

English As A Foreign Language Students' Attitude Toward English Preference And Islamic Vocabularies

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Abstract

The connections between students and English as a foreign language (EFL) are endlessly fascinating. Numerous studies have covered it from various angles and perspectives. One of them is this study, which examines it from an EFL and student viewpoint. Islamic elementary school pupils were questioned about their preferences for acquiring Islamic vocabulary and the English language in elementary school. In addition, the government's English book is already excellent based on how well it aligns with the curriculum for the English language arts topic. However, because the majority of Indonesian students are Muslims, the book's vocabulary does not include terms from the Islamic language. As a result, we were interested to know the student's opinions on the addition of Islamic words to their English classes. The quantitative methods were used, and we used the IBM SPSS statistical software for the data analysis. The findings indicate a positive relationship between two types of schools: Islamic elementary school (MI) and national elementary school (SD). In conclusion, 51.1% of students enjoy studying English, while 70% are interested in learning Islamic vocabulary. According to these findings, even 18.9% of students who do not like English are interested in learning Islamic vocabulary. They find it amazing that learning new words is so important for their daily lives as Muslims.

Keywords: EFL; English; Islamic; preference;
vocabularies

1. Introduction

In the realm of education, Indonesian children begin learning English at an early age (kindergarten) and continue through higher education. The Indonesian new curriculum, Kurikulum Merdeka (Independent Curriculum) is a curriculum with diverse intra-curricular learning where the content will be optimized so that students have enough time to explore concepts and strengthen competencies. Based on the Ministry of education, culture, research and technology number 034/H/KR/2022 concerning education units implementing the implementation of independent curriculum in the 2022/2023 academic year, therefore, starting the year 2022 English subject in elementary schools highly recommended to be taught in elementary school level. Moreover, the ministry of education stated that English language proficiency is a fundamental requirement for all Indonesian students to be able to communicate across cultures and between countries and to take an active part in a global society.

Teaching English to children is the same as teaching English to young learners as a foreign language since children do not comprehend why learning a foreign language is vital and one of the most important components of teaching English to young learners is to provide enjoyable and appealing learning activities (Madya and Wahyudi, 2020). Most importantly, it allows pupils to engage in the learning process, and to generate flawless results, whereby every education must be backed by academic facilities (Dalimunte & Ward, 2022). In addition, Ghazali et al. (2020) define meaningful learning involves students engaging in active, productive, and long-term activities throughout their learning.

Chérrez et al. (2018) define that teaching English as a foreign language is an issue that most nations around the world are addressing and practicing. Moreover, foreign-language educators across the world have struggled with the pedagogical difficulty of blending language and culture (Chen and Le, 2018). Furthermore, Misdi (2017) explains

that involvement and engagement in English learning are still underappreciated in terms of meaningful learning for both teachers and students. Cunningsworth (1983) suggested that language instruction should prepare students for real-world language use outside of the classroom. Therefore, real-world language is needed to be learned by the students based on Cunningsworth's suggestion.

In 2022, the royal Islamic strategic studies center (RISSC) stated that the Muslim population in Indonesia is estimated 237.56 million people, which is about 86.9% of all Indonesian people. The Islamic religion represents the most practiced religion in Indonesia. Muslim students study English at school, which brings us to the point where English is recognized as a worldwide language. However, the focus of their English textbook is presenting 'western' culture, context, and ideologies. Hence, what Muslim students require is to study English with an Islamic background, culture, and ideology (Cahyo et al., 2017). It will both ease their learning process and improve their Islamic understanding at the same time. Indonesian-Muslim students need educational materials that represent their Muslim lifestyle (Djamdjuri et al., 2022).

Educating Islamic morals is critical in the responsibility for moral education (Lovat, 2016). In a country with many Muslim people, take for example in Pakistan as Mahboob (2009) explained that English expresses Islamic principle and represents South Asian Islamic sensibilities. English education in Islamic institutions is a separate subject, focusing mostly on the cultural aspect—Western culture and philosophy. In addition, Khoiriyah et al. (2022) define Islamic content should be included in the English curriculum in Islamic primary schools. Therefore, Farah et al. (2021) create an English workbook for their pupils that are Muslim-friendly.

Researchers may utilize the CEFR as a measurement tool to introduce appropriate language into the development workbook. The CEFR is developed by the Council of Europe; it is not English-specific, but rather employs neutral terminology that may be used by learners of any language (Nuñez, 2020). Furthermore, Cambridge describes that it is a global language skills standard that assigns a six-point scale to language aptitude, ranging from A1 for novices to C2 for those who have mastered a language. The CEFR document also contains information

about the lexical control required of students at each level of the hierarchy (Milton, 2010).

Nuñez (2020) describes that students at the A1 level have a fundamental understanding of the English language. In addition, the growing importance of the CEFR has prompted research into the linguistic features of its levels, to aid in the design of teaching materials, courses, and assessments (Khushik & Huhta, 2022), as well as used for designing and assessing curriculum materials, certification requirements, exams, textbooks, and so on (Byram, 2022). From this point, this development workbook will develop vocabulary building using the CEFR standard for elementary students that is at the A1 level.

English books that have been published by both the government and private publishers are quite good, and interesting with various pictures on themes according to the existing syllabus and are also well structured. However, we then wonder if our elementary school students love their English classes and are also motivated to learn new words with Islamic nuances.

2. Method

In this research, we used quantitative research method to gain the needed information. As William (1987) stated that paradigm argues that behavior can be described by objective facts as positive visits, and quantitative approaches represent positive visit assumptions. Design and instrumentation convince by outlining the methods by which bias and error are minimized.

Participants in this study are elementary school students. There are two main types of schools involved: a national elementary school, also known as a Sekolah Dasar (SD), and an Islamic elementary school known as a Madrasah Ibtidaiyah (MI). The overall number of participants included 91 students from MI (school type 1) and 99 students from SD (school type 2). Additionally, the participant details are included in Table 1, which shows that a total of 54.2% of male and 45.8% of female participated.

Table 1. School type * Gender Cross-tabulation

	Male	Female	Total
School type 1	46	45	91

2	57	42	99
Total	103	87	190
Percent	54.2%	45.8%	100.0%

Additionally, the students are at least 7 years old and at most 13 years old, all of them are in grades 2 through 6 (the reason for excluding the first grade is because of a condition within their too-young age). Table 2 contains summary information on the number of students in each grade who are identified based on the type of school.

Table 2. School type * Grade Cross-tabulation

		Grade					
		2	3	4	5	6	Total
School type	SD	18	16	19	24	14	91
	MI	25	23	17	22	12	99
Total		43	39	36	46	26	190

The instrument used in this research is a questionnaire, it was answered by all students in pen and paper-based. We compiled the survey and then grouping into the data selection. Furthermore, the IBM SPSS statistical software was utilized to process the data and characterize the correlations between variables (Stockemer, 2019).

3. Results and discussion

The results of the study will highlight two issues: students' attitudes regarding English preference and Islamic vocabulary.

Table 3. English preference percentage

	Frequency	Percent (%)
Like English	97	51.1
Do not like English	83	43.7
No response	10	5.3
Total	190	100.0

Table 3 shows that from 190 students, 51.1% liked English subjects whereas 43.7% did not like English subjects, and the rest 5.3% decided to not answer the questions. Hanafi et al.

(2021) propose diverse grouping to allow for more extensive contact between students, hence increasing the sociocultural-interactive dimension, Allwright, (1981) drawn that material issues should be broadly tied to the conceptualization of the entire concept of language teaching and learning as cooperative management of language acquisition. In this results we knew that 43.7% student do not like English, the materials from the English book and or other reasons contains the way the students thinking is mean in this answer.

Littlejohn (2012) establish the basic proposition; we may see the creation of language instruction materials as no less a cultural practice than any other socially and historically situated human activity, and we may study the nature of materials by looking back at the larger context of their development. Moreover, Weis (2021) stated that today's society needs more commitment to educating future generation.

Table 4. Students' reasons of English preference percentage

	Frequency (n)	Percent (%)
Difficult	56	29.5
Cool	4	2.1
Unique	5	2.6
Like	60	31.6
Easy	13	6.8
Other	30	15.8
No response	22	11.6
Total	190	100.0

Table 4 shows the reasons for the students are varied. At most 31.6 % of students stated that they like English subject because they just like it. Other students also answered that they like English because of its uniqueness and coolness to learn. On other hand, 29.5% of students stated they do not like English subject because it is difficult.

Table 5. Students preference on learning Islamic vocabularies

	Frequency (n)	Percent (%)
Interested	133	70.0

Not interested	27	14.2
No response	30	15.8
Total	190	100.0

The second result is about students' answers about their preference in learning Islamic vocabulary that relates to their daily activities. It is shown that in table 5 that 70% of the total students are interested in learning Islamic vocabulary. 14.2% are not interested and the rest did not answer these questions.

Language and culture are inextricably linked, as Ahmed and Narcy-Combes (2011) demonstrated. In an English textbook, the development of religious characteristics and local wisdom is an attempt to increase student's English competency while neglecting their religious beliefs and culture in English communication (Darmayenti et al. 2021). Furthermore, Foye (2014) states that EFL/ESL teachers are generally not opposed to religion being mentioned or discussed in class, as well as the development of English instructional materials that could provide a set of instructional materials to accommodate Islamic characteristics and student needs.

Islamic studies have been thoroughly investigated, and it appears that Islamic studies have begun to be extensively studied by devotees of religious studies and others. Pratama (2022) described Islamic studies as a purposeful and methodical endeavor to study, comprehend, and expound in depth on issues linked to Islam, including spirituality, history, and practical application in daily life. Some researchers have worked on EIS studies for higher education such as Muslimin (2020), integrating Islamic values by Rochmahwati (2019), Suhono's (2019) studies about explicit strategy instruction, Munir (2017) language and Islamic values in producing a textbook and especially for Islamic education program (Wiranegara & Wahyudi, 2020).

Students' reasons on Islamic vocabularies preference are varied. At most 30.5% of students did not answer their questions. Additionally, 30% of them answered that they are interested in learning Islamic vocabulary because they want to know and understand the English version of its Islamic vocabulary. Moreover, some of the answered that because they are Muslim, they want to learn Islamic vocabulary and others stated that they are curious about that.

Djamdjuri et al. (2021) researched students' attitudes toward Islamic materials, and it is stated that the majority of respondents want to use Islamic materials to learn English; they said Islamic materials helped them improve their English language abilities. Furthermore, a challenge for English teachers to Immerse Islamic values in English Language Teaching had completed the Islamic value in English language teaching (Rohmana, 2020). Moreover, Wijayanto (2020) expressed the students' perspectives on the integration of Islamic principles in the execution of English learning. Therefore, from both of Rohmana and Wijayanto studies are outlining the necessity for Islamic resources to be included in EFL lessons.

Although realism and genuine materials improve student motivation, they are challenging to adjust to the learner's language ability, particularly at the beginning level. Benavent and Peamara (2011) added that It is also worth noting that creating such materials can take a long time Another consideration in generating materials is the material's level of authenticity. Designers should think about employing real-life, authentic materials that represent the target audience's area of expertise (Abudhahir et al., 2015). In addition, Islamic teachings contain human and universal values, standards, or laws of life, and are capable of providing answers to challenging circumstances. This is where the urgency of ideas to unearth Islamic teachings that are unique and pure, humanitarian, yet still relevant to the times arises (Pratama, 2022). Moreover, Alhasani (2017) argues that understanding a lot about a lot of things is crucial, but knowing how to present that information, precisely, and effectively to ensure successful "competitive" communication in an increasingly interconnected, multicultural world is more critical than ever.

4. Conclusions

Considering that language learning is mainly a learner-oriented activity, more emphasis has recently been placed on the learner's role in the process. For language learning and teaching to be successful, learners' needs and interests must be taken into account.(Noor, 2011). In future, more comprehensive and in-depth data will be collected and analyzed. In addition, it is highly recommended to create an English book based on Islamic vocabulary, whether it is for

primary or supplemental resources in the English class. Language theory advances over time have revealed the necessity to pay more attention to individual learners. Vičić (2011) offers that tailor-made materials allow the instructor to select combinations of language, functions, and structures: to create materials that present the most appropriate vocabulary and related functions and structures. In addition, the capacity to master a foreign language is a requirement for a student to compete on an international level. This is related to the objective of EFL learning in elementary school based on the Kurikulum Merdeka that is to take an active part in a global society.

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