

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

This chapter comes up with an overview of the study, including the background study, research questions, the purpose of the study, the significance of the study, scope of the study, the definition of critical terms and the theses organization.

1.1. Background of the Study

Integrating or combining religious values in various circumstances of human life is one of the efforts to live a life in balance, a concept highly valued in the Indonesian context. Only by integrating religious values could religion be meaningful and could be a blessing for its adherents, for humanity, or even the entire universe (Bagir et al., 2005; Otani, 2002). In the Indonesian society, where religious values play a significant role, the integration of these values in daily life is essential for fostering harmonious coexistence and building a strong moral foundation. By integrating religion into everyday life, people in Indonesia can do one thing with at least two values: religious and social values. Therefore, this integration approach is indispensable to be applied in various aspects of life (Roy, 1981), including in the educational context.

As Indonesia faces various issues related to moral and ethical values, integrating religious teachings into the educational system becomes even more relevant (Abdullah, 2014). The integration of religious values in education aims to nurture students who not only excel academically but also possess strong ethical principles that contribute positively to society. In the educational context of Indonesia, integration is often referred to as Integrated Teaching and Learning. Some mention the Integrated Curriculum Approach or Integrated or Thematic Approach (Kim et al., 2023; Smith, 2001, 2012). This approach combines two or more elements in a learning activity, such as merging Islamic values with English language learning. The integration of Islamic values into the English subjects in the online teaching and learning process addresses contemporary challenges of preserving cultural and religious identity while preparing students for global communication.

Meanwhile, in the context of language learning, integration between language and other things is very beneficial. It is because language is an instrument in education (Prayitno et al., 2022a). By implementing the concept of integration in the context of language learning, students could process and use language while acquiring new knowledge and skills. When students implement it, students gain progress not only in language but also progress in other aspects (Temirova & Westall, 2015).

Despite its benefits and efficacy, integrating religious and scientific values suffers from several issues and challenges, including integrating religious values into language learning. In its implementation, teachers will probably face at least two challenges: first, how to make language encounters into meaningful spiritual experiences for students, and second, how to incorporate religious values into language classes (Binkley, 2007). These issues look challenging, primarily if the learning and teaching activities are conducted online. In utilizing online learning activities, (teachers and) students would face various obstacles compared to the traditional learning (offline) that they have experienced so far. Interaction in online learning has become part of the natural flow of everyday life for today's students (Hamied, 2020).

Nevertheless, several studies have been conducted on integrating religious values and language, especially on integrating Islamic values and English. For instance, research conducted by Irawan (2020) revealed that integrating Islamic values could be easily implemented in teaching and learning activities. In addition, Irawan (2020) also believed that by integrating Islamic values into language learning, students would realise that Islamic values could be used as a guide in everyday life. At the same time, students could also acquire foreign language skills. After that, there was also a study conducted by Amelia (2012). This study aimed to design learning English based on an Islamic approach. The findings from the study conducted by Amelia (2012) implied that integrating Islamic values in learning English could be done by attaching relevant fragments of Al-Quran and Hadith and adding Islamic phrases or vocabulary pertinent to the topic given. Finally, in a study conducted by Rohmana (2020), the integration of Islamic values into the learning of English was explored among students majoring in Islamic

Religious Education. The findings revealed that these students exhibited a strong competence in incorporating Islamic values into the English teaching and learning activities.

However, departing from the background of this study and several previous outstanding studies regarding the integration of Islamic values and English, this study ought to fill a small gap so that the study on the integration of Islamic values and English is able to be seen more broadly and further. All things considered about previous studies focused on the application of integrating Islamic values and English in the context of offline learning at the university level, the challenge of this study is the implications of the integration approach in a particular area, especially in Islamic values integration in English Foreign Language (EFL) online teaching and learning process at junior high school level of As- Syifa Islamic Boarding School Subang, West Java.

1.2. Research Questions

To comply with the purposes of the study, in particular, this study examines two main research questions.

1. How does the English teacher integrate Islamic values into EFL online teaching and learning process?
2. What challenges are faced and solutions offered by the teacher and the students when integrating Islamic values into EFL online teaching and learning process?

1.3. Purposes of the Study

Related to the research questions above, the purposes of the study could be stated as follows.

1. To uncover how the English teacher integrates Islamic values into EFL online teaching and learning.
2. To identify the challenges faced and the solutions offered by the teacher and the students in integrating Islamic values into EFL online teaching and learning process.

1.4. Significances of the Study

There are several consequence areas where this study hopefully participates in some original contributions to.

1. To the education decision-makers, curriculum developers and policymakers, this study possibly supports them to consider and create some policies and strategies to improve education religious values integration based.
2. For teachers and forthcoming teachers, this study hopefully serves as a reference and at the same time conveys some meaningful contributions and valuable strategies promoting the integration of Islamic values in Islamic educational institutions in the future.
3. To EFL learners, this study may offer learning experiences in promoting Islamic values through English learning.
4. For future studies, hopefully, this study and thought could be a foothold or reference that may help researchers glimpse further and more broadly about the integration of Islamic values in the future.

1.5. Scopes of the Study

This qualitative research uncovers how English teachers integrate Islamic values into EFL online teaching and learning. In addition, this study also identified what challenges were faced and what solutions were provided by the teacher in integrating Islamic values in EFL online teaching and learning in junior high school. In particular, this research focuses on integrating religious values, in this study's context, Islamic religious values, as developed by Bagir et al., (2005) and Halstead (2007).

This research was conducted at the junior high school of As-Syifa Islamic Boarding School Subang, West Java, involving an English teacher and nine representative students. The reason the school was chosen was that the school is an Islamic-based school that integrates Islamic values in every subject, including English. In addition, I chose these nine representative students because of the recommendation from the English teacher and the students' learning abilities. Finally, the teacher's experience in teaching is also a consideration for me to determine the selected teacher. I assumed that the teacher's experience using technology in teaching English strongly supports this research, considering that online teaching and learning activities were conducted.

1.6. Definition of the Key Terms

To avoid misunderstanding and misleading some keywords of this study, the interpretation would be defined as below.

1. Islamic Values

Islamic values refer to the ethical and moral principles based on the teachings of Islam. These values encompass a wide range of beliefs, attitudes, behaviors, and practices that are rooted in the Quran, Hadith, and Sunnah of prophet Muhammad (Tabroni et al., 2022; Zeshan, 2022). Islamic values promote virtues such as honesty, respect, justice, compassion, generosity, self-discipline, and responsibility (Haniffah et al., 2021).

In line with Halstead (2007), throughout this study, the term Islamic values will be used to refer to all the guidance or Islamic teaching revealed by Allah to the Prophet Muhammad through the Qur'an and Hadith (the sayings, behaviors and traditions of the Prophet Muhammad).

2. Integrated Approach

In the educational context, an integrated approach refers to a teaching method that combines two or more subjects or learning activities in a cohesive and meaningful way (Artieda et al., 2020). This approach emphasizes the value of the relationship between different subjects or activities, with the goal of promoting a deeper understanding and more meaningful insights for the learners. In this context of study, integrated approach lead to teaching Islamic values and English subjects.

3. English as Foreign Language (EFL)

EFL refers to the teaching and learning of the English language in a non-English speaking environment where English is not the primary or foreign language of communication. In this study, the abbreviation EFL will be used to mention generally Indonesian students who learn English, considering the fact that English is a foreign language in Indonesia. English was decided to be a foreign language and the first foreign language to be taught in schools (Zein et al., 2020).

4. Online teaching and learning

Online teaching and learning refers to the use of technology and the internet to facilitate education and instruction remotely. It involves the use of digital platforms, online tools, and other technological resources to deliver educational

content and engage students in a virtual environment (Vlachopoulos & Makri, 2019). This paper utilizes the definition first suggested by Hofer et al. (2021) and Shea (2023), who catches sight of online teaching and learning as it refers to an educational activity that carries out through the internet. In the context of this study, the focus is on the integration of Islamic values into the realm of EFL online teaching and learning process, aiming to explore how educators incorporate Islamic principles into the virtual instructional setting.

1.7.Thesis Organization

The overall structure of the study considers the form of five chapters, including this introductory chapter. Chapter two begins by laying out the theoretical dimensions of the research and looks at how Islamic values is integrated into EFL online teaching and learning process. The third chapter is concerned with the methodology used for this study. The fourth section presents the findings of the study, focusing on the two key themes that answered the two research questions, the discussion of the finding to the theoretical perspective and closed with concluding remarks. Finally, Chapter Five involved the conclusions, implications and recommendations of this study.