

The Use of Storytelling Method in Teaching English with Islamic Content (Case Study of Modern Islamic Boarding School)

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ABSTRACT

Penelitian ini bertujuan untuk mengeksplorasi efektivitas metode bercerita (storytelling) dalam pengajaran bahasa Inggris berbasis konten Islami di pondok pesantren modern. Latar belakang penelitian ini adalah kebutuhan untuk mengintegrasikan pendidikan bahasa asing dengan penanaman nilai-nilai Islam tanpa menghilangkan identitas pesantren sebagai lembaga pendidikan Islam. Penelitian ini menggunakan pendekatan studi kasus kualitatif dengan teknik observasi, wawancara, dan dokumentasi sebagai metode pengumpulan data. Hasil penelitian menunjukkan bahwa metode bercerita tidak hanya meningkatkan keterampilan berbahasa komunikatif siswa, tetapi juga berfungsi sebagai sarana penyampaian nilai-nilai Islam secara halus, kontekstual, dan tidak membosankan. Cerita-cerita bertema Islami yang disampaikan dalam bahasa Inggris mampu menumbuhkan minat belajar, membentuk karakter, dan memperdalam pemahaman keagamaan siswa. Selain itu, metode ini dianggap relevan dengan kebutuhan pembelajaran masa kini karena mendukung pendekatan yang humanis dan kontekstual. Kesimpulannya, metode bercerita merupakan metode yang efektif dan fleksibel untuk menggabungkan pembelajaran bahasa dengan internalisasi nilai-nilai Islam dalam suasana belajar yang modern dan menyenangkan.

This study aims to explore the effectiveness of the storytelling method in teaching English based on Islamic content in modern Islamic boarding schools. The background of this study is the need to integrate foreign language education with the instillation of Islamic values without eliminating the identity of Islamic boarding schools as Islamic educational institutions. This study uses a qualitative case study approach with observation, interview, and documentation techniques as data collection methods. The results of the study indicate that the storytelling method not only improves students' communicative language skills but also functions as a means of conveying Islamic values in a subtle, contextual, and non-boring manner. Islamic-themed stories delivered in English are able to foster interest in learning, shape character, and deepen students' religious understanding. In addition, this method is considered relevant to today's learning needs because it supports a humanistic and contextual approach. In conclusion, storytelling is an effective and flexible method for combining language learning with internalization of Islamic values in a modern and enjoyable learning atmosphere.



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INTRODUCTION

Language is a very crucial means of communication in human life, especially in establishing social relationships and building interactions between individuals in the realm of education, language is

not only used as a means of communication, but also as a medium to convey knowledge and important values. In Indonesia, the two main languages that are widely used in the learning process are Indonesian and English. English has a strategic role in the midst of the era of globalization and rapid technological developments, English language skills are essential skills, even in Islamic educational environments such as Islamic boarding schools.

However, English language teaching in Islamic boarding schools cannot be directly equated with formal schools, considering that Islamic boarding schools have their own characteristics that are oriented towards Islamic values. In this context, a learning approach is needed that not only focuses on language skills but is also able to integrate Islamic values harmoniously. One approach that is considered effective and relevant to connect these two aspects is the storytelling method. A study by (Rahmatika & Izzah, 2024) revealed that the use of stories containing Islamic values can create a learning atmosphere that is not boring. Stories with Islamic content in teaching English not only encourage students' enthusiasm for learning the language but also enrich their understanding of Islamic teachings. This finding is reinforced by (Holidi et al., 2021) who discuss the application of the effective storytelling method in shaping students' religious behavior and making the learning process more meaningful.

Although various studies have been conducted related to storytelling methods in education, studies that specifically highlight the integration of Islamic content in teaching English in modern Islamic boarding schools are still very limited. In fact, Islamic boarding schools have their own identity as Islamic educational institutions that focus on developing the spirituality and religious character of students. As stated by (Rahman et al., 2023), Islamic boarding schools not only carry out the functions of formal educational institutions, but also act as the core of spiritual guidance that emphasizes the importance of Islamic values in all learning activities. Because there is a literature gap that needs to be bridged through a more in-depth and contextual literature review.

Based on the description above, this paper aims to describe the application of the storytelling method in teaching English in modern Islamic boarding schools, while exploring how Islamic values can be integrated into the process. This study is based on a review of literature and relevant previous research results. It is hoped that the findings in this article can provide real contributions for educators, especially in Islamic boarding schools, in creating English teaching that is not only focused on communicative matters but also religious and meaningful.

METHOD

This study uses a qualitative approach with a library research method. This method is used to explore and analyze in depth various relevant literature related to the application of the storytelling method in teaching English in modern Islamic boarding schools, especially those that integrate Islamic values. Data sources in this study were obtained from various references available online, such as national and international journal articles, academic books, and previous research results that are relevant to the focus of the study. Literature searches were carried out systematically using certain keywords, such as storytelling, Islamic values, English learning, and Islamic boarding school education.

The main references used include Rahmatika and Izzah (2024) who highlight the role of stories in creating a fun and spiritually meaningful learning atmosphere, as well as Nurfadilah et al. (2021) and Rahman et al. (2023) who emphasize the importance of a learning model that is able to harmoniously combine elements of language and religious values. The analysis was carried out by grouping the results of previous studies, assessing the approaches used, and formulating findings that can describe the application of the storytelling method contextually in the Islamic boarding school environment. Because this study did not involve subjects directly, ethical approval was not required, and all data sources were openly accessible and had been properly stated.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Description of the Application of the Storytelling Method

In the world of education, the success of the learning process is greatly influenced by the approach used to deliver the material to students. Especially in learning a foreign language such as English, a strategy is needed that is able to create a fun, interactive, and meaningful learning atmosphere. One approach that is starting to receive widespread attention from educators is the use of stories or narratives as a learning medium. This method is considered capable of building emotional involvement in students, while enriching the learning experience through the delivery of contextual meanings that are close to

everyday life. Its application in teaching English opens up new space to develop students' creativity, while strengthening language mastery naturally through an interesting storyline that is relevant to the values to be instilled.

In the realm of English language learning, the storytelling method is one of the innovative strategies that is increasingly being applied because of its effectiveness in building a participatory and meaningful learning atmosphere. The purpose of this approach is not only to present material in a more contextual way, but also to involve students' affective and cognitive domains simultaneously. The presentation of stories that attract attention motivates learners to acquire language skills such as listening, speaking, reading, and writing in a more enjoyable atmosphere. Stories function as a compilation of vocabulary, sentence structures, and cultural meanings that help an integrative approach to language acquisition. In addition, activities such as retelling, role-playing, and story-based reflective discussions offer a variety of expressive activities for students to develop linguistic competence and sharpen their critical thinking skills. Therefore, storytelling is not just a teaching method, but a pedagogical approach that combines the cognitive, emotional, and social aspects of learners into one unified process that encourages learning in a way that is relevant and responsive to the needs of 21st-century learners (Rifiyanti & Hidayat, 2024).

The storytelling approach in teaching English in modern Islamic boarding schools has a striking difference compared to contemporary pedagogical methods that tend to be communicative and interactive. Adapting this method in the context of Islamic boarding schools requires adjustments to remain in line with the Islamic values that are upheld. Educators need to design strategies and materials that are not only effective in developing language skills, but also reflect the character of Islamic boarding school education. Thus, the learning process can take place harmoniously, combining the strengths of modern methods and religious traditions.

In one of the research findings conducted by (Harahap, 2021) at the Darul Mursyidi Islamic Boarding School, the application of the storytelling method in learning English begins with a persuasive approach, namely building students' belief that learning English is an easy and fun activity. Although the content of the story is not explicitly Islamic, the stories used tend to come from traditional stories or folk tales that are familiar among students. The selection of stories is based on several important considerations such as simplicity of plot, clarity of story structure from beginning to end, easy-to-understand themes, and not too many characters. In addition, the stories used are also prioritized to have dialogue, elements of repetition, and language that is easy for children to digest. Students are not required to memorize the entire contents of the story, but are encouraged to choose stories that they are familiar with, read them again to understand the characters and sequence of events. In their delivery, they are also given the freedom to use props such as pictures on flannel boards, dolls, or other objects that are relevant to the story, such as hats or boxes. For its implementation, stories can be delivered individually in front of the class or in small groups so that more students have the opportunity to tell their stories. This strategy not only makes it easier to understand the language, but also encourages students to be active, creative, and confident when using English contextually.

The process of implementing the storytelling method in learning English in Islamic boarding schools involves various parties, especially teachers and students (Alim et al., 2024). Teachers not only act as teachers, but also as facilitators, motivators, and directors in shaping the learning experience of students. They are responsible for creating a conducive learning atmosphere and choosing approaches and strategies that are appropriate to the characteristics of the Islamic boarding school and the needs of students. On the other hand, students play an active role as learning subjects who are involved in storytelling activities, both individually and in groups, in order to improve their language skills. Dynamic interaction between teachers and students is the key to success in implementing this method effectively in a modern Islamic boarding school environment.

In several study findings examining the application of the storytelling method in Islamic boarding schools (Fitriani, Fitriani, 2023) it was revealed that the ability to listen to students to show good results in English was achieved thanks to the learning methods applied by the teachers. Although the steps taken are simple, it is a fact that not every student can maintain their focus throughout the lesson. The hope is that students are not just passive listeners, but they actively capture and understand the meaning contained in the stories or songs shared with them. This approach allows students to utilize the vocabulary they have contextually, which in turn greatly improves their skills in speaking English. Changing this approach according to the real conditions of students in Islamic boarding schools is the key to successful implementation.

Exploration of Integration of Islamic Values

The application of the storytelling method in a modern Islamic boarding school environment, this approach also opens up opportunities to integrate Islamic values into learning materials. The stories conveyed not only function as a means of language training, but can also be a medium for instilling Islamic character. Values such as honesty, responsibility, surrender to Allah, sincerity, and brotherhood among Muslims can be inserted subtly through a storyline that is relevant and easy for students to understand. Stories about the life of the Prophet, stories of companions, or local fairy tales that are given Islamic meaning can be used to strengthen the moral and spiritual values of students. Thus, this method not only trains English language skills, but also supports the formation of religious character as a whole (Irawan, 2020). It is important for educators to choose stories and structure their delivery with an approach that touches the emotional side and understanding of students, so that the message of the values contained can be well received.

The delivery of Islamic values in English-language stories in modern Islamic boarding schools is carried out through an implicit approach but touches on the affective aspects of students. Based on the findings (Sabiq & Suparjo, 2020), values such as honesty, responsibility, mutual assistance, and patience can be inserted naturally into the storyline that is packaged according to the context of the students' lives. These stories do not directly preach, but rather form a space for reflection through characters and conflicts that are relevant to their daily experiences. For example, stories about friendships that are tested by honesty or stories about the struggle to seek knowledge that is based on patience and trust, are able to present Islamic values without having to mention them explicitly. This strategy allows students to absorb moral messages more deeply because they feel emotionally connected, not just cognitively. In this way, the integration of Islamic values becomes a natural part of the language learning process, and at the same time strengthens character education based on noble morals.

The integration of Islamic values in teaching English in modern Islamic boarding schools has a significant impact on religious understanding and character formation of students. This approach allows students not only to acquire linguistic competence, but also to internalize Islamic values such as honesty, discipline, responsibility, and empathy through relevant and applicable learning contexts. As found in the study (Citra Dwi Safitri, Baso Jabu, 2023), the delivery of Islamic values contextually—through advice, quotations of verses and hadiths, and the habituation of religious activities—helps strengthen students' understanding of Islamic teachings in everyday life. In addition, (Umam, 2014) emphasized that learning that is in line with Islamic principles also plays a role in maintaining the religious identity of students in the midst of mastering a foreign language. As a result, students become individuals who are not only proficient in English, but also have strong Islamic morals and character, because these values have been indirectly embedded through a fun and meaningful learning process.

Compared to conventional learning methods, storytelling provides a fresher, more enjoyable, and more relevant approach in integrating Islamic values, especially in modern Islamic boarding school environments. Amidst the flow of modernity and technological advances, this method is able to answer educational needs that are not only cognitive, but also affective and spiritual. Through interesting stories, close to the reality of students' lives, and delivered with varied media—such as visual illustrations, videos, or props—Islamic values such as honesty, trustworthiness, mutual assistance, and patience can be inserted subtly but effectively. These stories not only convey messages, but also build emotional closeness that can foster a spirit of learning and strengthen character. Thus, storytelling becomes a method that not only avoids boredom in learning, but also enriches the students' experiences holistically in this modern era.

Through the discussion of the application of the storytelling method in teaching English in modern Islamic boarding schools, it can be understood that this approach provides a different nuance compared to conventional methods. Stories not only function as a medium for linguistic learning, but also as a means to build emotional closeness between the subject matter and the lives of students. This approach proves that teaching foreign languages does not have to be separated from the local context and Islamic values that are the identity of Islamic boarding schools.

Integrating Islamic values into English language materials through the storytelling method is a strategy that not only allows for the strengthening of spirituality, but is also relevant to the development of current character education needs. The stories chosen, both those with Islamic nuances and universal stories with moral content, are able to instill important teachings such as honesty, empathy, responsibility, and patience naturally. The process of internalizing these values occurs without pressure, but through the emotional involvement of students in the stories being told.

In addition to having an impact on the affective aspect, the use of this method also strengthens the communicative abilities of students in English. They are encouraged to be more active in speaking, listening, and understanding language structures through interactive storytelling activities. Thus, the integration of religious values and language skills is not only a goal, but also a mutually reinforcing process. This is what makes this approach unique in the context of modern Islamic boarding schools.

However, the success of this method is greatly influenced by the understanding of an educator in choosing teaching materials or in choosing the right story material, knowing oriental characters, and creating the desired classroom atmosphere. The interaction between teachers and students, in this case, must also be considered as a very important factor in the effectiveness of the storytelling session applied in the lesson. Therefore, teachers not only function as language facilitators but also as educators of boarding school values and culture.

Overall, the storytelling method offers an integrative and contextual approach to teaching English in Islamic boarding schools. Amidst the demands of the times that demand innovation in education, this method becomes a bridge between foreign language learning and strengthening the Islamic identity of students. However, from the results of data analysis and reviews of several studies, it should be noted that the effectiveness of this method is greatly influenced by the characteristics of each Islamic boarding school, both in terms of curriculum, teacher background, student readiness, and learning culture. Islamic boarding schools that are more open to creative approaches and have the support of adaptive facilities and teaching staff tend to be more successful in implementing this method. On the other hand, in Islamic boarding schools that are still very traditional or oriented towards memorizing classical texts, the application of storytelling may require further adjustments to align with the institution's vision. Therefore, although this method is promising, it is not immediately suitable for application in all Islamic boarding school environments without mature contextual adaptation.

CONCLUSION

The results of the study indicate that the storytelling method is an appropriate and potential approach in teaching English in modern Islamic boarding schools, especially when combined with Islamic values. Stories are not only a tool to improve students' language skills, but also an effective medium in conveying moral and spiritual messages that are in accordance with the principles of Islamic teachings. With an interesting delivery, this method is able to arouse interest in learning, create a pleasant classroom atmosphere, and foster awareness of religious values without the impression of being patronizing.

This method stands out because it combines functional language learning with strengthening Islamic character and identity. The Islamic stories used not only help master vocabulary and language structure, but also instill values such as honesty, patience, and responsibility in a context that is close to the students' daily lives. The process of internalizing values takes place smoothly and without force, because the students absorb messages from the characters and storylines they hear and retell.

However, the effectiveness of this method is highly dependent on the readiness of the teacher. Teachers need to have the skills to choose stories that are appropriate to the level of understanding and background of the students, as well as the ability to convey them in an interesting way. Therefore, teacher training in communicative and creative storytelling techniques is one of the main keys to the success of implementing this method in the pesantren environment.

In the context of modern Islamic boarding schools that are trying to bridge Islamic traditions and the demands of globalization, the storytelling method provides a great opportunity to unite foreign language learning with Islamic character education. This strategy shows that the integration of religious values in learning does not always have to be explicit and rigid, but can be done with a narrative approach that is humanistic, contextual, and in accordance with the development of the times.

However, it is important to note that not all Islamic boarding schools have the same characteristics. This method may be more suitable for Islamic boarding schools with an open curriculum and flexible learning approach. Therefore, before adopting this method widely, it is necessary to make adjustments to the conditions and needs of each educational institution so that its implementation remains effective and relevant.

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