Developing Culturally Responsive ELT Materials: Evidence from Indonesian Islamic Schools[1]

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Abstract

While proper English language teaching (ELT) materials should reflect the students' cultural and ideological context, locally designed materials for Islamic schools have been voicelessly represented. This article reports the development of a culturally responsive ELT material at Indonesian Islamic schools *(Pesantren* and *Madrasa).* The participants of this mixed-method study included twenty-seven English teachers, twenty students of *Madrasa*, and eight experts from various relevant fields such as Islamic studies, Islamic law, Indonesian Ulema Council, ELT, and Islamic religious education. They were involved in different stages of an instructional model called ADDIE (Analyze, Design, Develop, Implement, and Evaluate) which aims at developing and validating educational products including teaching materials. Quantitative data were collected from a needs analysis questionnaire, while qualitative data from interviews, a validation sheet, and field notes. Quantitative results showed that specific cultural content derived from Qur'anic stories and the history of Islam was expected more than that of local tradition and western culture. Qualitative results revealed that a culturally responsive ELT material for Indonesian Islamic schools should include Western culture, Indonesian local tradition, and Islamic text in one teaching material. In order to emphasize the significance of the cross-linguistic and cross-cultural components of teaching foreign languages, the content should be supported by a pluralistic approach. The *cultura franca* framework should also be used to bolster them in order to highlight the commonalities and similarities of diverse cultures. The study suggests that English teachers in the Islamic schools develop an ELT material utilizing the ADDIE model to accommodate the particularity and locality of their ELT contexts, as well as to incorporate diverse voices and perspectives in the field of ELT.

Resumen

Si bien los materiales adecuados para la enseñanza del inglés como lengua extranjera (ELT) deben reflejar el contexto cultural e ideológico de los estudiantes, los materiales diseñados localmente para escuelas islámicas han sido poco representados. Este artículo informa sobre el desarrollo de un material ELT culturalmente sensible en escuelas islámicas indonesias (pesantren y madrasa). Los participantes de este estudio de métodos mixtos incluyeron veintisiete profesores de inglés, veinte estudiantes de madrasa y ocho expertos de diversos campos relevantes, como estudios islámicos, derecho islámico, el Consejo de Ulemas de Indonesia, ELT y educación religiosa islámica. Participaron en diferentes etapas de un modelo instruccional llamado ADDIE (Analizar, Diseñar, Desarrollar, Implementar y Evaluar), cuyo objetivo es desarrollar y validar productos educativos, incluidos los materiales didácticos. Se recopilaron datos cuantitativos a partir de un cuestionario de análisis de necesidades, mientras que los datos cualitativos se obtuvieron de entrevistas, una hoja de validación y notas de campo. Los resultados cuantitativos mostraron que se esperaba un contenido cultural específico derivado de historias coránicas y la historia del Islam, en mayor medida que el de la tradición local y la cultura occidental. Los resultados cualitativos revelaron que un material didáctico de inglés como lengua extranjera (ELT) culturalmente pertinente para las escuelas islámicas de Indonesia debe integrar la cultura occidental, la tradición local indonesia y textos islámicos. Para enfatizar la importancia de los componentes interlingüísticos e interculturales de la enseñanza de lenguas extranjeras, el contenido debe basarse en un enfoque pluralista. Asimismo, se debe utilizar el marco de la cultura franca para reforzarlo y resaltar las similitudes y los puntos en común entre las diversas culturas. El estudio sugiere que los profesores de inglés en las escuelas islámicas desarrollen un material ELT utilizando el modelo ADDIE para adaptarse a las particularidades y la localidad de sus contextos de enseñanza, así como para incorporar diversas voces y perspectivas en el campo de la ELT.

Introduction

Of the many issues related to English instruction, cultural issues have been the most extensively studied. Zein (2018) asserts that cultural issues are complex within the context of English language teaching (ELT) in Indonesia due to the multilingual and multicultural repertoire. When such complexity is portrayed through the lens of Indonesian Islamic schools, for example *Pesantren* (Islamic boarding schools) and *Madrasa* (Islamic non-boarding schools) it becomes intriguing. These schools have to deal with cultural issues from local Indonesian traditions, Islamic traditions, and Western traditions. Given that Indonesia has more than 47,000 Islamic schools (Ihsan et al., 2021), which makes it the home for the world's largest number of

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English Moslem learners, and that little attention has been paid to the cultural issues faced by the Islamic schools, a further study with a more concrete teaching material addressing the multicultural repertoire is necessary.

To date, a considerable amount of research has been conducted related to cultural issues (Boroomand & Yazdani, 2017; Pennycook, 2007; Villacañas de Castro et al., 2018) and teaching material development in English instruction (Iswati, 2019; Tu et al., 2021; Williams, 2010). The research, however, has tended to focus on four aspects. First, the investigation into western cultural content in ELT textbooks. Chao (2011) reports that many ELT textbooks contain western perspectives and products; Mahmoud (2015) suggests the needs to include Islamic Arabic culture in addition to western culture; and Varzande (2015) observes western cultural hegemony in ELT textbooks. Second, the description of the students' national identity in the teaching of English as a foreign language (TEFL). Suryanto (2014) notes that local cultural context is of paramount importance in TEFL; Boroomand and Yazdani (2017) hold that students' narrative culture is a requisite for TEFL; and Muslim (2017) concludes that the use of students' heritage narrative develops their language skills. Third, the discussion on cultural issues and colonialism in ELT. Pennycook (2007) claims that many facets of ELT perpetuate colonial cultural constructs, while Le Ha (2008) states that ELT in many periphery countries might have excluded the local culture. Makhdoom (2014) reports the hegemony of western discourses in ELT and Villacañas de Castro et al., (2018) point out the existence of neoliberal ideology in ELT. Fourth, the use of the ADDIE model to design teaching materials. The model has been successfully used to develop writing skills (Williams, 2010); literacy instruction (Nichols Hess & Greer, 2016); online learning (Balanyk, 2017); English for specific purpose coursebook (Iswati, 2019) and course design (Tu et al., 2021). There has been no comprehensive study related to the design of culturally responsive teaching materials for Islam-affiliated schools in Indonesia.

This study contributes to the filling in the gap mentioned above addressing the following research questions: (1) What are the needs of the English teachers at Islamic schools in Indonesia related to ELT materials? and (2) How to design a culturally responsive ELT material for the Indonesian Islamic schools? For this study, we make two propositions. First, cultural issues faced by English teachers at Islamic schools are best anticipated by incorporating the Islamic theological ground for material development, and through connecting the Islamic, Indonesian and western cultures within a single teaching material. Second, as there is no teaching material that fits all contexts, a teacher needs to develop one through ADDIE steps (analyze, design, develop, implement, and evaluate) which are effective and operative for designing teaching material in the Indonesian context (Wahyudin et al., 2022).

The study's findings may assist English teachers at Islamic schools in devising proper teaching materials without losing their sights of the Islamic educational ground and the English instruction in universality. The findings also help language instructors to include cutting-edge teaching materials (Konstantakis et al., 2022) by instilling needs analysis-based cultural issues for Indonesian Islamic schools.

Review of the Literature

ADDIE Model

ADDIE model is one of the most widely used models in the field of instructional design to generate contextual and effective instructional products including learning materials. The acronym ADDIE stands for and depicts the five interconnected phases namely Analysis, Design, Development, Implementation, and Evaluation. The analysis phase mainly deals with the analysis of the learners, instructional goals, and learning objectives. The design phase focuses on designing the assessment, selecting the course form, and creating an instructional strategy. The development phase embraces creating factual samples of course materials. The implementation phase might include training the teachers, preparing the students, and organizing the learning milieu. The evaluation phase deals with the formative and summative evaluation (Aldoobie, 2015). Branch (2009), the initiator of the ADDIE model, states that the model is responsive, dynamic, and systematic. It responds to any particularity of instructional goals, accommodates changing variables that occur during the intentional instruction process, and contains rules and procedures aimed at responding to any stimulus. It emphasizes the complexity of students' cultural norms, social backgrounds, cognitive styles, and socio-economic status. It highlights the sensitivity of context as a socially constructed entity consisting of diverse concepts, propositions, and rules.

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Previous uses of the ADDIE model in the field of instructional design and materials development reported that the model might be used to systematically predict the desired learning outcomes (Dewi, 2018); generate students' worksheets and compact disks for listening courses (Furwana, 2021), as well as to develop a test to measure English proficiency delivered through the Learning Management System (Nita et al., 2022). Among some uses of the ADDIE model, there is one common thread: the model´s potential in developing learner-centred and context-dependent learning materials.

Culture in ELT

Culture is not easy to define, yet Tuna and Razı (2016) propose 45 elements of culture in ELT context, among others, are thoughts, habits, beliefs, values, etiquette, ethics, ideas, hobbies, skills, behavior, television shows, music, advertising, art, literature, and cinema. In other words, culture embraces beliefs, attitudes, and skills which distinguish one group from the other groups (Arrindell, 2003). Due to its broad coverage, culture is impossible to separate from language teaching as it is embedded in the language itself (Peterson & Coltrane, 2003). Parkinson (2013) affirms that English instruction does not only deal with the teaching of lexis and grammar, but also with culture and values that teachers need to consider. At this juncture, ELT can be viewed as a cultural transmission because language itself is the carrier of a specific culture.

In the context of teaching English as a foreign language (TEFL), the notion of cultural transmission is problematic pertaining to what culture, which culture, and whose culture to teach (Hidayati, 2016; Prodromou, 1992; Sugirin, 2013;). Within a multicultural learning environment, an English teacher should consider cultural similarities rather than differences (Pino Castillo et al., 2020). These scholars confirm that English cultural values and local cultural values and particular cultures like Islamic values should be integrated properly into TEFL to build respect toward cultural differences and to raise the awareness of mutual acceptance. It is worthy of note that religion is a part of culture and that religion and culture are two different concepts from a western perspective. Therefore, the word 'Islam' might be best viewed as an element of culture in this context, rather than as a religion.

Cultura franca and material development

Cultura franca (Böttcher, 2017) departs from an awareness of the differences and similarities in cultures in the world. It is an attempt to emphasize commonalities and similarities of the various cultures. It serves as a common ground upon which the existing cultures meet and can be regarded equally without being marginalized or subordinated. The ultimate goal of cultura franca is to introduce intercultural awareness, endorse cultural commonalities, understand culturally shared values, enhance mutual acceptance, and lead human to interact respectfully with one another (Al Hariri, 2022; Takari, 2013). A balance of power for all involved cultures is central to the cultura franca framework.

To a certain extent, cultura franca appears to intersect with the notion of universal values referring to beliefs, morals, virtues or wisdom that cut across national boundaries such as the values related to family relations, sympathy, trust, patriotism, commitment to a supreme being, self-respect, caring for others, caring for other living things, trustworthiness, honesty, truthfulness, integrity, fairness, patience, equity, generosity, and humility (Abu-Rahma & Abu-Rahma, 2013; Kinnier et al., 2000; Kostina et al., 2015). Those culturally and universally shared values should not prevent English teachers from introducing differences that exist in various world cultures.

It is noteworthy to mention that cultura franca is open to the comparison of different cultures that lead to an emphasis on their similarities. Matsuda (2012) suggests that a wide range of cultural elements could be incorporated in teaching materials. ELT materials are beneficial portal that could accommodate global culture, the culture of the students' future interlocutors, and the students' own culture. Many scholars support this argument and further explain that ELT materials should not center on the English native speakers' corpora (Kiczkowiak, 2019), but rather, be a vehicle to understand the others (Kim & So, 2018), consider ethnic diversity (Mize & Glover, 2021) and include such culturally familiar topics as environmental issues, pop culture, sports, food, crime, and tourism (Sheridan & Condon, 2020). They can also accommodate the lived experiences of both learners and teachers (Durand, 2021). From a cultura franca perspective, a teacher might develop an ELT material that is culturally and contextually responsive to the students' backgrounds.

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Materials development in Islamic schools

It is worthy of note that instructional activities in Islamic schools are based upon a Koranic perspective, Prophetic tradition *(hadits)* and the teaching of the learned *('ulamâ)* (Halstead, 2004). As for the ELT ground, Alwasilah (2010) offers two verses from the Koran:

> *O mankind, We have created you male and female, and appointed you races and tribes, that you may know one another. Surely the noblest among you in the sight of God is the most godfearing of you. God is All-knowing, All aware.* (The Holy Koran, 1955, 49:13).
>
> *And of His signs is the creation of the heavens and the earth and the variety of your tongues and hues. Surely in that are signs for all living beings.* (The Holy Koran, 1955, 30:22).

As for the support of intercultural awareness that becomes a central concept in cultura franca, Irwansyah (2018) relates the story of Prophet Muhammad, who spoke Arabic, once asked one of his companions, Zaid ibn Thabit to learn Persian, Greek, Aramaic, Ethiopian, and Hebrew.

English materials development for Islamic schools is complex and problematic given the fact that the ELT materials are both cultural and ideological vehicles. Durand (2021) warns that ELT materials often become tools to reproduce, legitimize, and perpetuate certain ideology domination, positions, and identities of the West resulting in power imbalances and colonial colors. To avoid the hegemony and the power imbalances within, English practitioners in Islamic schools should design ELT materials that best reflect their students' cultural and ideological experiences. The developed materials should accommodate three bases of Islamic instruction namely the Koran, as the main religious text of Islam, the Prophetic tradition, and the voice of the learned *('ulamâ).*

Methods

This study used a mixed-method approach, guided by an instructional model called ADDIE (Analyze, Design, Develop, Implement, and Evaluate) proposed by Branch (2009) and with some stages of teaching material development initiated by Tomlinson and Masuhara (2018), namely needs analysis, aims and objectives, drafting, piloting, production, and revision.

Participants

This small-scale research involved 55 participants as follows: 27 English teachers from 12 Islamic schools in Lampung Province, Indonesia; three experts from the fields of Islamic study, an Islamic law expert, and a local leader of the Indonesian Ulema Council; five other experts from related fields (ELT, Islamic study, teaching materials, Islamic law gender and children, and Islamic religious education) and 20 students of a *Madrasa.*

Subsequent to the approval of the Institutional Review Board, the researchers instructed all the participants, orally and as well as in writing, of the purpose of the research prior to obtaining their consent to participate in it. Consent was also gained for participants to record the interview process.

Instruments

The instruments used in this research were: (1) a needs analysis questionnaire (Appendix 1), (2) an interview (Appendix 2), (3) a validation sheet, and (4) field notes. The instruments of needs analysis, questionnaire, and validation sheet were mainly developed in tune with the theories of material development, while the instrument of the interview was developed in the light of cultural issues theories. The needs analysis questionnaire was used to generate quantitative data, while interview, validation sheet, and field notes were used to collect qualitative data.

Data collection

The data collection was based on the five steps of the ADDIE model. The first was the analysis in which the needs analysis questionnaire was generated and distributed via a *Google Form* to 19 English teachers from 12 Islamic schools in Lampung Province, Indonesia. The second was the design phase in which seven teachers from Islamic schools and three experts (Islamic study expert, Islamic law expert, and a local leader of the Indonesian Ulema Council) were interviewed. The interview covered beliefs, goals, objectives, theological ground, language contestation between Arabic and English, and suggestions for the improvement of ELT in the Islamic. The third was the developmental stage in which the educational product was generated

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and five other experts from related fields (ELT, Islamic study, teaching materials, Islamic law gender and children, and Islamic religious education) were involved to validate the product. The fourth was implementation in that a small-scale field testing of the developed materials was conducted in an Islamic school, Madrasah Tsanawiyah Ma'arif 01 Punggur Lampung Tengah, Indonesia. Two units of the developed materials were usedd, namely a Koranic Story, titled *Ashabul Ukhdud* (People of the Ditch), and the theme Self-Motivation with text *You Belong to the Sky.* The main aim of this field testing was to encourage the teacher to reflect on the students' responses toward the teaching material developed in this study. This step included one English teacher and 20 *Madrasa* students. The fifth and final step was evaluation in which the educational product was revised based on the feedback gained during implementation.

Data analysis

This study involved both quantitative data and qualitative data. The quantitative data, generated in the first phase through the needs analysis questionnaire, were presented in the form of a mean calculation to rank the sub-items of the teaching materials to be developed. The qualitative data, gathered in the second phase, were analyzed through six steps: (1) organizing the data into different types depending on the source of information, (2) reading the data to reflect on its overall meaning, (3) coding the data, (4) generating a description of the settings and categories of themes for analysis, (5) representing the description and themes chronologically, and (6) interpreting the findings by revealing the lessons learned from the research. To ensure the validity and reliability of the qualitative research, the researchers implemented the thick description strategy by providing a detailed description of setting and providing many perspectives about a theme (Creswell, 2014).

Results

The findings and results of this research are systematically presented following the stages of ADDIE model which involve analyze, design, develop, implement, and evaluate.

The needs of English Teachers at Indonesian Islamic schools

Analysis stage

A needs analysis questionnaire was distributed in the analysis stage to identify the components needed to develop teaching materials that are responsive to cultural issues (Table 1).

No.	Question subjects	Sub-item	Rank	Mean
1	Areas of Competence	Speaking	I	3.84
		Vocabulary	II	3.68
		Reading	III	3.63
		Writing	IV	3.53
		Listening	V	3.42
		Grammar	VI	3.42
		Translation	VII	3.32
2	Specific Content/Necessities	Koran stories	I	3.95
		The history of Islam	II	3.89
		Self-motivation	III	3.84
		Technology	IV	3.63
		Religion tolerance	V	3.47
		World scientists	VI	3.32
		Local tradition	VII	3.21
		Western culture	VIII	2.95
3	Types of Activities	Prayer (Arabic-Eng.)	I	3.74
		Group work	II	3.74
		Pair work	III	3.58
		Storytelling	IV	3.47
		Individual work	V	3.32
		Debate	VI	2.53
4	Evaluation Strategies	Rubric (role play, etc.)	I	3.58
		Multiple choice	II	3.32
		Fill in the blank	III	3.26
		Essay	IV	3.26
		Worksheet	V	3.21

Table 1: Summary of the needs analysis questionnaire.

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Table 1 shows the English teachers' needs related to the areas of language competence, the specific content to be taught in Islamic schools, classroom activities, and learning evaluation. It is clear that among the most important areas of competence of EFL that need to be taught in Indonesian Islamic schools are speaking skills, reading skills, and vocabulary mastery. The students are considered to be successful when they can speak fluently, read intensively, and have a wide vocabulary. Related to reading skills, the students are supposed to be good at understanding certain topics, particularly those related to Islamic teachings, motivation, and technology. Other topics that are considered important include religious diversity, international figures, locality, and western culture. For the types of classroom activities, the teachers put praying in Arabic and English translation as the top priority. Prayer is essential in the Islamic education tradition. The teachers accommodate common practices of classroom activities such as working in groups and in pairs. While the teachers expect the students' to be independent while learning, many of them seemed not to recommend debate as a classroom activity. For evaluation of learning, rubric strategies, multiple options, short answers, essays, and worksheets were believed to still be relevant.

Of the four aspects covered in the needs analysis stage, the specific content or specific necessities of the Islamic schools are highlighted in Figure 1.

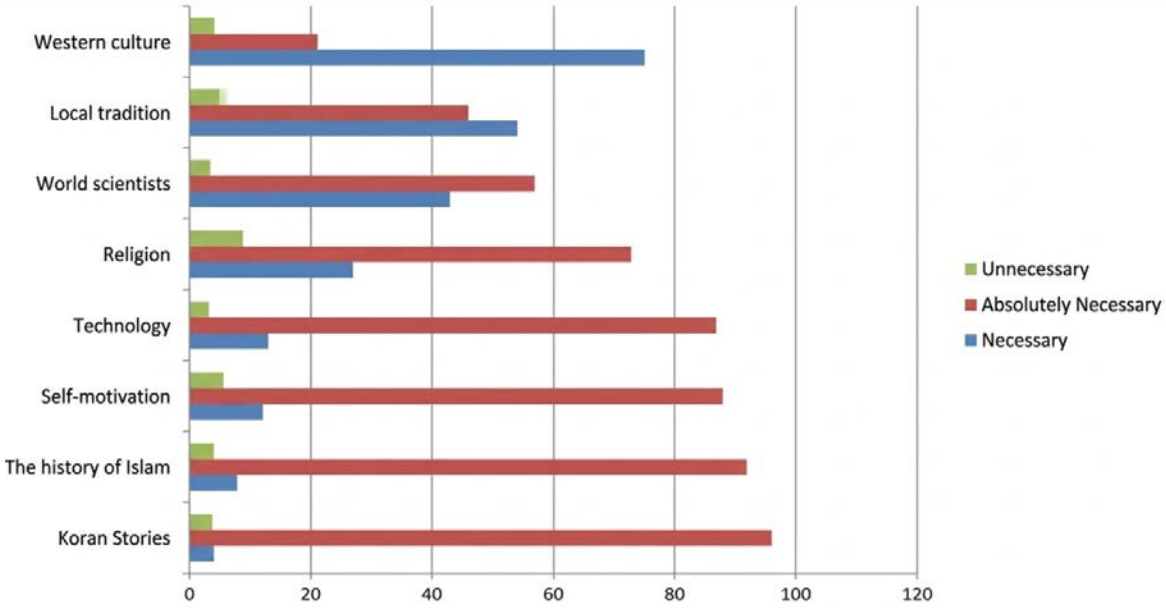

Figure 1: Specific contents of teaching materials needed in Indonesian Islamic schools.

Figure 1 displays certain contents or topics that need to be taught in Indonesian Islamic schools. The gradation of the topics makes it clear that Koran stories are the most important reading texts. Koran stories, together with other topics related to Islamic history, motivation, technology, religious tolerance, and world scientists have a level of need that is higher than 50%. Topics such as local traditions and western culture, on the other hand, are if interested to fewer that 50%. Nevertheless, topics related to local traditions and western cultures still need to be incorporated into the English teaching materials for Islamic schools because both are necessary to maintain national identity, foreign cultural recognition, and cross-cultural understanding.

It is worth noting that Indonesian Islamic schools require specific contents which, to a certain extent, are different from those of public schools. While the schools are open to the content of western culture, they expect to be exposed to Islamic texts written in English-.

Teaching materials that are culturally responsive for Indonesian Islamic teachers

Following the needs analysis stage is data collection related to the statement of beliefs, or to what the teachers at Islamic schools believe to be relevant for their teaching contexts.

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Design stage

The following interview quotes highlight what the English teachers at Indonesian Islamic schools believe about their teaching. Specifically, the teachers (identified with anonymous code Teacher 1, 2, 3…) articulated their statements of beliefs pertaining to ELT.

> *English is important as it is a part of the national exam. However, I still find that the students' learning interests are more directed toward Arabic than English.* (Teacher 1)
>
> *For our school, becoming a winner in an English speech contest is a barometer of achievement. To that end, the school supports the existence of an English club.* (Teacher 2)
>
> *English is an international language that is needed in this modern age, especially for interests related to information, technology, and culture.* (Teacher 3)
>
> *It is important to introduce English from the early age of the students*. (Teacher 7)

We need to prepare students with international language skills to face globalization and technological developments. For the learning activities, the Grammar Translation Method seems still relevant, as was mentioned by Teacher 4.

> *English learning is needed to respond to the development of the times, globalization, modernization, and information.* (Teacher 5)
>
> *English is beneficial for integrated Islamic schools. Therefore, it is necessary to integrate Islamic values into the English language learning*. (Teacher 6)

The discussion of teachers' statements of beliefs is one of the pillars of teaching material development (Tomlinson & Masuhara, 2018). The data gained in this research demonstrate that English remains an important subject in Indonesian Islamic schools for several reasons, namely: (1) English is tested in the Indonesian national exam, (2) English is a widely used international language, (3) English competency is essential in the globalization, technology, and modern age, and (4) it is an added value for a modern integrated Islamic school. Such statement of belief implies the need to introduce English from an earlier age, strengthen the existence of English clubs in Islamic schools revisit the implementation of western language teaching methods and integrate Islamic insights into EFL. Nevertheless, teacher still find a confrontation between two international languages: Arabic and English. In certain Islamic schools more attention may be paid to the teaching of Arabic over that of English.

Other noteworthy things from interviews with the English teachers are as follows.

> *Many teachers in this school graduated from* [sic] *Middle East like Medina*. (Teacher 1)
>
> *One day we won an English speech contest, since then the school pays [sic] good attention to ELT and approves* [sic] *the existence of an English club.* (Teacher 2)
>
> *I teach English materials and connect them to Islamic values for I realize that students in this school are directed to continue their study in* [sic] *Middle East like Medina.* (Teacher 6)

It is evident that in certain Islamic schools, the Arabic language is more popular than English because many influential teachers in the schools studied in the Middle East where Arabic is the most widely used language. As those teachers commonly have an important position in the school's managerial system, they made a pedagogical decision that emphasized the importance of Arabic. Nevertheless, ELT deserves a better place when it brings achievement for the schools such as by winning an English proficiency contest, and when it is connected to Islamic teaching. In other words, ELT is more acceptable when it incorporates texts or contents related to Islamic values.

To corroborate the above findings, interviews with three experts (identified with anonymous code Expert 1, 2, 3) from related fields namely an expert of Islamic studies, an expert of Islamic law, and a regional leader of the Indonesian Ulema Council are presented as follow.

> *In Islamic history, some of the Prophet's companions are known as language experts. Language learning is then a cultural necessity. It is good if an Islamic school places Arabic as a primary need and English as a secondary need.* (Expert 1)
>
> *There is no restriction on the object of science that needs to be studied in Islam, to the extent that such knowledge is useful. Nevertheless, there must be a scale of science priority. The mastery of English is essential, but the science of the Koran and hadith are more critical. An Islamic school must have a robust road map regarding the orientation of foreign language learning, Arabic and English.* (Expert 2)
>
> *Islam supports the existence of science. There is no specific evidence in Islamic tradition calling for the learning of English. However, because learning English is not contrary to the Koran and hadith, it is allowed. In this global era,*

> *the emphasis on mastery of Arabic alone is not wise. English is also necessary because Muslims need to conform to the global world. The combination of Arabic and English skills is essential for Islamic schools. Arabic is a religious language, and English is the language of knowledge. Language teaching should follow the system applied in boarding schools, with many exercises, and practices.* (Expert 3)

The above data are related to the experts' and *ulema's* views on foreign language teaching, cultural contestation, and practical suggestion for language pedagogy. It is obvious that learning a foreign language with the intention to spread Islamic teaching is in line with the prophetic tradition. Indonesian Muslim learners are allowed to learn any foreign language including English, yet they are required to first master the Arabic language. From the Islamic jurisprudence perspective, ELT and learning are permissible. Nevertheless, Muslim learners should always realize that the study of Koran and the prophetic tradition is above all branches of knowledge. At the practical level, learning Arabic itself without learning English is not wise. Arabic is needed to engage with Islamic primary sources (Baharin et al., 2025) while English should be learned as it is the lingua franca of science and technology (Kamadjeu, 2019). Both Arabic and English should be taught in Indonesian Islamic schools and might be best taught through the boarding school system with an emphasis on language use rather than on the language usage (Silviyanti et al., 2024). The interview results imply the need to bridge Arabic teaching, Islamic teachings, and English teaching through a culturally responsive English teaching material for Indonesian Islamic schools.

Developmental Stage

Based on the results and implications of the needs analysis and interview at the design stage, an initial version of teaching materials consisting of eight units was then developed (Table 2).

Units	Topics	Titles	Text Type	Words
1	Koran Stories	*Ashabul Ukhdud* (People of the Ditch)	Adapted	407
2	History of Islam	The King who Saved his Kingdom after his Death	Adapted	267
3	Self-Motivation	You Belong to the Sky	Adapted	162
4	Technology	Use Google Translate Effectively	Adapted	277
5	Religious Toleration	The Treaty of *Hudaibiyah*	Adapted	286
6	World Scientist	Muslim's Best Doctor	Adapted	145
7	Local Tradition	Enjoying the Islamic New Year at the *Tabuik* Festival	Adapted	389
8	Western Tradition	Do you love American Culture?	Adapted	328

Table 2: Topics and texts used in the developed materials.

Table 2 presents the topics, graded based on the needs analysis result conducted previously, and the texts used in English teaching materials developed through this research. In this context, the word 'developed' refers to the process of adapting original texts composed by other authors. Each topic is represented by a relevant reading text, and each reading text is adapted from its original version. The adapted version was made to fit the *Madrasa* students' English proficiency level. The adaptation process was also aimed at keeping the reading texts short, ranging from 145 words to 407 words so that they could be used during one class period. Each topic was then formatted as a unit of the teaching material developed for the Indonesian Islamic schools.

The initial product design, or teaching material, consisted of eight components: (1) cover, (2) preface (3) table of contents, (4) instructions for students, (5) instructions for teachers, (6) units, (7) answer keys, and (8) references. It is worth mentioning that the teaching material developed through this study included particular instructions to students and teachers. The students' referred to the prophetic tradition related to a Moslem learner's code of conduct which says that the Prophet Muhammad said that whoever is not kind to the younger ones or does not respect the elders or does not understand the rights of religious scholars is not from his nation. The latter was related to teachers' ethics such as being patient, caring and open to argumentation. It also emphasized that teachers should always remind their students to learn English to seek Allah's blessing.

The initial product was then validated by five experts from the fields of ELT, Islamic law, gender, and children, Islamic religious education, English teaching material, and English materials developers as well as the English practitioners in the Islamic schools. The validation of the experts is presented in Figure 2.

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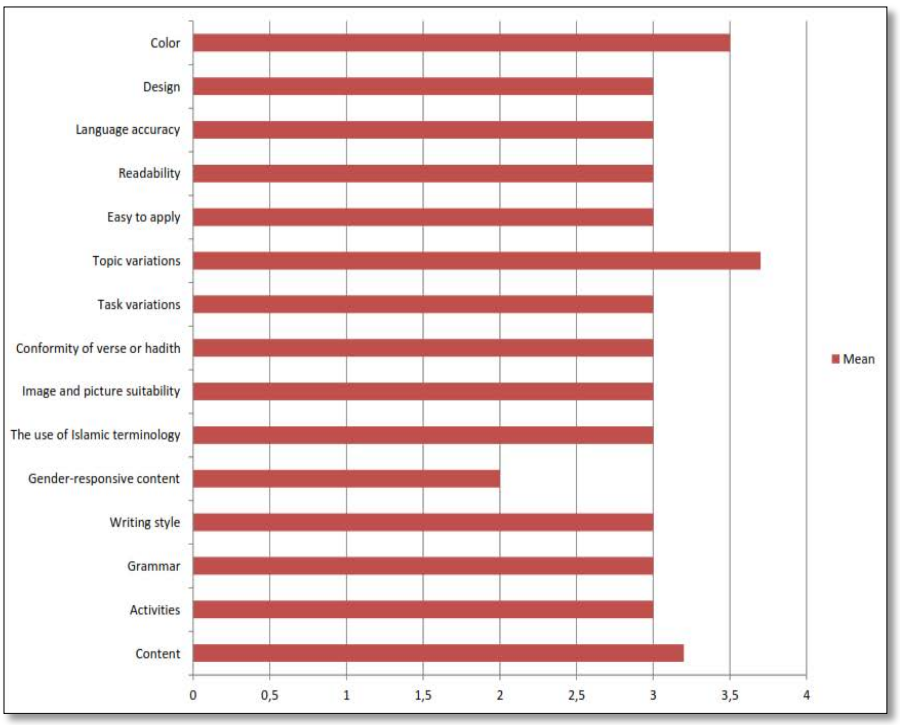

Figure 2: Experts' validation of the developed teaching material.

Figure 2 shows the validation of the initial product from the five experts using a 4-point Likert scale. The experts assessed fifteen aspects of the product ranging from the content to the pictures found in the product. It showed that the most important aspect that needed additional attention related to gender responsiveness. This means that a sensitive aspect of content or visuals was required on gender issues. The data also indicated the need for the enrichment of visual aspects, grammatical explanations, and vocabulary lists. Therefore, two additional components, grammatical and vocabulary, were developed.

Implementation stage

Two units of the developed materials, *Ashabul Ukhdud* (People of the Ditch) and *You Belong to the Sky,* were implemented in a small-scale field test at Madrasah Tsanawiyah Ma'arif 01 Punggur, Lampung Tengah, Indonesia. The purpose of this implementation stage was to capture initial classroom responses to the materials before moving to the evaluation stage. The materials presented five-step learning process adapted from Crawford (2001), namely relating, experiencing, cooperating, applying, and transferring. During the implementation, it was reported that:

> *Most students felt that the texts developed in this study helped activate their background knowledge, especially knowledge related to Islamic teachings. Even though most students could guess what the text is about, because the had relevant background knowledge, they could not follow the learning steps smoothly because they did not know many of the English words in it.* (Teacher 8)

The texts were generally meaningful and relatable because they were in line with students' Islamic background knowledge. This aligns with schema theory research showing that activating students' background knowledge can support reading comprehension (Khartite, 2021). At the same time, the teacher also noted a practical challenge in that most students struggled with English vocabulary items appeared in the reading passage. This challenge is consistent with evidence that vocabulary knowledge is significantly associated with reading performance (Qian, 2022). These initial reactions suggest that the developed materials supported schemata activation, yet they also indicate the need for a stronger vocabulary scaffolding to enable more active participation and stronger comprehension during the learning process (Arora et al., 2024). Exercises related to vocabulary were inserted in the learning process, particularly in the cooperating step.

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Evaluation stage

The evaluation stage revealed that during implementation many students could not understand the details of the texts. Limited English vocabulary and weak reading habits made the reading tasks challenging for most students. This is consistent with evidence that vocabulary knowledge supports reading comprehension through semantic understanding, but it should be developed alongside with grammatical knowledge and inference skills (Dong et al., 2020). This challenge also relates to schema theory emphasizing that prior knowledge can enhance comprehension, but it should be supported by adequate linguistic resources such as vocabulary and grammar (Carrell & Eisterhold, 1983). The teacher also highlighted students' uneven English proficiency.

> *The English levels of my students are quite mixed. Only about 10% of them have a fairly good level of English. So, any text I give them becomes a real challenge*. (Teacher 8)

Taken together, these findings suggest that the developed materials successfully supported schema activation. However, the evaluation also highlights the need for stronger vocabulary scaffolding and reading support through social and collaborative techniques (Jamali Kivi et al., 2021), enabling more students to participate confidently in the learning process. This aligns with the challenges observed during the implementation state, underlying the importance of a more collaborative or cooperative learning environment.

Finally, the feedback gained from the experts' validation, teachers, and students involved in this research was used as the basis to revise the English materials for the Indonesian Islamic schools.[4]

Discussion

English learners at Islamic schools are likely to have heavier burden in terms of learning culture than those in public schools. They are supposed to learn their home culture, Islamic culture, and English culture. Thus, English language teachers at the Islamic schools have to formulate equitable strategies to help the students learn the various cultures, as Oxford and Gkonou (2018) put it, language, culture, and learning strategies are interwoven. Moreover, the ELT in Indonesian Islamic schools is not free from curriculum controversy (Ihsan et al., 2021), epistemological competition (Irwansyah, 2018), or resistance and negotiation due to identity issues, given that the schools have had their long-established tradition and curricula. A plausible remedy to those problems includes revisiting culture in ELT, connecting universal values to Islam tradition, clearing Islamic theological ground for ELT, and infusing multiculturalism into an instructional variable like teaching materials.

The purposes of this study were to investigate the needs of Indonesian Islamic schools in terms of ELT and to develop a culturally responsive English teaching materials for the schools. The first question of this study targeted the need for ELT materials in Islamic schools. The research findings show that vocabulary mastery, speaking skill, and reading comprehension are top priority areas of competence. Related to reading skills, the students at Islamic schools need to read more texts on Islam, motivation, and technology. The texts of local tradition and western culture are also acceptable to maintain Indonesian identity and to introduce cross-cultural understanding. These findings support the research conducted by Lisan (2018) reporting that Islamic values ought to be incorporated into the ELT for Indonesian Islamic junior high schools. The results of this study lend partial support to, and further extend Habiburrahim et al.'s (2022) reported that appropriate English materials help students of Islamic boarding schools enhance their knowledge and insights about general and Islamic-related subjects. It also confirms the finding of Azizah et al. (2021) that the integration of students' local culture into reading materials is a potential way to enable the students to negotiate their own culture and beliefs in EFL.

The second research question related to designing a culturally responsive teaching material for Indonesian Islamic schools. The study results confirm the finding of Wahyudin et al. (2022), as it was found that the ADDIE model was operative for designing teaching material for the Indonesian context. Furthermore, the data suggested three points for developing teaching material. First, teaching material developed based on needs analysis tends to be contextual and acceptable. This result is in line with research reported by Gholami (2017) that English teaching materials should be adapted to the needs analysis of the schools. To enhance the acceptability of the developed materials, three elements were also considered, as suggested by other researchers, namely stories (van Aswegen et al., 2019), familiar resources (Morwane et al., 2019), proverbs

[4] The complete revised version of the developed material is available at https://repository.metrouniv.ac.id/id/eprint/4403

(Hatipoğlu & Daşkin, 2020), and specific content related to the social context (Parba, 2021). As such, the developed material can accommodate the students' culture and helps increase their self-knowledge and reflection skills. Second, teachers' reflections are a key element in designing a contextual teaching material. All English teachers, in this study, viewed English as an important subject to be taught in Islamic schools. Nevertheless, they found that English was less popular compared to Arabic. Skourdoumbis and Madkur (2020) observed a similar problem in that the tension between Arabic and English still occurs in *Pesantren*. The stakeholders of *Pesantren* value Arabic over English because Arabic is the main medium of Islamic teaching while English is merely a mandate of the national Indonesian curriculum. Third, an ideological justification might be needed to strengthen English teaching in Islamic schools. The experts involved in this study revealed positive attitudes concerning justification. English teaching is permissible according to the Islamic jurisprudence. While the study of the Koran and the prophetic tradition, which requires Arabic language mastery, should be a priority for all Muslim learners but the importance of English mastery should not be neglected One point worth mentioning here is that Islamic culture calls for a balance between spiritual life and empirical knowledge so ELT can serve as an important instrument in the exploration of empirical knowledge in science and technology.

The study results also demonstrates the importance of establishing cultural interaction through a teaching material through the *cultura franca* framework aimed at foregrounding the shared values among cultures in the world (Al Hariri, 2022). A culturally relevant text, as reported by Parlindungan and Rodgers (2022), not only would help students develop their language skills but also enlarge their socio-historical contexts. The presentation of Western culture, Indonesian local tradition, and Islamic text in one teaching material may lead to a bigger socio-historical context by opening a new opportunity to what Čebron (2017) termed it as a 'dialogue' between universal culture and particularities of different cultural repertoire. Such presentation might support the notion of a pluralistic approach in ELT materials, as advanced by Vettorel and Lopriore (2013), in that a cross-linguistic and cross-cultural settings tend to be increasingly included in English teaching materials.

Conclusion

In summary, this research study has sought to engage with the needs of English teachers in Indonesian Islamic schools pertaining to a culturally responsive teaching material. The analysis has shown that Islamic teachings can shed light on the English materials developed for this type of school. Familiar Islamic cultural topics like stories from the Koran and the history of Islam are among the most acceptable topics. Other topics such as technology and western culture ought to be equipped with explanations of Islamic values. The participants of the study indicated the emergent tension between Arabic teaching and English teaching still exists in Islamic schools. Although Arabic seems to be valued more than English, both Arabic and English are beneficial and mandatory for Islamic schools. To reduce the tension, English teachers or material designers should bear in mind that Arabic teaching and English teaching are not to be confronted. English proficiency must be complementary to that of Arabic mastery.

While the diversity of students' cultural, educational, and ideological backgrounds should be taken into account, material designers have to develop teaching materials necessary for the learners to be open to various forms of social and cultural diversity. Teaching materials, such as those described in the current article should offer opportunities for students to get to know various forms of social and cultural diversity. This study also illustrates how the ADDIE steps (analyze, design, develop, implement, and evaluate) are effective in the development of such culturally responsive English materials for Indonesian Islamic schools. English teachers or material designers might apply the same steps to develop English materials that accommodate the locality or particularity of their teaching contexts. The English teachers themselves should be the material designers at the same time to generate a context-dependent teaching material. Furthermore, by creating needs analysis-based ELT material with a *cultura franca* and pluralistic lens, an English teacher in the expanding circle countries could reproduce, legitimize, and perpetuate their local discourse without losing the global aspects of ELT.

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Appendix 1

Needs Analysis Questionnaire

Name: ....

Affiliation: ....

Instructions: Please include how necessary each item is for inclusion in English teaching material for Islam affiliated Junior High Schools. Select one option for each item.

Rating Scale:

1 = Very Unnecessary
2 = Unnecessary
3 = Necessary
4 = Very Necessary

A. Areas of Competence

In your opinion, how necessary are the following competencies/skills to be included in English teaching material for Islam affiliated Junior High Schools?

Competency/Skill	1. Very Unnecessary	2. Unnecessary	3. Necessary	4. Very Necessary
Listening				
Speaking				
Reading				
Translation				
Grammar				
Vocabulary				

B. Specific Content/Necessities

In your opinion, how necessary are the following topics to be included in English teaching material for Islam affiliated Junior High Schools?

Topic	1. Very Unnecessary	2. Unnecessary	3. Necessary	4. Very Necessary
Religious Tolerance				
Local Tradition				
The History of Islam				
World Scientists				
Koran Stories				
Western Culture				
Self-Motivation				
Technology				

C. Types of Activities

In your opinion, how necessary are the following activities to be included in English teaching material for Islam affiliated Junior High Schools?

Activity	1. Very Unnecessary	2. Unnecessary	3. Necessary	4. Very Necessary
Prayer (Arabic-English)				
Storytelling				
Debate				
Individual Work				
Pair Work				
Group Work				

D. Evaluation Strategies

In your opinion, how necessary are the following forms of assessment to be included in English teaching material for Islam-affiliated Junior High Schools?

Assessment Type	1. Very Unnecessary	2. Unnecessary	3. Necessary	4. Very Necessary
Multiple Choice				
Fill in the Blanks				
Worksheet				
Rubric-based Assessment				
Essay				

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Appendix 2

Semi-structured Interview Questions

The statement of beliefs

(a) Should you make a statement of beliefs about how important English language teaching is for Madrasa and Pesantren, what would you say?

Goals and objectives

(b) What should be the goals and the objectives of English language teaching in Madrasa and Pesantren?
(c) How are the goals and the objectives achieved in relation to the existing materials?
(d) Do the existing teaching materials emphasize specific language skills?
(e) What do you expect from an English teaching materials for Madrasa and Pesantren?

Theological ground

(f) From an Islamic perspective, what would you like to say about English language teaching in Madrasa and Pesantren?

Language contestation between Arabic and English

(g) Regarding the learning of Arabic, as the main language in Islamic culture, and English, as a foreign language in Indonesia, how do you see it? Do you think there is any competition between the two languages?

Suggestion for the improvement of ELT in the Islamic schools

(h) What needs to be done to make English language teaching in Madrasa and Pesantren better?

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