Jurnal Praktik Baik Pembelajaran Sekolah dan Pesantren
Vol. 3, No. 03, pp. 163-170
journal.iistr.org/index.php/PBSBP
DOI: 10.56741/pbpsp.v3i03.746

Best Practices in Islamic Integrated Competency-Based English Instruction: Insights from a Thai School

[1]Soontorn Piyawason*
Corresponding Author: *kalamullahschool@gmail.com
[1] Kalamullah al-Qur'an and Multilingual School, Thailand

ARTICLE INFO

Article history
Received 4 November 2024
Revised 15 November 2024
Accepted 18 November 2024

Keywords
Best Practices
Islamic School
Integrated Competency-based English Instruction
Thai School

ABSTRACT

This study explores best practices in Islamic integrated competency-based English instruction, drawing from educational approaches in a Thai school setting. The aim is to illustrate how integrating Islamic values with English language teaching can enhance both language proficiency and students' moral development. The instructional design prioritizes answering fundamental pedagogical questions—why, what, how, and how to evaluate—while focusing on specific competencies across cognitive, psychomotor, and affective domains. Teachers are encouraged to cultivate competencies incrementally, from foundational sub-skills to more complex capabilities, fostering holistic language mastery and moral growth. The curriculum aligns English learning with Islamic principles, integrating content and etiquette in listening, speaking, reading, and writing. Classroom management and control techniques are used to maintain an engaging, respectful learning environment, with reinforcement through positive language and Islamic expressions. This approach aims to build well-rounded students, capable of using English for real-life communication while upholding Islamic ethics, fostering skills such as self-discipline, critical thinking, teamwork, and adaptability to technology.

This is an open-access article under the CC–BY-SA license.

Introduction

This article was inspired by my experience sharing insights on English instruction with 150 lecturers and students in the Department of English Education, Faculty of Education, at Universitas Muhammadiyah Riau (UMRI) in Pekanbaru, Indonesia. This session, held on June 24, 2024, at the Faculty's 3rd Floor Conference Room, centered on the topic of "Islamic Integrated Competency-based English Instruction." The audience responded enthusiastically, expressing interest in exploring Islamic integration techniques in greater depth. This provided an invaluable opportunity for me to share ideas from my teaching practice and experiences as an educational supervisor in Pattani, where I worked to enhance English teaching skills for educators, as well as from my experiences teaching in higher education.

The importance of integrating English and Islamic studies is a growing need within society, as students benefit from an approach that blends both linguistic and religious content [1]-[3]. However, teachers often lack clear, practical guidelines for implementing Islamic-integrated English instruction [4]. While scholars have presented valuable ideas on this topic, many teachers struggle with applying them in the classroom [5]. This article aims to bridge this gap by offering practical techniques for comprehensive integration.

When it comes to course integration, teachers have several options, such as integrating within a single discipline, across multiple disciplines, or tailoring methods to both the subject and student needs. Schools and teachers should feel empowered to choose the approach that best suits their resources, preparedness, and teaching strengths, as it is not necessary to apply a uniform method across every institution.

Methods

This study employs a qualitative approach to explore the author's insights on managing English language learning within the context of religious-based schools. The research focuses on the author's observations during their experience in managing learning and the application of Islamic philosophical foundations as a better alternative for education. The author's observations were conducted with English teachers and school administrators from various educational levels who implement religious-based learning approaches. This aimed to gain an in-depth perspective from individuals experienced in integrating Islamic values into English language teaching. This study is limited to the author's perspective, which may affect the generalization of the findings. However, the insights gained provide valuable implications for educators looking to integrate Islamic principles into English language instruction in similar contexts.

Result and Discussion

A. Setting Learning Standards

In education, Bloom's Taxonomy is widely known for its division of learning objectives into three domains: Cognitive, Affective, and Psychomotor [6]. Interestingly, Islamic education also organizes learning standards into three similar categories: Rohaniah (spirituality), Ilmiah (intellectual), and Jismaniah (physical). This similarity invites reflection on the origins of these frameworks and highlights how both educational traditions emphasize a holistic approach to student development [7].

Islamic education places primary importance on spirituality, or Rohaniah, as a foundation for all learning. Teachers are encouraged to nurture spiritual awareness in students before delving into any subject matter, ensuring that students develop Islamic etiquette and self-discipline. These qualities, in turn, help students approach learning with greater attentiveness and respect. Understanding key educational terms helps to clarify this integrated approach. Learning standards outline essential developmental goals, specifying what students should know, practice, and embody in terms of ethics and values. Learning objectives are more immediate, describing what students should accomplish by the end of a lesson. Indicators identify specific knowledge, skills, and values students are expected to achieve at each stage. Skills reflect abilities gained through knowledge, practice, and attitudes, enabling individuals to perform tasks proficiently. Competency refers to the ability to carry out tasks successfully and efficiently, combining understanding and skill.

In practical terms, learning objectives focus on what students should know at the end of a lesson, while competencies represent the broader skills expected by the end of a program or module [8],[9]. For example, a learning objective might be that a student can retell a story, demonstrating knowledge. Skill reflects doing something proficiently, such as a student creating a mobile from recycled materials. Competency, on the other hand, combines both ability and skill, such as a student effectively managing themselves in various situations.

The Basic Education Curriculum from 2008 in Thailand identifies several core competencies that are foundational for students: self-management, advanced thinking, communication, teamwork, responsible citizenship, and sustainable living with nature and science [10]. In the 21st century, additional competencies have become vital, including communication, critical thinking, problem-solving, life skills, and technological proficiency [11]. For language teachers, it’s also essential to develop language competencies such as speaking, reading, listening comprehension, reading comprehension, handwriting, dictation, and essay writing.

Today's educators face the task of integrating these competencies by combining the curriculum's core competencies, 21st-century skills, and specific language proficiencies. With thoughtful planning and flexibility, this comprehensive approach to competency-based learning in English is attainable and beneficial for both teachers and students.

B. Organizing Content and Learning Experiences

In language learning, content refers to the specific subject matter that students explore and master. Essential content includes vocabulary, phrases, key sentence structures, sentences, and messages or stories [12]. Teachers aim to organize this content to address all four language skills: listening, speaking, reading, and writing. For Islamic-integrated competency-based English instruction, a content organization can take several approaches. One way is to draw entirely from religious studies, using subjects like Aqidah, Fiqh, Sirah, and Akhlaq. Another approach combines Western and Islamic cultural content when relevant similarities exist. For instance, when teaching social etiquette, a teacher might contrast the Western custom of knocking on a friend's door with the Islamic guidance from Surah An-Nur on greeting when visiting, enriching the lesson with culturally relevant practices from both perspectives.

Islamic content can also enrich language learning through familiar religious concepts. For example, when teaching about body parts, teachers could incorporate the practices of Wudu (ablution) so that students not only learn vocabulary related to external body parts but also connect it to religious practices. Quranic verses and Hadith can also serve as meaningful content. By including at least one verse and one Hadith per unit, and providing their English translations, teachers help students build their vocabulary and comprehension while fostering their ability to apply these teachings to everyday life. Islamic news, magazines, journals, pamphlets, and short English-language religious lectures from prominent figures like Dr. Sulaiman Omar or Nouman Ali Khan are also valuable content sources. Daily Du'a, or supplications, can further be translated into English, allowing students to expand their vocabulary and apply it in a meaningful context.

Experiences refer to the activities and interactions that help students internalize the content [14]. Teachers should use as much English as possible in class, ideally reaching full English immersion. Practicing classroom language fosters an environment where students naturally absorb and practice English. With these techniques, students accumulate experiences in English use, eventually reaching a level where they communicate in English comfortably and intuitively.

C. Learning Methodology

Teachers need to consider three essential elements to organize effective learning activities that build students' ability to communicate in a new language: the theory of instruction, the instructional methods or models, and the techniques used in instruction. Planning and

designing language lessons require an understanding of these elements, as language learning aims to enable students to communicate effectively.

1. The Communicative Approach

The Communicative Approach, which emphasizes interaction and real-life context, is widely recommended for language instruction [15]. This approach can be integrated with methods like Play and Learn, Active Learning, Collaborative Learning, Cooperative Learning, Competency-based Learning, Activity-based Learning, and Project-based Learning. The primary objective of language learning is to prepare students to use language in real-life situations, not merely to learn grammar rules.

The Communicative Approach focuses on teaching students how to use language appropriately in different contexts, such as varying social roles and locations, and emphasizes communication activities to enhance language skills [16]. Key components of this approach include cultural immersion, engagement with real-life scenarios, and meaningful interaction. A five-step instructional model is commonly used in applying the communicative approach. This model can incorporate Islamic integrated competency-based learning activities at every stage:

- Introduction to the Lesson (Muqaddimah and Warm-up): Teachers prepare students mentally by reciting Surah al-Fatihah and an opening dua, followed by a review of prior lessons. Activities like reading, discussing experiences, or daily events help students connect new material with previous knowledge.
- Presentation: Teachers share information, often using a "Gabriel" technique—speaking loudly and multiple times to ensure students understand. Media aids can enhance engagement, with students primarily listening and observing.
- Practice: Teachers guide students in practice exercises through individual, pair, or group activities, allowing students to actively engage and participate in the learning process.
- Production: Teachers shift to a facilitator role, advising students as they work independently or collaboratively on activities, promoting student-led learning.
- Wrap-up and Khitam: Teachers conclude the lesson by summarizing key points, using Q&A, or assigning exercises. The session ends with a recitation of Surah Wal-Asr and a closing dua.

Instructional techniques also emphasize creative, enjoyable, and meaningful activities [17]. "Meaningful learning" includes exercises that help students meet learning goals and deepen their knowledge [18]. "Enjoyable learning" involves engaging students in a joyful, happy atmosphere, and "creative learning" includes a variety of activities to avoid

monotony [19]. To maintain an attentive and focused classroom, teachers employ a variety of control techniques to ensure that learning sessions proceed smoothly. One effective method is pretesting, which encourages students' determination and engagement without relying solely on traditional paper tests. A teacher's positive personality plays a crucial role, as respected educators—much like revered religious teachers—can significantly influence student behavior and attitudes. Intentional engagement is achieved through an energetic presence, punctuality, and the implementation of stimulating activities that keep students interested and motivated. Additionally, subtle physical contact, such as a gentle touch on the hand, can effectively regain students' attention when distractions arise. Teachers also manage behavior discreetly by walking around the classroom, which helps maintain order without disrupting the learning environment.

Reinforcement through praise, both in English and Islamic expressions like "Alhamdulillah" or "Masha Allah," serves to encourage and motivate students continually. Varying one's tone of voice helps keep students engaged and fosters respectful communication, drawing inspiration from the da'wah techniques of the Prophets. Facial expressions and gestures that convey satisfaction or dissatisfaction are also used to manage student behavior non-verbally. Asking questions regularly can spark attention and concentration, ensuring that students remain mentally present and involved in the lesson. Occasionally, teachers might tap the table to recenter focus, though this should be used sparingly to avoid annoyance. Finally, post-testing serves as a reminder of upcoming assessments, encouraging students to stay attentive and dedicated throughout the learning period. By integrating these techniques, teachers create a disciplined yet supportive classroom environment that enhances student learning and engagement. In each instructional step, Islamic principles can be incorporated, with teachers using words like "Alhamdulillah" and "Masha Allah" to praise students, explaining the meaning in English.

2. Skills to Foster in Students

To develop language competency holistically, learning activities should incorporate Islamic etiquette, discipline, self-management, high-level thinking, teamwork, problem-solving skills, life skills, and technological competence [20]. Building a strong foundation in Islamic etiquette enables students to approach communication with respect, fostering manners for listening, speaking, reading, and writing [21]. This encourages them to express themselves thoughtfully, observe respectful dialogue, and approach discussions with patience and politeness. Discipline is essential, particularly in adhering to classroom rules, being punctual, following a dress code, and demonstrating consistency in academic and social responsibilities. By promoting discipline, teachers instill habits that extend beyond

the classroom and into daily life, shaping students' ability to function effectively within societal structures.

Conclusion

In summary, effective teaching requires thoughtful planning, clear objectives, and a comprehensive understanding of both subject matter and educational philosophy. Teachers should start by addressing fundamental questions: Why teach? What to teach? How to teach? And how to assess learning? These guide the purpose, content, methods, and evaluation processes necessary for impactful instruction. By establishing specific goals for cognitive, psychomotor, and affective domains, teachers can break down competencies into manageable sub-skills, fostering progressive mastery from simpler tasks to more complex ones. This approach ensures that students build foundational skills before tackling more challenging objectives, promoting a well-rounded understanding.

Additionally, teachers must be equipped with a strong grasp of Islamic education principles to design learning activities that not only meet academic goals but also integrate Islamic values, fostering students' ethical and spiritual growth alongside their cognitive development. Through Islamic Integrated Competency-based instruction, content and skills are harmonized to produce well-rounded individuals prepared for academic success and life challenges. This holistic approach enables educators to nurture students' minds, character, and capabilities, aligning with the broader goals of education in an interconnected and diverse world.

Conflict of Interest

The authors declare that there is no conflict of interest.

References

[1] Djamdjuri, D. S., Gatot, M., Yusiyaka, R. A., Sahril, M., Mufaridah, F., & Pratama, M. I. (2023). Systematic Literature Review: Integrating Islamic Education in English Language Teaching. *Journal of English Education and Teaching*, *7*(4), 881-900.

[2] Suraju, S. B. (2017). Curriculum Integration and Islamic Studies in Nigeria: Problems and Prospects. In *World Educators Forum* (Vol. 9, No. 1, pp. 1-10).

[3] Suhud, W. (2018). *An Analysis of The Integration of Islamic Values into English Language Curriculum* (Doctoral dissertation, Uin Ar-Raniry Banda Aceh).

[4] Ilias, N., Adnan, A. H. M., Thomas, M., & Ab Manan, N. A. (2022). English Language Settings at Private Islamic Schools in Malaysia: How Interactive Are the Language Classrooms? *International Journal of Academic Research in Progressive Education and Development*, *11*(3), 119-127.

[5] Annisa, A. (2017). *The integration of Islamic values in English teaching and learning process at MAN Model Palangka Raya* (Doctoral dissertation, IAIN Palangka Raya).

[6] Makmun, A. R., Al Hidaya, A., & Akbar, E. (2021). Reconciliation of Bloom's Taxonomy and Framework of Islamic Sciences Philosophy: Concepts of al-Jabiri, Khaled M. Abou El Fadl and Soroush. *Review of International Geographical Education Online*, *11*(2), 740-749.

[7] Pangestu, R. A., & Anshori, A. (2024, September). Evaluation of the Application of Bloom's Taxonomy in Islamic Religious Education Learning. In *Proceeding of International Conference of Islamic Education* (Vol. 2, pp. 241-250).
[8] Kennedy, D. (2006). *Writing and using learning outcomes: a practical guide*. University College Cork.
[9] MacLean, P., & Scott, B. (2011). Competencies for learning design: A review of the literature and a proposed framework. *British Journal of Educational Technology*, *42*(4), 557-572.
[10] Ra-ngubtook, W., & Bhongsatiern, J. (2022). Basic education in Thailand. In *International Handbook on Education in South East Asia* (pp. 1-25). Singapore: Springer Nature Singapore.
[11] Trilling, B., & Fadel, C. (2009). *21st-century skills: Learning for life in our times*. John Wiley & Sons.
[12] Haynes, J.,
[13] & Zacarian, D. (2010). *Teaching English language learners across the content areas*. ASCD.
[14] Sosa Díaz, M. J., Guerra Antequera, J., & Cerezo Pizarro, M. (2021). Flipped classroom in the context of higher education: Learning, satisfaction, and interaction. *Education Sciences*, *11*(8), 416.
[15] Qasserras, L. (2023). Systematic review of communicative language teaching (CLT) in language education: A balanced perspective. *European Journal of Education and Pedagogy*, *4*(6), 17-23.
[16] Tiu, J., Groenewald, E., Kilag, O. K., Balicoco, R., Wenceslao, S., & Asentado, D. (2023). Enhancing Oral Proficiency: Effective Strategies for Teaching Speaking Skills in Communication Classrooms. *Excellencia: International Multi-disciplinary Journal of Education (2994-9521)*, *1*(6), 343-354.
[17] Cremin, T. (2022). Teaching English creatively. In *Teaching English Creatively* (pp. 1-11). Routledge.
[18] Andrews, D., van Lieshout, E., & Kaudal, B. B. (2023). How, Where, And When Do Students Experience Meaningful Learning? *International Journal of Innovation in Science and Mathematics Education*, *31*(3), 28-45.
[19] Cronqvist, M. (2021). Joy in learning: When children feel good and realize they learn. *Educare*, (3), 54-77.
[20] Ramdhani, I. H. K., Waluyo, K. E., & Bariah, O. (2024). Religious Literacy Model Based on The Student-Centered Learning Approach in Learning Islamic Religious. In *Proceedings of 5th Borobudur International Symposium on Humanities and Social Science (BISHSS 2023)* (p. 252). Springer Nature.
[21] Singha, R., & Singha, S. (2023). Faith and Culture in Education: Fostering Inclusive Environments. In *The Role of Faith and Religious Diversity in Educational Practices* (pp. 149-172). IGI Global.

Author



Dr. Soontorn Piyawason is a prominent educational leader serving as the President of the Foundation for Quranic Education. He is also the School Licensee and Manager of Kalamullah al-Qur'an and Multilingual School. With a dedication to promoting Quranic education, he is committed to enhancing educational practices within the context of Islamic values. (email: kalamullahschool@gmail.com).