence while simultaneously safeguarding the moral and spiritual development of learners. Islamic education, by its very nature, is deeply rooted in the comprehensive development of individuals not only intellectually, but also morally and spiritually. This educational philosophy is not merely academic; it embodies a commitment to fostering individuals who live according to the ethical and spiritual tenets of Islam (Ashraf-Khan & Hossain, 2021) (Daud, 1998). Ismail (2016) asserts that religiously grounded character education is fundamental in shaping individuals who act with moral integrity. In this view (Ismail, 2016), language learning must go beyond grammar and fluency; it must also cultivate adab (proper conduct) and akhlaq (ethical character) (Sakinah, 2025). The aim is to ensure that Muslim students do not just learn to speak and write in English, but also use the language in ways that reflect the teachings of Islam (Putra et al., 2024). Moreover, this integrated approach to EFL instruction not only preserves learners' Islamic identity but also empowers them to engage ethically in a global context. As Moaddel (2002) and Esposito

(2005) point out, Islamic culture is not limited to religious ritual—it is a complex worldview that informs how individuals perceive justice, relationships, knowledge, and social order (Nasr, 1996). Teaching English through an Islamic lens means shaping global citizens who are also faithful stewards of their faith (Norton, 2013).

MATERIALS AND METHODS

The methodology employed is a conceptual and analytical review based on Islamic teachings and pedagogical frameworks for EFL instruction. The approach synthesizes concepts from Islamic culture, value-based material development, Islamic communication ethics, and pedagogical roles of teachers within the context of language education. The discussion is organized according to four curriculum levels: supra (national/global policies), macro (institutional framework), meso (school implementation), and micro (classroom practice).

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Understanding Islamic Culture and Its Role in EFL Teaching

Understanding Islamic Culture and Its Role in EFL Teaching Islamic culture, while anchored in the universal teachings of the Qur'an and Sunnah, is characterized by rich diversity (Halstead & Taylor, 2000). This diversity stems from the varying interpretations and practices of Muslim communities across different regions and historical contexts (Hartono et al., 2021). Despite these differences, the culture maintains a set of core values that are consistent throughout: tawhid (belief in the oneness of God), justice, humility, respect, knowledge-seeking, and ethical living (Harmaini et al., 2024) .

These values are not simply abstract ideals; they are actionable principles that guide every aspect of a Muslim's daily life, including language use and communication. Incorporating such cultural elements into the EFL classroom can be a powerful tool for identity formation and character development (Hasibuan et al., 2025). According to Ali, Sinaga, and Ag (2016), Islamic culture offers a holistic integration between faith and everyday practice, enabling learners to internalize values through both formal education and real-life experiences (Hasibuan et al., 2024). Al-Attas (1993) further argues that Islamic education centers around the instillation of adab, making it inseparable from moral character.

Including Islamic civilization such as the stories of the Prophet Muhammad (PBUH), Muslim scholars like Ibn Sina or Al-Khwarizmi, and Islamic art can provide culturally relevant material that fosters student engagement (Khan, 2019).

Selecting and Adapting Teaching Materials Aligned with Islamic Values

Selecting and Adapting Teaching Materials Aligned with Islamic Values Typical English textbooks may contain cultural norms conflicting with Islamic teachings—such as scenes involving alcohol, dating, or materialism. Therefore, teachers must critically evaluate and adapt these resources.

Choudhury (2013) highlights the importance of contextualization in EFL, urging teachers to filter inappropriate content and insert faith-aligned alternatives. Furqan (2019) supports this by offering frameworks for integrating Islamic literacy into language education. Haque (2001) also adds that materials sensitive to learners' faith reduce cultural dissonance and build emotional safety.

Teachers can modify reading passages to include stories from Islamic history, or incorporate hadith and Qur'anic parables in comprehension exercises. Vocabulary practice can use terms like zakat, hijab, or ummah, while writing tasks may revolve around moral topics such as honesty, kindness, or community service. These adaptations ensure language instruction not only promotes linguistic skills but also nurtures character (Moaddel, 2002).

Developing Islamic Language Skills: Ethics in Communication

Developing Islamic Language Skills: Ethics in Communication Language, in the Islamic tradition, is more than a tool, it is a divine trust. The Qur'an teaches that believers must "speak justly" (Surah Al-Ahzab: 33:70), underlining the ethical responsibility attached to communication (Nasr, 1996).

Khan (2013) outlines that Islamic communication is rooted in sincerity, clarity, and positive intention. Al-Issa (2005) expands this by noting how ethics like niyyah, sidq, and amanah shape not only what is said but how it is said. Educators should leverage this framework in EFL lessons (Khan, 2019).

For example, teachers can introduce ethical communication through scenario-based dialogue practice (e.g., resolving conflict respectfully), reading passages involving moral dilemmas, or group work structured around collaborative values. According to Halstead and Taylor (2000), moral learning through language helps students internalize values, particularly when guided by religious narratives.

Role of Teachers as Moral and Educational Guides

In Islamic education, the role of the teacher is far more than that of a knowledge transmitter. Teachers are expected to serve as moral exemplars, embodying the values they seek to instill in their students. This dual function educator and spiritual mentor is deeply rooted in Islamic tradition, where the Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) himself was referred to as a teacher who combined wisdom, character, and communication in his instruction (Sahin, 2013).

As language instructors in Islamic institutions, teachers carry the responsibility of modeling ethical communication, maintaining respectful interactions, and integrating moral reflections into classroom discourse (Tran, 2010). Sadeghpour and Sharifian (2019) note that successful integration of

religious identity into language instruction requires a high degree of teacher agency, intercultural competence, and critical reflection.

To be effective in this role, educators must undergo professional development that not only enhances their linguistic teaching skills but also deepens their understanding of Islamic pedagogy. Workshops and training sessions can provide guidance on selecting faith-aligned materials, using culturally sensitive classroom practices, and designing activities that support both language acquisition and character formation (Sidqurrahman, 2024).

Moreover, teachers must collaborate with families and the broader community. Parental involvement reinforces classroom instruction, and community engagement creates a network of shared values. Together, they form an educational ecosystem that supports students' development across all domains: linguistic, cognitive, social, and spiritual.

An effective Islamic EFL teacher therefore becomes a bridge connecting global language education with local religious identity. This role, while demanding, is essential for cultivating students who are confident in both their faith and their ability to participate ethically in an English-speaking world. They must embody the ethical and spiritual values they teach. Al-Attas (1980) argued that without adab, education becomes corrupted. Sadeghpour and Sharifian (2019) assert that faith-conscious language teachers must develop intercultural sensitivity and reflective practice. This includes aligning lesson content with Islamic ethics and demonstrating those values in class interaction (Weda et al., 2022). Professional development programs should train teachers to recognize spiritual dimensions in language learning and equip them with culturally adaptive teaching strategies. Hashim (2004) and Edge (2003) emphasize that spiritual training for teachers enhances their ability to guide both academic and moral growth.

Curriculum Development through Supra, Macro, Meso, and Micro Levels

Curriculum Development through Supra, Macro, Meso, and Micro Levels At the supra level, national education policy must explicitly support cultural preservation while promoting global competence. Bokamba (2019) and Wan Daud (1998) advocate for language education models that foster ethical multilingualism. This means positioning Islamic values as compatible with global engagement (Daud, 1998). At the macro level, institutions like Islamic universities must design curricula that include moral goals. Nasr (1996) argues that a sound curriculum integrates both reason and revelation, balancing spiritual and intellectual excellence.

At the meso level, schools can implement activities such as English speech competitions with Islamic themes, or project-based learning around Muslim scholars (Ramakrishna & Abdullah, 2015). Such initiatives foster holistic learning that ties language with identity. At the micro level, classroom practices must reflect Islamic communication ethics. Teachers can assess not just grammar and fluency, but also

politeness, honesty, and cooperation. Cook (2001) emphasize integrating values directly into assessment rubrics (Daud, 1998) (Al-Attas, 1980).

CONCLUSIONS

The integration of Islamic perspectives into English as a Foreign Language (EFL) instruction is both a necessary and enriching endeavor for Muslim educational institutions. Far from being a peripheral concern, the inclusion of Islamic values in language education is central to the development of learners who are capable of participating in global discourse while maintaining their religious identity and ethical commitments.

Islamic culture with its emphasis on justice, truthfulness, humility, and intellectual pursuit offers a deep reservoir of content and values that can profoundly enhance EFL instruction. When language learning is infused with religious relevance, students not only achieve linguistic competence but also develop moral insight and spiritual resilience.

Through the careful selection of appropriate materials, the ethical framing of communication skills, and the central role of teachers as moral guides, EFL classrooms can become spaces of transformative learning. Moreover, when supported by curriculum design at all four levels supra, macro, meso, and micro this integrated approach becomes both scalable and sustainable.

In essence, teaching English from an Islamic perspective is not about isolating learners from the global community. Rather, it is about preparing them to engage the world thoughtfully, respectfully, and faithfully. It ensures that English is not just a tool for communication, but a medium for upholding the values of adab, akhlaq, and iman in a rapidly changing world.

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