

The (In) famous English Language Policy in Pesantren: What We Already Know and What Remains Unknown

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Abstract

HISTORY

Received

07 December 2022

Revised

16 November 2023

Accepted

18 November 2023

KEYWORDS

English Language

Instruction,

Learning Effectiveness,

Pesantren Based


Management,

Objectives, Practices,

Challenges.

The development of English language instruction ought to align to a well-established educational system that aims to produce students with proficient English language skills. *Pesantren*, which are educational institutions that are well-known for their capacity to provide high-quality English language instruction, serve as an illuminating study in this context. This study investigates the goals, practical implementations, and challenges associated with English language instruction in *pesantren*. In this study, researchers used triangulation to boost the validity and reliability of the findings in investigating English language instruction in *pesantren*. By combining several data sources, such as document analysis and a semi-structured interview, researchers may construct a cohesive and comprehensive picture of the research subject. Additionally, it investigates the intricate relationship between the various factors that influence students' command of the English language. English language teaching and learning in *pesantren* operate in a multifaceted practices, with each component fulfilling specific roles and functions that are tightly aligned with the overarching goal of English learning. Since each component fulfills a different set of roles and functions, students are able to not only acquire the necessary linguistic competence but also develop effective communication skills, which enables them to flourish in the interconnected and globalized world of today. The interdependence of all facets of teaching English as a foreign language is painstakingly orchestrated, and institutional conditions provide a stable and dependable foundation for this. This study sheds light on the complexities of English language instruction in *pesantren* and emphasizes the importance of continuous reflection on the purpose of English by examining these key aspects.

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 : <https://doi.org/10.47766/idarah.v7i2.821>

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INTRODUCTION

In Indonesia, both private and public educational institutions at all levels of education, including elementary school (SD), junior high school (SMP), senior high school (SMA), and college, have implemented English as a foreign language requirement for students, alongside the national language, Indonesian (Hamid & Ali, 2022). The inclusion of English in the mandatory national education curriculum is based on its status as an international language (Rahman & Saputra, 2021). Consequently, English is taught in all Indonesian schools, and its proficiency is assessed in the National Final Examination (UAN) as one of the tested disciplines (Zein et al., 2020). As students' progress to the third year of junior high school (grade III) and senior high school (grade III), where they are preparing to take the UAN, additional study time in the form of tutoring is offered.

Meanwhile, *Pesantren* (The Islamic Boarding School), one of the most prominent non-formal religious institutions in Indonesia, is an integral element of the educational landscape of the country (Nilan, 2009; Mujib et al., 2021; Prasetyo & Fadhilah, 2022). While religious studies are the primary focus of *Pesantren*, these Islamic residential schools provide students with valuable opportunities to acquire general knowledge and learn English (Habibi et al., 2018). *Pesantren* are renowned for their commitment to Islamic education, with the objective of fostering students' spiritual development and religious comprehension (Tolchah & Mu'ammam, 2019). The curriculum emphasizes Islamic foundations and teachings through core disciplines such as Qur'anic studies and law "*Syariah*". In this setting, students are taught and guided by religious experts known as *Abu*, *Abati*, *Syekh*, *Kyai* (Islamic Scholar) or *Ustadz* (Teacher), who are responsible to cultivate a deep understanding of Islamic faith and principles.

Thus, recognizing the need of a well-rounded education, most of the *Pesantren* have broadened their curricula to include general knowledge disciplines (Isbah, 2020). These disciplines often include science, social studies, and languages (Bin-Tahir et al., 2019; Isbah, 2020). In this case, *Pesantren* seeks to provide students with awareness of the world (global context/needs) by including general knowledge into their educational programs, allowing them to engage with other (important) disciplines of study outside of religious studies.

Therefore, English language instruction has gained an equally significance in the curricula of most *Pesantren* (Bin-Tahir et al., 2019; Thoyib et al., 2020). Recognizing the global significance of English as a lingua franca, *Pesantren* provide their students the opportunity to develop their English language skills (Marzulina et al., 2021). Grammar, vocabulary, reading, writing, listening, and speaking components of English language instruction may automatically be included in teaching-learning process.

Moreover, the inclusion of English language teaching in *Pesantren* serves several purposes. For starting point, it provides students with a wider range of educational resources, such as academic books, research articles, other reading resources and internet content that is primarily available in English (Kalsum et al., 2023; Bin-Tahir, 2017; Mustakim, 2021). By learning English, students can widen their intellectual horizons and stay up to date on globally advancements in a variety of subjects. Furthermore, English language skills enable *Pesantren* graduates to advance in their careers (Qoyyimah et al., 2023). English proficiency is highly desired in many professional domains, including commerce, tourism, international relations, and academia, in an increasingly interconnected globe (Khoiri & Ayati, 2021).

Pesantren helps students to compete effectively on a global platform and contribute to society in a range of sectors by providing them with English language skills (Latif, 2019; Supriyono, 2022; Khoiri & Ayati, 2021). Thus, it is important to note that the inclusion of general knowledge and English language teaching in the *Pesantren* curriculum differs by institution. The breadth of these offers is governed by elements such as the *Pesantren*'s specific mission and available resources, as well as the students' and their families' preferences and needs (Latif, 2019).

The (In)Famous Policy of Language Learning Instruction in *Pesantren*

The establishment of a comprehensive and complete English language program that covers a range of components of the English language, including reading, writing, listening, and speaking abilities, is required for the design and implementation of a curriculum in a *Pesantren*. While developing the English curriculum, English teachers in *Pesantrens* might consider taking into account their students' specific needs and interests (Sundari & Lutfiansyah, 2021; Latif, 2019). They may include Islamic themes, ideas, and events into language learning materials and exercises to create a meaningful and culturally acceptable learning experience. The process of establishing a syllabus may also include the selection of appropriate textbooks, authentic materials, and online resources that are adaptable to the students' language and cultural needs (Bin-Tahir, 2017; Bin-Tahir et al., 2019; Yusuf, 2020).

Students at *Pesantren* achieve a high level of English proficiency as a result of the combination of an immersive language environment and intensive language interaction both in formal and informal settings (Saidna et al., 2017; Hand et al., 2016). These Islamic boarding schools provide an environment in which learners are exposed to English on a daily basis. English is used as a medium of instruction in some places, and it is promoted in casual settings to give ongoing exposure and practice. *Pesantren*'s curriculum also provides thorough English language instruction, with an emphasis on improving listening, speaking, reading, and writing skills (Bin-Tahir et al., 2019). The curriculum may adhere to international language competence standards, such as

the CEFR, so by using structured lessons, language labs, and interactive activities to assist students in improving their language skills. The integrative approach of *Pesantren* helps students to become proficient English speakers within the framework of their studies.

The school system's purpose is to give children with the necessary language skills to participate in international communication, academic pursuits, and future job opportunities (Yu et al., 2019). To attain this goal, the *Pesantren* education system requires students to start studying English at an early age and assesses their level of ability through standardized tests. Hence, it is vital to note that this policy not only recognizes the global relevance of the English language, but also emphasizes the importance of multilingualism and cultural engagement in an increasingly diverse and interconnected world (Khoiri & Ayati, 2021). By increasing English language competence among Indonesian students, the education system in Indonesia promotes cross-cultural understanding and facilitates participation in global debates, academic alliances, and professional networks (Yuzar, 2020; Yuzar et al., 2022).

The widespread inability of students to utilize English as a foreign language effectively in the classroom, either verbally or in writing, is an issue that must be addressed promptly. This issue arises as a result of students' widespread usage of their home tongue as a second language, which makes it quite simple for them to forget the English they have been taught. It is critical to note that this problem cannot be assigned just to a specific group, such as pupils or teachers; rather, it necessitates a study into the entire educational system as a whole.

The *Pesantren*, which provides education at both the junior and senior secondary levels, is an excellent example of a school that has successfully addressed this issue. This educational institution has done an outstanding job incorporating English for speakers of different languages into its course offerings. This is demonstrated by the accomplishments of its students, who have not only been successful in passing English language examinations but have also been accepted into universities located in other countries, where English is widely spoken.

This investigation should involve an analysis of curriculum design, teaching methodologies, teacher training programs, and available resources. By identifying areas for improvement and implementing targeted interventions, schools across the country can strive to enhance the teaching and learning of English as a second language. The development of *Pesantren*, from (*Salaf* or traditional Islamic boarding schools) to modern Islamic boarding schools, which has been very rapid to date. This reality cannot be going separate ways from the existence of a well-defined curriculum and school system. Because the curriculum is a very important tool in the success of an education, it is necessary to have planning in its application, without a good and

appropriate system, it will be difficult to achieve all the educational goals and objectives that have been aspired to.

This phenomenon raises intriguing questions about the goals that guide English language instruction, the instructional practices used, and the challenges that *Pesantren* faces. Exploring these aspects will shed light on how English language learning fits into *Pesantren's* broader educational goals, as well as provide insights into the efficacy and potential areas for improvement in language instruction strategies. As a result, the purpose of this research is to investigate the goals, practices, and challenges of English language instruction in *Pesantren*, thereby contributing to a better understanding of language education in this unique Islamic educational context. Therefore, this study aims to answer these research questions:

1. What are the primary goals of English language instruction in *Pesantren*, and how do they correlate with the institutions' broader educational objectives?
2. How do *Pesantren's* English language instructional practices and methodologies differ from those employed in other conventional educational settings?
3. What are possibly the most significant challenges that instructors and students face when delivering and acquiring English language instruction in the context of *Pesantren*, and how do these challenges affect the efficacy of language instruction?

METHODS

In this study, researchers used triangulation (Oliver-Hoyo & Allen, 2006), to increase the validity and reliability of their findings in the context of examining English language instruction in *Pesantren*. By combining several data sources, such as document analysis and a semi-structured interview, researchers are able to create a cohesive and comprehensive perspective of the research issues.

To begin, document analysis is a necessary first step that allows researchers to delve into official documents, curriculum requirements, and objectives. This gives researchers a better understanding of how *Pesantren* runs the English language instruction. These materials offer a useful starting point for understanding the English language instruction's stated goals as well as its more extensive philosophical basis.

Further, a semi-structured interview was employed in this study to get an in-depth understanding of the perspectives and experiences of the individuals involved, which proved extremely valuable when investigating complicated phenomena. Furthermore, semi-structured interviews were performed with school officials or staffs, English language teachers/ instructors, and students to provide significant insight into the following processes in the context of studying how *Pesantren* operate

the English teaching and learning process in both formal and informal settings (classroom and extracurricular activities).

The semi-structured interviews, which included 20 students, 10 teachers, and staff members, sought to investigate the objectives, treatments, and challenges employed at current *Pesantren* for English language instruction. These interviews provide details about the use of different instructional tools, textbook selection, and execution of various classroom activities to improve language learning outcomes.

The research was carried out at two top-tier *Pesantren* in North Aceh, an area noted for its strong educational legacy and dedication to Islamic education. Because of their reputation for offering high-quality education and their emphasis on integrating modern educational practices within the traditional framework of *Pesantren*, these institutions were chosen as the research setting.

Pesantren A, the first residential school, is well-known for its rigorous academic curriculum and holistic approach to teaching. It covers a wide range of topics, including as religious studies, general knowledge, and foreign languages. The school's aim to offering a well-rounded education is consistent with the study goal of investigating the administration of English language teaching and learning in modern boarding schools.

Pesantren B, the second boarding school, is likewise an important part of North Aceh's educational landscape. School B, which is known for its creative methods and technological integration, focuses a heavy emphasis on providing pupils with digital literacy skills and preparing them for the needs of the modern world. This is consistent with the research interest in investigating the use of technology and various instructional approaches in English language teaching.

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

1. English Teaching and Learning Objectives in *Pesantren*: A Closer Look

The majority of the public's overarching perception of the purpose of learning English revolves around its facilitation of employment opportunities (Akhter, 2022). Proficiency in the English language, whether spoken or written, active or passive, is becoming increasingly important in a variety of career paths. Recognizing this reality, various formal and informal English education institutions skilfully employ this concept as a powerful marketing strategy to capture public attention. However, for the educated segment of society, acquiring English proficiency extends beyond vocational urges, encompassing advanced academic studies and improving employability prospects.

The excellent reputation enjoyed by modern Islamic boarding schools among the general public is also due to the excellent linguistic prowess displayed by their students, who frequently outperform their counterparts in public educational

institutions in terms of both English and Arabic proficiency. Within this context, the organization of English instruction within such prestigious educational institutions takes on distinct goals. According to an English teacher affiliated with a modern Islamic boarding school, the primary goal of English education in this environment is to provide students with the ability to express themselves fluently and accurately in English. As a result, it is critical to instil in students a keen understanding of the intrinsic value of English in contemporary society.

The preceding excerpts evidently demonstrate the profound societal significance of English in modern times, which extends beyond mere competence in standardized examinations such as the National Exam (Sundayana et al., 2018). English has emerged as a globally prevalent language for effective communication, highlighting the broader goal of English education: preparing students to assume their roles as custodians of societal progress and embracing the globalization era through effective interaction with diverse stakeholders. Language proficiency, in this regard, plays an emblematic role within the *Pesantren*, symbolizing its intellectual eminence.

"We believe Language serves as a tool that enhances communication, fosters knowledge and develops fundamental skills. English language has a favourable position in our Pesantren system, because this particular language is used in all aspect of teaching-learning process, extracurricular activities, and daily basis, of course it is in a similar vein with Acehese, Bahasa Indonesia and Arabic. . . So, we really believe that the objective of the incorporation of English in this institution will make a valuable (tool) addition for students in the future (career)."

Excerpt from the interview (School's official/leader/chairperson).

In the domain of English language instruction, there are two distinct types of educators in modern Islamic boarding schools: formal and informal instructors. Individuals who hold the necessary qualifications and licensure from educational institutions and adhere to established rights and responsibilities are considered formal educators. These educators have undergraduate degrees in English and are fluent in English as well as other languages.

"We as formal instructors have been assigned specifically to teach English as part of the institution's structured curriculum. We are in charge of creating and delivering lessons based on predetermined curricula. . . further, we are typically having formal degree and use approved teaching techniques".

Excerpt from the interview (Teachers/Instructors).

Formal Instructors: People who have been assigned specifically to teach English as part of the institution's structured curriculum are known as formal instructors. They are in charge of creating and delivering lessons based on predetermined curricula.

These educators typically have formal training in teaching foreign languages and use approved teaching techniques.

"we (informal instructors). . . may not have formal training as language teachers, their role is pivotal in fostering language acquisition and integration in real-world contexts. We are more responsible seeing students behaviour and attitude in interaction outside the classroom, although they are outside classroom, they must speak English with their friends or Ustadz . . .we do not really concern about. . ."

Excerpt from the interview (Teachers/Instructors).

In Islamic boarding schools, informal teachers – often referred to as "Ustadz" or mentors – play a special role in language instruction. Despite not having received specialised training as language instructors, they provide students with helpful informal language exposure and guidance. These instructors motivate and mentor students on their journey to improve their English proficiency by using a combination of reward-based incentives, disciplinary measures, and persuasive guidance. Furthermore, extracurricular English competitions open to high-achieving students provide opportunities for recognition through book and trophy awards, whereas failure to follow prescribed regulations exposes individuals to the aforementioned consequences.

They (informal instructors) broaden students' linguistic and cultural horizons by holding discussions, debates, and Q&A sessions in English on Islamic teachings and contemporary issues, cultivating a holistic understanding of language's role within the context of faith and society. Outside of the classroom, informal teachers promote extracurricular language engagement. They give students opportunities to practise their English skills outside of the classroom. Group projects, presentations, drama performances, and community outreach initiatives in English promote a hands-on, dynamic language experience. As respected members of the Islamic boarding school community, these instructors serve as role models for effective English use, emphasising its importance and inspiring students to embrace it as a tool for meaningful communication.

This role modelling aspect inspires students to use English not only for academic success, but also as a portal to broader global connections and information. In essence, informal instructors enrich the language learning journey by cultivating an environment in which language becomes an integral part of daily life, seamlessly connecting cultural, religious, and linguistic dimensions for holistic development.

"I see Islamic boarding schools that... effectively provide language instruction as much more than a simple subject; rather, it is a mixed of values and learning. Equally important, . the incorporation of religious teachings is one example, sacred texts and teachings are incorporated

into language lessons so that students can both improve their language skills and strengthen our spiritual connection."

"We are conversing with wisdom, although we love the language, sometime we also struggle with its linguistic complexities. . . we also use sometime non-standard English because we have to speak. But we still believe we can benefit from the purpose-language learning experience that we have here."

Excerpt from the interview (Students).

Language learning in Islamic boarding schools is an intricately woven tapestry that blends seamlessly with the institution's core values and goals. This integration is most visible in the religious and spiritual realms. Language classes are thoughtfully designed to include sacred texts and teachings, allowing students to improve their linguistic skills while also deepening their spiritual connection. Students deal with linguistic and grammatical complexity, as well as the profound wisdom submerged in religious teachings. By establishing a strong feeling of purpose and devotion in their linguistic progress, this symbiotic relationship between language and spirituality enriches students' language learning experiences.

Furthermore, language learning in this context is used to foster character and ethical development. In order to reflect the ethical ideals promoted by Islamic teachings, students are encouraged to adopt courteous and sensitive language. These linguistic encounters extend beyond the classroom, promoting the ideals of empathy, humility, and compassion in their daily talks. Language becomes a medium for qualities to be embodied, revealing that effective communication is more than just a verbal competence. Furthermore, within the framework of an Islamic boarding school, the incorporation of cultural identity into language acquisition is effortlessly intertwined. Language sessions are reinforced by conversations of cultural heritage, which builds pride and a sense of connection to one's beginnings. This integration promotes not only linguistic proficiency but also cultural appreciation, enhancing the connection between language, culture, and faith.

The holistic approach to language education in Islamic boarding schools is exemplified further by its alignment with the institution's broader goals. Language learning extends beyond vocabulary and grammar to include a thorough examination of religious texts and current issues. Thus, this multifaceted approach equips students with the ability to use language as a tool for critical thinking, effective communication, and cultural understanding.

Unveiling the *Pesantren's* English Language Instruction Practices

One of the most important endeavours in the field of learning instruction is the development of methodologies, strategies, and the breadth of learning instruments.

The following clarification seeks to shed light on fundamental concepts pertaining to the administration of the English teaching and learning process within contemporary *Pesantren* in North Aceh.

Aside from academic excellence, students are encouraged to become responsible global citizens who use language to bridge the gap between different cultures and perspectives. Furthermore, the communal living environment of Islamic boarding schools fosters peer-to-peer interactions, which enhance language learning. Students' sense of brotherhood and sisterhood facilitates continuous language practise, transforming language acquisition into a collaborative endeavour.

Embracing Translanguaging Practices for Pesantren's Holistic English Language Learning

The use of a translanguaging approach in the English language curriculum at *Pesantren*, Islamic boarding schools, is a notable alternative practise that has revolutionised traditional language instruction (Creese & Blackledge, 2015). Translanguaging, defined as the dynamic and strategic use of multiple languages in communication and learning, calls into question the traditional concept of strict language separation (Wei, 2018). In the context of *Pesantren*, where students commonly come from varied social and linguistic backgrounds (Aribah & Pradita, 2022), this approach recognizes and uses the language assets that students bring to the instructional setting (both formal and informal).

Translanguaging promotes an educational concept in which language is viewed as a fluid tool for communication rather than a rigid structure that must be sorted. By allowing students to freely negotiate between their original language and English, this approach creates a greater awareness of language's fundamental interdependence. At the heart of this paradigm change is the acknowledgement of students' linguistic identities as significant assets rather than barriers. In practice, translanguaging-infused English lessons acknowledge students' existing linguistic competencies while scaffolding them toward English language mastery. Learners, for example, are encouraged to express complex ideas in their native language first, followed by a collaborative translation into English. This not only promotes conceptual clarity but also allows for a more seamless language transition.

Furthermore, by validating students' linguistic skills and boosting their confidence to participate actively in discussions and activities, this approach fosters a positive learning environment. In English lessons, the use of familiar idioms, cultural references, and contextualised translations not only improves comprehension but also deepens cultural awareness. *Pesantren* strives to produce well-rounded individuals with strong moral and ethical values, and the translanguaging approach supports this goal by fostering open-mindedness, empathy, and intercultural competence.

"we know that most of the students here came from multilingual family and a very diverse background, they came from North Sumatra (and other part of Sumatra mentioned) in which they speak multiple languages. . . came from Java, and. . . also a few from Malaysia, so all instructors must realise this is the fact, we cannot deny this, thus we decide to use translanguaging as one of the approaches. . . the chief leader also confirm it"

Excerpt from the interview (Teachers/Instructors)

The use of the translanguaging approach in English instruction at *Pesantren* provides a multifaceted avenue for holistic language development. By valuing students' linguistic diversity and recognizing their mother tongues as advantages, this method improves the overall language learning experience. In this setting, English is no longer considered as a difficult language to conquer, but as a method of bridging cultural and linguistic divides, establishing significant links between students' identities and the language itself. This approach is particularly popular in *Pesantren*, where students from all over the countries (Indonesia) speak a diversity of languages.

Through the translanguaging technique, students are encouraged to convey complex concepts and ideas, surpassing the restrictions that strict language separation could place on them. This approach recognizes language skills transferability, allowing students to draw parallels between their home language and English. Furthermore, incorporating local cultural elements and idiomatic expressions enriches the language learning process by making it more relatable and engaging. *Pesantren* embraces translanguaging to provide students with not only English language proficiency but also cultural pride and a deep appreciation for linguistic diversity.

Community-Based Language Learning Practice in an Islamic Boarding School (Pesantren)

With regard to its compatibility with the holistic educational concepts that drive these institutions, the integration of Community-Based Language Learning (CBL) takes on a special significance in an Islamic boarding school setting. The goal of CBL is to create a collaborative and supportive environment (Reisinger & Clifford, 2022), closely resembles the communal ethos of Islamic boarding schools. Structured language exchange programmes that allow students to engage in authentic discussions with their peers are one-way CBL is practised. This interchange develops not only linguistic improvement but also a sense of solidarity and mutual support among students.

Within the setting of an Islamic boarding school, CBL capitalizes on the intimate connection of the community. Students are encouraged to participate in

language circles, where they engage in open talks about a variety of themes while incorporating English into their daily activities. Teachers act as a facilitator and guide the conversation or dialogues to enhance their speaking skills and provide them direct feedback during this activity. Furthermore, the concept of 'twinning' is used, in which students are matched with their colleges who speak a foreign language. This strategy promotes collaborative learning by having advanced speakers assist those who are still learning the language, providing an environment of mutual learning and support (Klaas-Lang, 2022).

Language anxiety is mostly found as a fundamental issue for students during interaction using foreign language. This is happened in Islamic boarding schools because students come from a variety of social and linguistic backgrounds. To address this, Islamic boarding schools use the Community-Based Language Learning (CBLL) approach to help students overcome language-related fears. CBLL prioritises the development of a caring atmosphere that recognises the emotional dimensions of language acquisition. Students are encouraged to express themselves in English without fear of judgement using strategies such as storytelling sessions, role-playing, and collaborative projects.

"From my experience, one main factor is the fear of making mistakes. When I'm learning a new language like English, I often worry that I'll say something wrong or use incorrect grammar, and that makes me hesitant to speak up in class and outside the class."

Personally, setting realistic goals has been a game-changer for me. Instead of pressuring myself to be perfect, I focus on a sustainable progress. . . so that can give me a sense of achievement and reduces my anxiety.

"We could also be the pressure to perform well. Because there's the expectation that we need to quickly grasp the language, and that can lead to anxiety. . . and about cannot compete to other students."

Excerpt from the interview (Students).

Islamic boarding schools incorporate mindfulness practises into CBLL to help students handle their anxieties. Deep breathing exercises and mindful journaling become essential components of language learning sessions. These activities not only improve kids' language skills but also assist them develop emotional resilience. Furthermore, CBLL allows students to interact with native speakers or individuals fluent in English, developing authentic language use in a supportive environment. Islamic boarding schools foster a sense of belonging and self-assurance by providing a safe and welcoming environment, allowing students to overcome language anxiety and succeed in their English language journey.

Language becomes a bond that fosters camaraderie and mutual support, rather than just a means of communication. This collective language experience in the context of a boarding school improves linguistic fluency while also fostering

meaningful connections among students. Hence, language proficiency gained within the framework of an Islamic boarding school meshes well with the institution's community-based learning system. Students who excel at language learning can use their talents to advocate for social justice and address community concerns. In accordance with the institution's ethical teachings, language becomes a vehicle for amplifying their voices and advocating for positive change. Language learning, in essence, integrates seamlessly into the fabric of Islamic boarding schools, enriching students' linguistic abilities while empowering them to embody the institution's values and contribute to enhance a better community practice.

Determining Challenges in *Pesantren's* English Language Instruction

English language instruction in *Pesantren* faces a number of obstacles and challenges that must be carefully examined. The limited exposure to English outside of the classroom is a significant challenge. *Pesantren* frequently operate in rural areas where English may have limited practical application. As a result, students may have fewer opportunities to practice their English skills outside of the structured learning environment, potentially hampered their language development.

The paucity of trained English language teachers is a significant barrier that *Pesantren* encounter in their pursuit of effective language education. This is especially true for *Pesantren* that operate with minimal resources or in remote places. Attracting and retaining English language instructors with specialized training can be a daunting challenge. The quality of language instruction may be jeopardized if educators are not well-versed in language pedagogy and competency. The scarcity of trained teachers not only impedes the adoption of novel teaching methods, but it also limits the availability of different resources (Nurmayuli, 2022), which is necessary for comprehensive language acquisition.

"We believe our teachers are competent, but only half of them have followed specialized training, but again, I hope this scarcity of trained teachers will not impedes the instruction the class, but the informal ones (instructors) still needs to improve because most of them are the fresh graduate from this pesantren...we just try to recruit them so that they can have a bigger responsibility to the pesantren"

Excerpt from the interview (School's official/leader/chairperson).

Therefore, a lack of qualified English language teachers might lead to a lack of variety in teaching approaches. Trained instructors bring to the classroom a repertoire of efficient strategies that adapt to diverse learning styles and individual needs (Valverde-Berrocoso et al., 2020). The shortage of such teachers, on the other hand, may limit the breadth of instructional tactics used, perhaps leading to boring teaching

approaches that fail to engage students optimally. Furthermore, the lack of skilled educators might impede the use of technology and interactive learning aids, which have become essential components of modern language instruction. This scarcity highlights the need for specific professional development program and activities that not only improve the skills of present instructors but also incentivize skilled language educators to join and stay in the *Pesantren* system.

Furthermore, combining English language study with Islamic studies creates a new set of challenges that must be navigated carefully. A nuanced and deliberate strategy is required to reconcile the religious and cultural components inherent in *Pesantren education* with the rigorous demands of English language acquisition. A curriculum that effortlessly integrates these aspects requires a fine balance to ensure that students not only become proficient in English but also continue to expand their grasp of Islamic beliefs and values. One of the difficulties is striking a precise balance between language competency goals and the broader goals of Islamic education. Because *Pesantren* stress comprehensive personal development, the curriculum must be structured to improve English language abilities while also developing the spiritual and ethical growth that is essential to Islamic beliefs. This dual emphasis is critical in preserving the nature of *Pesantren* education, in which the search of knowledge extends beyond language ability to include a greater commitment to moral and spiritual development.

Furthermore, when merging language and religion studies, appropriate educational materials must be developed. It might be difficult to ensure that English language learning materials are culturally sensitive and match with the ethical standards of *Pesantren* education. Educators must design information that resonates with Islamic principles, enabling pupils to see language education as a way to widen their worldview and engage in meaningful cross-cultural exchanges.

Furthermore, evaluating students' English language proficiency within the setting of a *Pesantren* might be challenging. Traditional assessment systems, which are mostly based on written examinations, may not accurately assess students' genuine communicative talents. This disparity is especially noticeable when examining the sophisticated parts of language skills such as speaking and listening, both of which necessitate dynamic and authentic interactions. Because these abilities are critical for effective communication, the inherent limits of the *Pesantren* educational framework can complicate the assessment process even further. The *Pesantren* atmosphere, which is intended to impart religious and moral ideals, may lack resources and chances for frequent, genuine English language encounters. Due to time constraints, a curriculum that emphasizes other courses, and the overall structure of the educational system, engaging in spontaneous dialogues, debates, and discussions – essential for honing speaking and listening skills – might be constrained.

Innovative assessment approaches could be considered to solve these problems. Using technology-assisted evaluations, interactive group activities, role-playing situations, and language immersion experiences to bridge the gap between traditional *Pesantren* values and the need for modern communication skills could help. These approaches may not only improve language competency but also correspond with broader educational aims of encouraging critical thinking, adaptability, and effective communication.

CONCLUSION

Finally, the analysis of the English language education system in Modern Islamic Boarding Schools reveals a well-functioning structure in which each component effectively operates within its designated role and function. The overarching goal of English education in these institutions is to provide students with the linguistic skills needed to engage in effective communication with diverse individuals and groups, allowing them to fulfil their roles as caliphs in the modern world and globalization era. As a result, students and teachers are compelled to learn English in addition to Arabic, creating an educational environment that prioritizes English as the official medium of communication.

Furthermore, there is a remarkable level of cohesion and harmony in the correlation between the components of English education. This is demonstrated by the system's perpetually stable and balanced state. In the unlikely event that conflicts or deviations arise, a comprehensive system of predetermined sanctions addresses these issues immediately, ensuring the prompt realignment of any deviating components. As a result, overt conflicts are effectively avoided, leaving only latent conflicts. This methodical approach demonstrates the commitment to maintaining equilibrium and resolving any disruptions in the English education system as soon as possible.

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