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The Role Of English In The Development Of Islam In Indonesia

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A B S T R A C T

English plays an important role in the development of Islam in Indonesia, especially in the era of globalization. This study aims to explore how English is used in Islamic education, digital da'wah, and academic literature to support the development of Islam. A descriptive qualitative approach was used by collecting data through interviews, observations, and documentation in Islamic educational institutions, digital da'wah communities, and academics. The results of the study indicate that English has become an integral part of Islamic education, especially in modern Islamic boarding schools and Islamic universities, in order to prepare a generation of Muslims who are able to compete globally. In digital da'wah, English is used to convey Islamic values to international audiences in an inclusive and modern way. Meanwhile, Islamic literature in English produced by Indonesian academics contributes to the global discourse on moderate Islam. However, challenges remain, including gaps in English language competency, limited access to literature, and concerns about shifting local identities. This study suggests strategies, such as English language training for educators and da'wah, integrated curriculum development, and increasing the distribution of Islamic literature in English. With these strategic steps, English can be optimally utilized to strengthen the role of Indonesian Islam in the global arena without sacrificing local identity.

INTRODUCTION

The development of Islam in Indonesia cannot be separated from the influence of various factors, both internal and external. One external factor that is increasingly relevant in the era of globalization is the role of English as an international language. English has become an important tool in supporting cross-cultural communication and global knowledge transfer, including in the context of Islamic development. In Indonesia, English is not only used to expand access to international Islamic literature, but also as an effective medium for spreading Islamic values to the global arena.

In recent decades, the use of English in various aspects of Islamic life has increased. This phenomenon is clearly seen in Islamic educational institutions, such as modern Islamic boarding schools and Islamic universities, which have integrated English into their curriculum. For example, Pondok Modern Gontor and Al-Azhar Islamic boarding schools pay great attention to English language proficiency to prepare a generation of Muslims who are able to compete globally. In addition, English-based digital preaching through platforms such as YouTube and Instagram is now growing rapidly, allowing Islamic values to be conveyed to an international audience in an inclusive and attractive manner.

On the other hand, English-language Islamic literature published in Indonesia is also increasingly diverse, including books, articles, and academic journals. These works not only enrich Islamic discourse at the national level but also contribute to disseminating moderate Islamic values to the international world. In addition, the participation of Indonesian academics in international conferences on Islam and the increasing number of student exchange programs to English-speaking countries show how English plays an important role in strengthening the position of Indonesian Islam on the global stage.

However, these efforts also present challenges, such as concerns about the shift in local Islamic identity and traditional values that have long been the foundation of Islam in Indonesia. In this context, a balance is needed between the use of English

as a tool of globalization and efforts to maintain the uniqueness of Indonesian Islamic identity.

Several previous studies have shown the importance of English in supporting the development of Islam in Indonesia. Zainuddin and Hamka (2017) highlight how modern Islamic boarding schools integrate English in education to improve the competitiveness of graduates. Azra (2019) discusses the role of Islamic universities in promoting moderate Islam through English-language study programs. Arifin and Wahid (2020) analyzed the effectiveness of Islamic preaching in English on social media, while Nasution (2021) highlighted the challenges in developing students' English skills without sacrificing traditional Islamic values. Putri and Yusri (2022) examined the contribution of English-language Islamic literature to the global discourse on peaceful and inclusive Islam.

Based on this background, this article aims to explore the role of English in the development of Islam in Indonesia. This study will discuss the potential and challenges faced in using English to strengthen Islamic values, as well as how English can be a bridge for Indonesian Islam to contribute more widely in the midst of globalization.

METHODS

This study uses a descriptive qualitative approach to describe an in-depth study of the role of English in the development of Islam in Indonesia. The research locations were focused on several Islamic institutions that have English-based programs, such as modern Islamic boarding schools, Islamic universities, and digital da'wah communities. The research subjects included educational institution managers, da'is and digital da'wah content creators, as well as academics and writers who actively produce Islamic literature in English. Data were collected through in-depth interviews, participant observation, and documentation. Interviews were conducted to understand the motivations, strategies, and challenges in using English in various contexts, such as education, da'wah, and Islamic literature. Observations were conducted to directly observe learning activities in Islamic educational institutions, the process of creating digital da'wah content, and academic discussions that use English. Documentation was conducted by reviewing the education curriculum, English-language Islamic literature, and recordings of da'wah content.

The collected data were analyzed through the processes of reduction, categorization, and interpretation. Data reduction was carried out to sort out relevant information, while categorization was used to group data based on themes, such as the role of English in Islamic education, digital da'wah, and academic literature. Next, interpretation is carried out to construct a narrative that explains how English contributes to the development of Islam in Indonesia. Data validity is maintained through triangulation of sources and methods by comparing the results of interviews, observations, and documentation to ensure consistency of information. The results of the analysis are also consulted with Islamic education and da'wah experts to obtain relevant input and strengthen the validity of the findings. The output of this study is expected to provide a comprehensive picture of the strategic role of English in the development of Islam in Indonesia, while also offering recommendations to maximize the potential of English without ignoring local Islamic identity.

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

1. English in Islamic Education

The results of the study show that Islamic educational institutions in Indonesia, such as modern Islamic boarding schools and Islamic universities, have made English an important part of their curriculum. Modern Islamic boarding schools, such as Pondok Modern Gontor, use English as a means of daily communication and in learning activities to support students in understanding international Islamic literature. These programs are designed to prepare graduates to be able to compete globally while still adhering to Islamic values. At the university level, several Islamic institutions have offered English-language study programs, such as the Islamic Studies program at UIN and private Islamic-based campuses. These programs aim to produce Muslim scholars who can introduce moderate Islam to the international community. However, challenges faced include the lack of teacher competence in integrating English with in-depth Islamic studies.

2. English in Digital Da'wah

In the realm of da'wah, English has become the main medium in reaching a global audience. Digital da'wah content created by young Indonesian da'wah,

such as videos on YouTube and posts on Instagram, utilize English to convey Islamic values that are peaceful, inclusive, and relevant to contemporary issues. This phenomenon shows how digital technology and English collaborate to expand the reach of Islamic messages. However, it was found that not all preachers have adequate English language skills, so that the messages delivered are sometimes less effective. Another challenge is ensuring that the content created remains rooted in local Islamic values, so as not to lose the identity of Indonesian Islam.

3. English in Islamic Literature

Islamic literature in English produced by Indonesian academics has shown significant growth. The books and journals published not only enrich Islamic discourse in Indonesia, but also contribute to global discussions about Islam. This study found that many academics use English to promote moderate Indonesian Islam as a model that can be adopted by other countries. However, the distribution of this literature is still limited to certain academic circles. Greater efforts are needed to ensure that this literature is accessible to the wider global Muslim community, especially in countries with limited access to academic resources.

4. Challenges in the Use of English

Despite the vital role of English, there are significant challenges that must be overcome. First, the concern that the dominant use of English can shift the local identity and traditional values of Islam in Indonesia. Second, there is a gap in English language skills among educators, preachers, and students, which can hinder the effectiveness of English-based programs.

5. Implications and Future Strategies

English has great potential to strengthen the position of Indonesian Islam in the global arena. However, there needs to be a balance between the use of English and the preservation of local Islamic identity. Some strategies that can be implemented include:

- ✓ Training for educators and preachers to improve their English language competency.

- ✓ Development of a curriculum that harmoniously integrates English with local Islamic values.
- ✓ Increasing access to Islamic literature in English, both through digitization and wider distribution.

With these steps, English can be optimally utilized to support the development of Islam in Indonesia without ignoring the richness of local traditions and values that have become the foundation of Islamic identity in this country.

CONCLUSION

This study shows that English has a strategic role in supporting the development of Islam in Indonesia, especially in the era of globalization. In the field of Islamic education, English has become an important tool to improve the competitiveness of graduates of Islamic boarding schools and universities, enabling them to understand international Islamic literature and contribute at the global level. In the context of da'wah, the use of English through digital media has opened up opportunities to convey the message of peaceful and inclusive Islam to international audiences. In addition, English-language Islamic literature produced by Indonesian academics has strengthened the discourse of moderate Islam on the global stage. However, the integration of English also presents challenges, such as the potential for a shift in local Islamic identity, a gap in English language competency, and limited distribution of international Islamic literature. Therefore, strategic steps are needed, such as English language training for educators and da'is, curriculum development that integrates local values with English, and increasing access to international Islamic literature. With the right approach, English can be a bridge connecting Indonesian Islam with the international world without sacrificing local identity. This allows Indonesian Islam to play a greater role in building a global understanding of Islam that is peaceful, inclusive, and relevant to the challenges of the times.

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