

Integrating Spirituality in Teaching English to Young Learners based on the Independent Curriculum in Elementary Schools

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Abstrak. Teaching English to Young Learners started in 1994 at the elementary school level. 2022 will be the first year for English as an elective subject in the Merdeka Curriculum. As the name implies, there is no obligation for schools to use this curriculum. As an example, the Integrated Islamic Elementary School is one of the levels that are acquainted with this curriculum only in grades one and four. Although it has a mission to integrate the curriculum of the Ministry of National Education and the curriculum of the Integrated Islamic School, in reality not all English teachers in Islamic schools easily integrate their spiritual values. It aims to integrate spirituality in teaching English to young learners at the elementary school level by applying Independent Curriculum-based and specialist. This research and development are a bridge in answering the teacher's needs for this. The results of this research are teachers need a reference for integrating spirituality in teaching English as a subject in an Integrated Islamic school that combines the Independent Curriculum with the Integrated Islamic Elementary School Curriculum. In language skills development, reading and writing become the focus of the average teacher. Meanwhile, teachers are also obliged to develop complete skills in the Merdeka curriculum, namely listening, speaking, reading, viewing, writing, and presenting.

Keywords: Spirituality, TEYL, Independent Curriculum

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INTRODUCTION

The uniqueness of the curriculum owned by the Integrated Islamic Elementary School has the aim of integrating Islamic values with the curriculum of the Ministry of Education and Culture. This is still homework when the availability of appropriate learning resources is still scarce and not by the needs of each educational unit. Instructional material in general still dominates compared to material with Islamic content.

The issue of the importance of integrating spirituality in teaching and learning English is currently become an interesting discussion for teachers at the Integrated Islamic School to combine spirituality and the issue of an Independent Curriculum. Some factors might be considered when determining what is or is not appropriate for matters of faith and professional practice (Wong & Lee, 2018). Many students do not understand the relationship between the teacher's spiritual identity and learning English. Some of them think that sharing their spiritual identity can harm them because they are vulnerable to discrimination. However, on the other hand, research has found that the spiritual identity of teachers can give them a sense of

calling, purpose, direction, support, and inspiration to do their jobs well, relate their values to what they do, and teach with integrity (Wong, 2012). When teachers approach spiritual identity as an informed critical attitude pedagogy, their spiritual identity can become an element of motivation for students and reduce student anxiety (Wong, 2018).

For some of the problems above, this research offers a solution. Of course, when discussing issues of faith and education, there are many contextual variables to consider, including nation-state, society, institutions (public or private, religious or secular), subject matter, related current events, possible impact on students discussing their issues beliefs, teacher-student relationships, and several student variables, such as age, level of English proficiency, and religious background, to name a few (Wong, 2018). The other solution is teachers should think about personal (internal) elements such as personal experiences, cultural traditions, logical explanations, and religious and spiritual views that may have an impact on their judgments about what they feel to be ethical behavior in the classroom. Other factors influencing their choices come from more

external sources, such as institutional purpose statements, professional codes of conduct, ethical standards for research, and the numerous sacred or secular literature that teachers use to guide their practice (Wong, 2018).

The purpose of this research is to integrate spirituality in teaching English to young learners at the elementary school level by directly applying Independent Curriculum-based and specialists without burdening them. In this study, several ways are available to link spiritual identity with pedagogy. Not only that, but this study also provides previous studies related to the issues discussed as evidence. It would be useful for today's language professionals to review spiritual resources as they may offer different points of view that could influence the teaching philosophy of language instructors and curricular practices on important topics of concern to us today. The concept of spirituality may provide us with a philosophical foundation for what it means to be a language teacher. For example, the commitment of language teachers to teach subjects other than "language" creates a place for pedagogical potential in promoting environmental responsibility and a peaceful human society as a whole (Sharma, 2018).

METHOD

This research and development fill a gap in the teacher's needs in this regard. A questionnaire, interviews, and documentation are used in this study's convergent parallel design kind of mixed methodology to collect data. Each

region has a comprehensive network of Islamic schools. The smallest district in Central Java, Kudus, was picked because it featured several integrated Islamic schools at the elementary, junior high, and high school levels. There were two locations for the SDIT level: SDIT Al Islam in Surakarta City, SDIT Nur Hidayah was chosen due to its specialty in publishing textbooks based on the Integrated Islamic School which is used in several schools in Central Java. This study focuses on the fourth-grade level, where students had previous experiences with English learning and this year marked the beginning of the Independent Curriculum.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

According to the study's findings, teachers of English in an integrated Islamic school that integrates the independent curriculum with the integrated Islamic elementary school curriculum need a reference for incorporating spirituality into the subject's instruction. Reading and writing are typically the teachers' main areas of concentration when it comes to language skill development. Additionally, teachers must help students achieve the outcomes learning of English skills They refer to six language skills from the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages: Learning, Teaching, Assessment (CEFR) at level B1, in the form of learning various types of texts that combine listening, speaking, reading, viewing, writing, and presenting. It is stated in the following Figure 1:

The English learning outcomes in your education unit include a variety of language skills that are integrated into various types of texts

2 responses

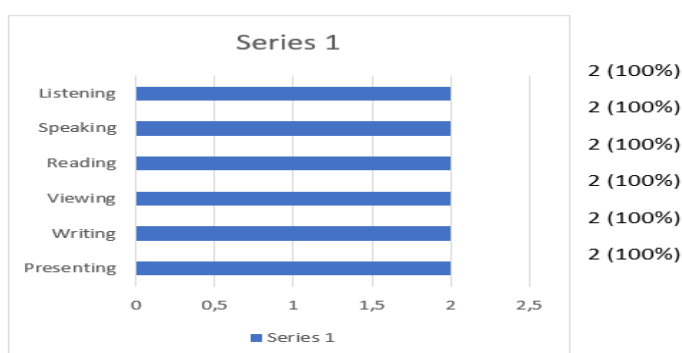


Figure 1. English Learning Outcomes

For more than two decades English at the primary school level has been taught as local content. English becomes an elective subject at this level starting in 2022 which is carried out

through the Independent Curriculum. The implementation of the Independent Curriculum has been piloted in several elementary schools that are ready and starting from grade one and

grade four. The elementary school curriculum structure is divided into Phase A (grades I and II), and Phase B (grades III and IV). Phase C (classes V and VI). So this research focuses on Phase B at the fourth-grade level.

The results of this study indicate that using spiritual identity as a way to combine the integrated Islamic curriculum and the independent curriculum is very useful for students to facilitate their learning, especially in Integrated Islamic Elementary Schools. Students there are required to study two curricula at once

to meet the needs of the government and schools. The integrated Islamic school aims to produce a generation that is not only good at general learning but also religion. For this reason, this study provides the importance of the value of spirituality in pedagogy, so a curriculum that includes both general and spirituality is needed. The data (Figure 2) show that Islamic songs and oral instruction/Islamic audio are always used in English instructional materials.

The intensity of the use of Islamic songs in teaching materials for English subjects

2 responses

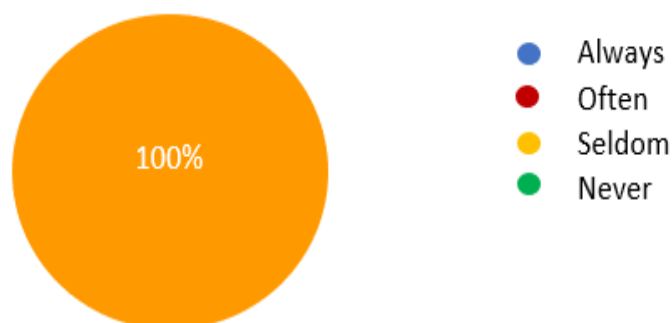


Figure 2. The intensity of Islamic Songs and oral instruction/Islamic audio in English instructional materials

Next, figure 3 and 4 informs that hadith inclusion and Islamic visualization/pictures are not always mentioned in English subject.

The intensity of the inclusion of hadith in teaching materials for English subjects

2 response

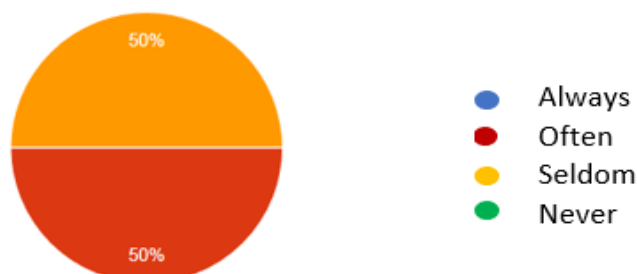


Figure 3. The intensity of Hadith Inclusion in English subject

The intensity of the use of Islamic images/visuals in teaching materials for English subjects

2 responses

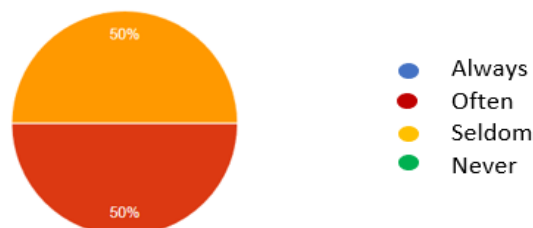


Figure 4. The intensity of Islamic visualization/pictures in English subject

In contrast with the previous one, Figure 5 informs that no one uses audio. They only read available texts or combine the links of videos from sites.

Learning English uses a genre-based approach, namely learning to focus on the text in various modes

2 responses

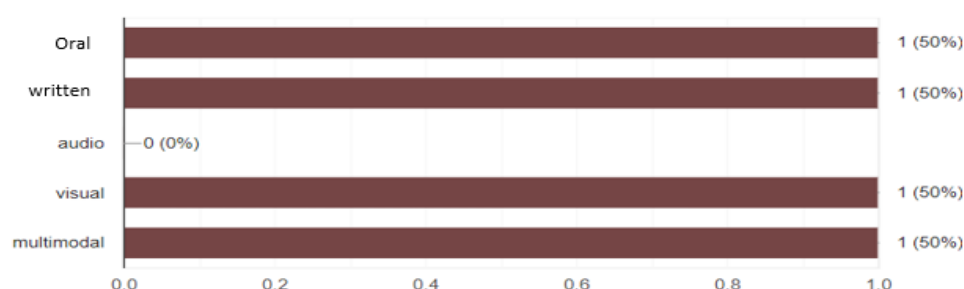


Figure 5. Genre-based Approach in English Learning

Then, **Figure 6.** mentions that all English teachers graduated from English Department. However, none of them are from Islamic institutions.

The English teacher is...

2 responses

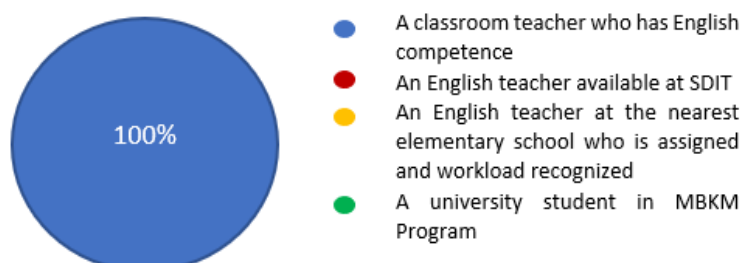


Figure 6. Academic Background of English Teachers

Based on the Decree of the Head of the of Education, Culture, Research and Technology Standards Agency, Curriculum and Assessment Number 33/H/KR/2022 concerning Changes in

English Learning Outcomes, educational units can add additional content according to the characteristics of the education unit by integration in other subjects, integration in the project theme of strengthening the profile of

Pancasila students, as well as developing independent subjects. This is in line with “Penguatan Project Pelajar Pancasila” in Figure 7 as follows:



Figure 7. Description of Pancasila Students Profiles at Education units (Nurhayati,et. al, 2022)

In a nutshell, the existence of the Pancasila Student Profile also directs the integration of the curriculum of the Integrated Islamic Elementary School and the Independent Curriculum. These points can be developed according to the characteristics of each educational unit independently. Integrating spirituality into English language teaching has proven to be effective. However, schools cannot simply state that they include spirituality in learning just because previous research has shown a positive impact. To integrate the value of spirituality, schools need to pay attention to the readiness of teachers and students by understanding first what spirituality is. The feeling of spirituality is one of connectivity with everything, including the universe, everyone, and nature. Those are told by educators revealing spirituality as the search for something trans-personal that provides an ontological foundation for ethics of kindness, love, and service to others (Abu Bakar, 2020).

The relevance of spirituality to teaching English is rooted in two reasons; 1) as motivation for students; 2) as a means for students to better understand their religion. Teachers must foster an environment in which students can learn without fear of failure while

also instilling confidence in their capacity to learn. For teachers who are challenging their students' conventional thinking during the teaching and learning process, spirituality is crucial (Shahjahan, 2009).

CONCLUSION

The spirituality of a teacher can help students feel inspired, supported, and called to do their jobs well, relate their beliefs to what they do, and teach with integrity. Additionally, it aids in their comprehension of how their religion is developed, acknowledged, tested, concealed, critiqued, altered, and restored. Many factors, including the personal, need to be taken into account when talking about trust and education concerns. Integrating spirituality in young learners' English classrooms for implementing Independent Curriculum is needed especially for a school that has readiness. Meanwhile, for its implementation in Integrated Islamic Elementary Schools, the Pancasila Student Profile can support a combination of both its unique curriculum and the Independent Curriculum.

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