

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

This chapter presents some background information about this study. It highlights some important points: Integration of Islamic Values in English as a Foreign Language at Two Upper Secondary Islamic Boarding Schools in Bandung. Therefore, this section introduces the background, research questions, research purposes, research contributions, framework, and previous studies.

A. Background of the Research

Integrating Islamic values into non-religious subjects has become an important topic in the world of education, especially in Indonesia. In the context of national education, this integration is known as Integrated Learning which uses approaches such as the Integrated Curriculum or thematic approach (Rohmah, Hanifiyah, Fitriyah & Ningsih, 2019). At the school level, the application of Islamic values in English learning is considered an effort to enrich the Kurikulum Merdeka while strengthening students' character. This aims to enable students to face global challenges without losing their footing on the values of Pancasila, local culture, and religious teachings.

Kurikulum merdeka places students as learning, with an emphasis on differentiated learning to adapt to the diversity and potential of each student's center. With this approach, each student is expected to achieve achievements according to their respective fields. One of the roles of education in developing students' potential is to guide and maintain their nature so that they develop in a better direction. The development of this potential takes place through the learning process, both in the school environment and outside of school.

Kurikulum merdeka also carries the principle of the Pancasila Student Profile Strengthening Project (P5), which has six main dimensions, namely faith and devotion to God Almighty and noble character, global diversity, mutual cooperation, independence, critical thinking, and creativity. This Pancasila Student Profile can be realized through various activities, including school culture, extracurricular activities,

and the implementation of the Pancasila Student Profile Strengthening Project (P5) in educational institutions under the auspices of the Ministry of Education and Culture. Meanwhile, for institutions under the auspices of the Ministry of Religion, this activity is developed in the form of the Pancasila Student Profile Strengthening Project and the Rahmatan Lil Alamin Student Profile (P5PPRA).

One of the main challenges in learning English is the content of the material which often has Western cultural nuances that are not always in line with Islamic values (Wafi, 2024). This challenge emphasizes the need for educators to play an active role in explaining the differences and similarities between Western cultural norms and Islamic values, even though they are not teaching Islamic learning at that time.

Due to cultural differences between the West and Indonesia, teaching English in Islamic-based schools such as Islamic Boarding Schools needs to integrate Islamic and local values to prevent misunderstandings about cultural and religious diversity (Safitri, Jabu and Samtidar, 2023). With these challenges, educators need to play an active role in explaining the differences and similarities between Western cultural norms and Islamic values.

The Indonesian education system, through the Kurikulum Merdeka, seeks to address these challenges by emphasizing holistic education that combines cultural, moral, and religious values. Kurikulum Merdeka was introduced by the Ministry of Education, Culture, Research, and Technology (Kemendikbudristek) in response to meeting the needs faced by students (Ariga, 2022; Nugraha, 2022). Kurikulum Merdeka is designed to be more adaptive and flexible, with a focus on developing students' character and essential skills. Key features of the Kurikulum Merdeka include project-based learning that develops students' soft skills and character (Fajari, Aminuddin, 2024).

Kurikulum Merdeka is divided into two parts: (1) co-curricular and (2) intracurricular learning to strengthen students' character with the values of Pancasila and noble character (see national documents). The moral values contained in the

Preamble to the 1945 Constitution of the Republic of Indonesia are an important source of learning about divinity and Faith. This is in line with the mandate of *Law of the Republic of Indonesia No. 20 of 2003 on the National Education System*, Article 3, which states, "National education functions to develop the potential and shape the character and civilization of the nation with dignity to enlighten the nation's life."

Kurikulum Merdeka provides autonomy to teachers to develop more interesting and relevant teaching resources, aiming to create education that is in accordance with students' needs and instills character in line with Pancasila. In this context, the formation of the P5 optimization program is part of Kurikulum Merdeka. A series of teaching activities aimed at improving students' profiles by the values of Rahmatan lil alamin and Pancasila are important components of the curriculum, with a focus on project-based learning. The purpose of all these activities is to increase student involvement in learning and achieve competencies and moral values that are in line with Rahmatan lil alamin and Pancasila. (Aini, 2023)

English teaching in Indonesia largely followed prescribed textbooks, neglecting opportunities to integrate religious and local values. In fact, in the field of language learning, integrating a foreign language with other disciplines has proven to be very beneficial, considering the important role of foreign language as an educational tool (Prayitno, Nasucha, Huda, Ratih, Rohmadi, Boeriswati, & Thambu, 2022).

In the context of the *Kurikulum Merdeka*, the integration of Islamic values into English language learning is essential in guiding students to develop communication skills that are in line with religious and cultural beliefs. *Kurikulum Merdeka* emphasizes the importance of holistic education, where not only cognitive development but also character building is the main focus. Integrating Islamic values such as respect, honesty, humility, and discipline into English language learning can help students acquire skills that are not only useful in global communication but also consistent with their Faith.

The same case may happen in Islamic education institutions. The implementation of the *Kurikulum Merdeka* in Islamic boarding schools is not only

interesting from the aspect of strengthening religious and cultural values but also provides great opportunities for the development of English language learning. In this context, English can be taught not only as a language skill but also as a medium for instilling Islamic values. As Kusumawati (2024) explained, Islamic boarding schools have a head start in integrating local and religious values into the modern curriculum, including in English language learning. This approach allows Islamic boarding schools to teach English with culturally and religiously relevant content, such as moral themes, ethics, and Islamic stories.

Opportunities to strengthen English language learning by implementing the *Kurikulum Merdeka* in Islamic boarding schools open up contextual and meaningful education. This curriculum not only helps students master English for academic and professional purposes but also instills Islamic values that are relevant to their needs as individuals living in the era of globalization. Islamic boarding schools can utilize the *Kurikulum Merdeka* to make English language learning part of an educational strategy based on religious and cultural values.

In this situation, EFL (English as a Foreign Language) teachers play a vital role in addressing these differences, helping students navigate language and culture while reinforcing Islamic principles. This process ensures that students understand the global context of the language without compromising, not to mention ignoring and degrading religious values. Through such integration, English language learning can contribute to character building by encouraging students to uphold Islamic values in their interactions, both inside and outside the classroom.

In addition to learning language, students are also taught the various social uses of language in native-speaking communities. In this way, students are introduced to the social values that exist in English-speaking society. However, when some cultural differences or thoughts are not to Islamic values and Indonesian cultural values, EFL teachers should explain this to Muslim students. By so doing, they do not immediately adopt values that conflict with their religious teachings and national identity.

The learning process for Muslim students is not only transforming knowledge and developing practical skills for a certain profession or job. More than that, it is expected to be a means of instilling Islamic values in an integrated manner (Permatasari. 2019). Sari (2013) underlines the important role of education in instilling moral values in students, which is in line with the idea that education functions as an optimal means for instilling ethical principles.

Integration of Islamic values in English learning can be achieved through relevant activities, such as storytelling with Islamic stories, as seen in Angin's (2018) study of Al-Faisal College in Sydney, which integrates English with Surah Al-Fil in its curriculum. His research shows how an English lesson focused on text analysis can include the interpretation of Surah Al-Fil, providing students with not only a deeper understanding of the Qur'anic text but also Islamic values. This approach allows students to meet the English curriculum requirements set by NESA (NSW Education Standards Authority) while also enhancing their religious understanding, creating a more holistic learning experience.

At Al-Faisal College in Sydney, English lessons were integrated with Surah Al-Fil. It was chosen because it is short and easy to understand for many students, making it an effective teaching material. Surah Al-Fil has an interesting historical context that allows students to conduct a deeper analysis of the text. This shows how the integration of religious material, such as the interpretation of the Qur'an, can be effectively implemented within the framework of English learning in Islamic schools in Australia (Angin, 2018).

The integration of technology with Islamic values in English learning is exemplified through the use of multimedia tools, such as videos containing Islamic content. Marhamah et al. (2020) conducted a study that demonstrated how Islamic values, including the stories of the Prophets, were effectively integrated into video-based teaching materials. In their research, teachers were trained to design and develop English teaching materials that align with both curriculum standards and Islamic principles. This process involved selecting and adapting content, simplifying

language, and visualizing lessons through multimedia presentations, including videos. The study highlighted how such integration not only enhances students' engagement and understanding but also supports their character development by instilling Islamic values in the learning process.

Research on the integration of Islam into English language learning has been widely conducted; for example, Angin (2018), in his study of Islamic schools in Australia, lies in the limited availability of practical pedagogical resources that effectively integrate Islamic values with mandated curriculum subjects, such as English. While Angin's work provides valuable insights into the integration of Surah Al-Fil into English language lessons, these efforts remain fragmented and specific to the Australian context. There is a marked absence of research findings, so the nuanced challenges of integration remain under-explored. This underscores the need for empirical studies and strategies that address the various needs of students, teacher training, and curriculum design in the integration of Islam in English language learning.

Wijayanto's (2020) research also highlights the integration of Islamic values into English language learning among students, especially those in the Islamic Education Study Program. This study is the Top Ranking of the Publish or Perish application with 57 citations per year with the keyword integration of Islamic religion in English language learning. However, despite providing a detailed exploration of how Islamic values can be integrated into English language teaching materials, this study primarily focuses on higher education and does not comprehensively address the context of secondary or higher education. Furthermore, the findings of this study are limited to a specific student demographic with a strong background in Islamic studies, which may not fully capture the challenges and opportunities of integrating Islamic values in a broader and more diverse secondary school environment.

This research gap highlights the need for research investigating how Islamic values in Islamic boarding schools can be integrated in the EFL at the secondary school level, where students may have varying levels of religious understanding and

where the curriculum demands differ significantly from higher education. Addressing this gap may help create a more cohesive pedagogical approach that meets the developmental and educational needs of Islamic boarding school students.

B. Research Problems

The research problem in this study is that Islamic Educational Institutions focus on their learning on the Islamic religion, but to keep up with the times, they develop materials such as English, Natural Science, and Social Studies. The meaning of how far these lessons, for example English, are integrated with Islamic values as the focus of teaching in Islamic Educational Institutions.

Teachers often face challenges in adapting learning to remain in accordance with Islamic values without reducing the effectiveness of language teaching, the lack of practical implementation guidelines makes the integration of Islamic values in learning still less than optimal (Alfian, 2021). The gap between the goals of Islamic education and the needs of English learning is also a challenge, especially in Islamic boarding schools that prioritize religious values (Angin 2018). Studies on this integration need to be developed.

This study examines the integration of Islamic values into English Foreign Language (EFL) learning in two Islamic Boarding Schools. The research problem highlights the gaps in integrating Islamic values into EFL.

By exploring how these values are integrated into EFL, this study offers insights into what Islamic values are present in learning activities or in lesson plans and how to integrate Islamic values in learning activities. This study also examines how these values align with broader language learning objectives.

Refining the problem and conducting a literature review, this study establishes a well-defined and structured approach to what Islamic values are and how to integrate Islamic values in two Islamic boarding schools. Moreover, these boarding schools are under the leadership of large organizations in Indonesia, such as Persis and Muhammadiyah. Following the recommendations of Grewal et al. (2016), this

process ensures that the research is based on relevant theoretical and practical frameworks, thus enhancing its contribution to education and cultural studies.

C. Research Questions

This thesis is conducted to answer several research questions related to the integration of Islamic values into English Foreign learning at Manbaul Huda Persis Islamic Boarding School and Syamsul Ulum Islamic Boarding School. The main objective is to understand the types of Islamic values that are integrated into English language learning and how Islamic values are integrated into English language learning. These two research questions are presented as follows:

1. What kind of Islamic values are Integrated into English as a Foreign Language in Upper Islamic Secondary Schools?
2. How are Islamic values Integrated into English as a Foreign language in Upper Islamic Secondary Schools?

The first and second research questions involved qualitative analysis. The first research question aims to identify specific Islamic values integrated into English as a Foreign Language. This question seeks to understand which Islamic values, such as Faith Values, Worship Values, and Moral Values, are integrated into EFL. By answering this question, the study will highlight the extent to which these values are integrated into the language learning process, whether they are explicitly presented or subtly intertwined within the teaching activities.

The second research question explores the methods used to integrate Islamic values into English as a Foreign Language. It examines how teachers integrate these values through teaching materials, classroom activities, or their conduct, such as using texts aligned with Islamic principles or discussing Islamic history. Additionally, this question investigates whether Islamic values are addressed directly or subtly integrated into the learning process. Both questions are crucial to understanding how Islamic values can be effectively integrated into English learning to support both educational and religious objectives.

Teachers have a high influence on students. Therefore, research on teachers was conducted to see what and how they integrate Islamic values into EFL.

D. Research Purpose

This study aims to explore Islamic values in English as a Foreign Language at two Upper Secondary Islamic Boarding Schools in Bandung: Manbaul Huda Persis Islamic Boarding School and Syamsul Ulum Muhammadiyah Islamic Boarding School. It will focus on two main objectives: to gain an understanding of Islamic values in English learning.

The first objective is to identify Islamic values integrated into EFL. This includes examining values such as Faith, Worship, and Moral. By identifying these values, this study will provide insight into what Islamic values exist in EFL. The second objective of this study is to explore how teachers integrate Islamic values into EFL learning. This will involve analyzing teaching materials, lesson plans, classroom activities, and interactions between teachers and students. This study will examine whether Islamic values are explicitly conveyed through stories or discussions about Islamic teachings or if they are subtly integrated through moral lessons in the learning process. Understanding these methods will help explain how teachers successfully balance delivering language skills while also instilling Islamic values in their students.

This study seeks to offer a comprehensive view of how Islamic values are integrated in the EFL learning activity in these two schools. It will highlight kind of Islamic values and how to integrate religious values into non-religious subjects. The findings of this study aim to provide valuable insights for educators and institutions seeking to balance language education with Islamic values to be ready to face local and global challenges.

E. Significances of the Research

Practically, this study directly benefits researchers, educators, and students by addressing the real-world challenges of integrating Islamic values into English as a Foreign Language. Researchers can gain valuable insights into the practical application of religious principles in education, helping to bridge the gap between faith-based learning and language acquisition. For English teachers, these findings offer insights into integrating Islamic values into lesson planning, classroom interactions, and teaching materials, ensuring that language learning remains aligned with religious values. The study also supports learning environments that integrate faith, worship, and morals into language acquisition, and enhance character development.

Theoretically, this study contributes to the fundamental understanding of religious integration in education. It provides a conceptual framework for analyzing how Islamic values interact with EFL learning and offers new perspectives on the relationship between faith, worship, and moral in language education. By expanding theoretical discussions on the religious dimensions of EFL, this study enriches the discourse on inclusive education practices and cross-cultural studies. Furthermore, it supports the development of educational models that balance language proficiency with moral and spiritual growth, shaping future studies in this area

F. Contributions of Study

This study seeks to increase the wealth of information in education through the alignment of religious and language education. The aim is to create a harmonious alignment between religion and language and enhance students' academic abilities but also guide students' academic and spiritual growth. This study can provide valuable information on the integration of Islamic values in EFL learning. By showing the importance of integrating religious values into EFL, teachers as educators and lesson planners, can respond to the need to prioritize holistic student development and promote learning rooted in Islamic Values.