

## TEACHING ENGLISH THROUGH ISLAMIC CONTEXTS TO IMPROVE STUDENTS' MOTIVATION FOR ISLAMIC EDUCATION CLASSROOM

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**Abstract:** *English is frequently seen as a foreign topic that is unrelated to students' everyday spiritual practices and religious beliefs in many Islamic educational institutions. In English classes, this view often results in low learning motivation, low interest, and passive participation. In order to improve students' motivation in Islamic education classes, this study investigates the efficacy of teaching English through Islamic contexts. This method aims to produce meaningful, pertinent, and culturally sensitive learning experiences by incorporating Islamic principles, themes, texts, and actual religious activities into English language training. Students from an Islamic secondary school participated in the study, which used a mixed-methods research approach. Semi-structured interviews, classroom observations, and motivation questionnaires were used to gather data. The results show that when Islamic contexts were incorporated into instructional materials and classroom activities, students' motivation, engagement, and positive attitudes toward learning English significantly improved. Students showed more self-assurance, engagement, and a greater sense of connection between studying English and their religious identity. According to the study's findings, teaching English in Islamic contexts is a pedagogically successful approach that integrates language acquisition with students' cultural and spiritual backgrounds, resulting in increased motivation and more significant learning opportunities in Islamic educational environments.*

**Keywords:** Islamic contexts, English language teaching, student motivation, Islamic education, culturally responsive pedagogy

## **INTRODUCTION**

English has developed into a universal language that is essential to science, technology, education, and worldwide communication. English language instruction (ELT) has therefore been extensively used in a variety of educational settings, including Islamic educational establishments. However, despite its significance, pupils in Islamic institutions frequently perceive English as a subject that is unrelated to their cultural values and religious identity. Students' motivation and involvement in learning English may suffer as a result of this view. It is often acknowledged that motivation plays a crucial role in language acquisition success. Motivated learners are more likely to be persistent, enthusiastic, and eager to participate in educational activities. On the other hand, low motivation can lead to poor learning outcomes, anxiety, and little participation. When instructional materials in Islamic education classes are dominated by Western cultural references that do not reflect their beliefs, values, or everyday experiences, students may find it difficult to discover personal connection in English teachings.

A viable pedagogical strategy to address this issue is the incorporation of Islamic contexts into English language instruction. Incorporating Islamic beliefs, themes, tales, terminology, and practices into language learning resources and activities is a key component of teaching English in Islamic contexts. This method seeks to contextualize language objectives within students' religious and cultural frameworks rather than to supplant them. Many academics contend that by making learning more relevant and accessible, culturally and religiously sensitive instruction can increase students' motivation. Students may view English as a helpful tool for comprehending and communicating Islamic knowledge in a global context rather than as a threat to their religious identity if English training is aligned with Islamic ideas in Islamic education settings.

Thus, the purpose of this study is to find out how teaching English in Islamic contexts might boost students' motivation in Islamic education settings. It specifically aims to investigate how systematic integration of Islamic content into English training affects students' motivation, classroom participation, and attitudes toward learning the language.

## **LITERATURE REVIEW**

### **Student Inspiration for Learning English**

In educational research, motivation in learning second and foreign languages has been thoroughly examined. Gardner's socio-educational theory states that learners' motivation is comprised of their desire to acquire a language, their attitudes toward the process of learning, and the amount of effort they put into learning activities. In a similar vein, Dörnyei highlights how motivation affects language learners' decisions, perseverance, and performance.

Maintaining students' motivation becomes a significant difficulty in EFL situations, particularly when English is not utilized in everyday interactions. Students frequently find it difficult to relate English to their own life, which lowers their interest and involvement. This problem is especially noticeable in schools with a strong religious component, as students may choose religious studies above foreign languages.

### **Culturally**

The significance of integrating students' cultural origins, values, and experiences into teaching methods is emphasized by culturally responsive teaching. This method acknowledges that learning occurs best when new information is integrated into learners' preexisting cultural frameworks. Culturally responsive teaching in ELT entails modifying instructional materials, subjects, and

activities to take into account the cultural identities of the students. According to research, students are more likely to feel appreciated, respected, and driven when they encounter representations of their culture in educational materials.

### **Islamic Perspectives on Teaching English**

The incorporation of Islamic ideas, values, and material into English language instruction is referred to as "Islamic contexts" in ELT. Islamic tales, moral precepts, historical personalities, Qur'anic themes, everyday religious rituals, and ethical concepts can all be used as sources for reading, writing, speaking, and listening exercises.

According to earlier research, including Islamic content into English instruction helps boost students' enthusiasm, confidence, and anxiety levels. When educational materials align with their moral principles and religious convictions, students typically react favorably. Additionally, Islamic-contextualized ELT can support students' simultaneous development of moral character and language proficiency. Nevertheless, there is still little empirical research on how Islamic-contextualized ELT affects students' motivation despite its possible advantages. By offering actual data on how this strategy affects students' motivation in Islamic education classes, this study aims to add to the body of knowledge.

### **METHOD**

#### **Design of Research**

In order to obtain a thorough grasp of students' motivation, this study used a mixed-methods research design that combined quantitative and qualitative techniques. While the qualitative component thoroughly examined students' experiences and perspectives, the quantitative component tracked shifts in students' motivation levels.

#### **Participants**

Sixty pupils from an Islamic high school participated in the study. The pupils were enrolled in English classes that incorporated Islamic settings into lesson plans and instructional strategies. Purposive sampling was used to choose the participants in order to guarantee that they were pertinent to the study's goals.

#### **Tools**

**Three tools were employed to gather information:**

#### **Questionnaire on Motivation**

Students' motivation was assessed both before and after Islamic-contextualized English instruction was implemented using a Likert-scale questionnaire that was modified from well-known motivation scales.

#### **Observation in the Classroom**

To assess students' involvement, engagement, and interaction during English classes, observations were made in the classroom.

### **Interviews that are semi-structured**

Selected students were interviewed to understand more about their thoughts, emotions, and experiences with learning English in Islamic situations.

### **Analysis of Data**

Descriptive statistics were used to evaluate quantitative data from the surveys in order to determine shifts in motivation levels. To find recurrent patterns and themes pertaining to motivation and engagement, qualitative data from observations and interviews were subjected to thematic analysis.

### **Result and Discussion**

#### **An increase in the motivation of students**

The results of the questionnaire showed that when Islamic-contextualized English instruction was introduced, pupils' motivation significantly increased. Higher levels of interest, enjoyment, and desire to engage in English language learning activities were displayed by the students. English classes felt more significant and applicable to their life, according to many students.

#### **Enhanced Involvement in the Classroom**

Increased student participation during lessons was seen in the classroom. Pupils were more inclined to participate in group discussions, ask questions, and talk. Students responded enthusiastically to activities that included Islamic themes, such as talking about moral principles or recounting Islamic tales in English.

#### **Positive Views of Students**

Students valued the inclusion of Islamic contexts in English language instruction, according to interview data. They believed that their religious identity and English were no longer separate. Rather, they saw English as a useful instrument for comprehending and disseminating Islamic knowledge to a larger audience.

These results corroborate other studies on culturally responsive education, which highlight how cultural relevance can boost motivation. Students' emotional connection to the learning process was strengthened when English education was in line with Islamic principles.

## **RESULT AND DISCUSSION**

### **1. General Shifts in Students' Inspiration**

Following the incorporation of Islamic contexts into English language training, students'

motivation clearly and consistently improved, according to the quantitative data from the motivation surveys. Many kids showed little interest in English classes prior to the adoption. English was frequently seen as a challenging topic that had little bearing on their daily life and religious beliefs.

Following the educational intervention, students demonstrated increased motivation in a number of areas, such as curiosity, focus, self-assurance, and participation willingness. English classes felt less daunting and more important, according to the students. The improvement in motivation was noticeable in speaking, listening, reading, and writing exercises rather than just one particular skill. These results imply that integrating Islamic themes into English training can help close the gap between language acquisition and students' own values, resulting in longer-lasting motivated engagement.

## **2. Motivation Indicators: Participation, Confidence, and Interest**

Individual motivation indicators show notable shifts when examined more closely. First, there was a noticeable rise in interest in studying English. When Islamic principles, tales, or well-known religious customs were covered in English classes, students reported enjoying them more. Students were inspired to pay more attention in class and actively interact with the learning resources as a result of their heightened interest.

Second, there was a noticeable increase in pupils' confidence. Many kids were reluctant to speak English before Islamic contexts were integrated because they were afraid of making mistakes. On the other hand, pupils were more assured and eager to share their thoughts when asked to address well-known Islamic subjects. Students were able to concentrate more on language use than subject comprehension since familiar content lessened cognitive strain.

Third, **classroom participation** increased significantly. Students were more active in asking questions, participating in discussions, and completing tasks. Group work activities based on Islamic themes generated lively interaction and collaboration among students, indicating a positive shift in classroom dynamics.

## **3. Results of Classroom Observations**

The questionnaire data was strongly supported qualitatively by observations made in the classroom. In contrast to regular English classes, pupils showed greater levels of involvement during lectures that included Islamic themes. Pupils were more engaged in class activities, attentive, and responsive.

Sustained eye contact with the instructor, taking more notes, and actively participating in group and pair discussions were among the specific observable behaviors. Additionally, students were more inclined to offer solutions and take part in role-playing or narrative exercises with an Islamic theme.

Additionally, the classroom environment became more welcoming and upbeat. Students seemed more at ease and less nervous, indicating that the incorporation of Islamic settings helped create a welcoming classroom atmosphere that promoted active language usage.

## **4. Views and Attitudes of Students**

Students' opinions of learning English in Islamic situations were overwhelmingly positive, according to the interview data. According to the students, this method increased the relevance and significance of studying English. Many pupils said that the inclusion of Islamic content altered their impression that English had little to do with who they were.

Students were proud to be able to talk about Islamic principles and customs in English. Additionally, they acknowledged the value of English as a universal language for communicating internationally and disseminating Islamic knowledge. These impressions point to a change in motivation from extrinsic to more integrative and intrinsic.

### **1. Important Motivational Elements: Relevance and Meaningfulness**

The study's findings support the idea that students' motivation to learn English is greatly increased by relevance and meaningfulness. Learning takes on greater personal significance when English instruction is linked to students' everyday routines and religious beliefs.

Learners are more motivated when they believe that the things they are doing are worthwhile and significant, according to motivational theories in second language acquisition. Students are given familiar conceptual frameworks through the incorporation of Islamic contexts, which enables them to make connections between newly acquired language skills and their prior religious and cultural knowledge. This relationship promotes persistent engagement and increases students' intrinsic drive.

### **2. Islamic Contexts and Motivation Based on Identity**

The results emphasize the significance of identity in language learning motivation. Because they view English as culturally alien or even at odds with their religious identity, students in Islamic education classes frequently struggle with the language. This study shows that by coordinating language instruction with students' identities, incorporating Islamic contexts helps ease this conflict.

Students are more motivated when they perceive English as a means of communicating Islamic principles rather than as a danger to their convictions. Identity-based motivation theory, which highlights that students are more motivated when learning activities align with their beliefs and self-concept, is supported by this.

### **3. Reducing the Affective Filter and Anxiety**

The affective filter hypothesis provides an explanation for the observed rise in participation and confidence. Students' nervousness and fear of making mistakes are reduced when they are familiar with Islamic curriculum. Students feel less pressure and more at ease when asked to discuss subjects they are already familiar with.

Reduced fear enables pupils to use English more daringly, which is crucial for language growth. This result is consistent with earlier research highlighting the importance of emotional elements in effective language acquisition.

## CONCLUSION

This study shows that students' motivation in Islamic education classes can be greatly increased by teaching English in Islamic situations. Students' engagement and favorable attitudes toward English are increased when Islamic beliefs, themes, and content are incorporated into English instruction to produce meaningful and culturally relevant learning experiences.

The results imply that Islamic-contextualized ELT enhances students' religious identity and moral consciousness in addition to promoting language development. Teachers in Islamic educational institutions are therefore urged to use this method as a tactic to improve learning outcomes and motivation.

Future studies could look at how this strategy affects language proficiency over the long run and how it is applied in various educational settings and levels.

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