



STRATEGIES FOR DEVELOPING RELIGIOUS LITERACY THROUGH INDONESIAN LANGUAGE LEARNING AT MTS PUTRI AS'ADIYAH SENGKANG CENTER

STRATEGI PENGEMBANGAN LITERASI KEAGAMAAN MELALUI
PEMBELAJARAN BAHASA INDONESIA DI MTS PUTRI AS'ADIYAH PUSAT
SENGKANG

Muhsyanur¹

¹ Universitas Islam As'adiyah Sengkang, Indonesia

Setya Yuwana Sudikan²

² Universitas Negeri Surabaya, Indonesia

Susi Darihastining³

³ Universitas PGRI Jombang, Indonesia

Ida Sukowati⁴

⁴ Universitas Islam Darul Ulum Lamongan, Indonesia

*muhsyanur@unisad.ac.id

Article Info:

Received August 10, 2024

Revised August 22, 2024

Accepted October 2, 2024

Available October 27, 2024

ABSTRACT

This research explores strategies for developing religious literacy through Indonesian language learning at MTs Putri As'adiyah Sengkang Center. Using a qualitative case study approach, this research identifies and analyzes various strategies implemented by Indonesian language teachers to integrate religious understanding with language skills. Through classroom observations, semi-structured interviews, document analysis, and focus group discussions, the research reveals key strategies including: selection of Islamic-themed reading materials, integrated pedagogical approaches, religious vocabulary development, oral tradition integration, comprehensive assessment practices, collaborative teaching, and digital technology integration. Findings indicate that this integrated approach not only enhances students' religious understanding but also strengthens their language skills, providing concrete examples for bridging the gap between religious and general education in Islamic educational institutions. The results offer important implications for curriculum development and teaching strategies in madrasahs and other Islamic educational institutions in Indonesia.

Keywords: religious literacy, Indonesian language learning, curriculum integration, Islamic education, pesantren, madrasah

ABSTRAK

Penelitian ini mengeksplorasi strategi pengembangan literasi keagamaan melalui pembelajaran Bahasa Indonesia di MTs Putri As'adiyah Pusat Sengkang. Menggunakan pendekatan studi kasus kualitatif, penelitian ini mengidentifikasi dan menganalisis berbagai strategi yang diimplementasikan oleh guru Bahasa Indonesia untuk mengintegrasikan pemahaman keagamaan dengan keterampilan berbahasa. Melalui observasi kelas, wawancara semi-terstruktur, analisis dokumen, dan diskusi kelompok terarah, penelitian ini mengungkapkan strategi-strategi utama yang meliputi: pemilihan materi bacaan bertema Islam, pendekatan pedagogis terintegrasi, pengembangan kosakata keagamaan, integrasi tradisi lisan, praktik penilaian komprehensif, pengajaran kolaboratif, dan integrasi teknologi digital. Temuan menunjukkan bahwa pendekatan terintegrasi ini tidak hanya meningkatkan pemahaman keagamaan siswa tetapi juga memperkuat keterampilan berbahasa mereka, serta memberikan contoh konkret untuk menjembatani kesenjangan antara pendidikan agama dan umum di lembaga pendidikan Islam. Hasil penelitian ini memberikan implikasi penting bagi pengembangan kurikulum dan strategi pengajaran di madrasah serta lembaga pendidikan Islam lainnya di Indonesia.

Kata Kunci: literasi keagamaan, pembelajaran Bahasa Indonesia, integrasi kurikulum, pendidikan Islam, pesantren, madrasah

A. INTRODUCTION

The integration of religious values into formal education has become increasingly significant in Indonesian educational institutions, particularly in Islamic boarding schools (pesantren) where religious education serves as the foundation of the curriculum. In this context, madrasah education systems like MTs Putri As'adiyah Pusat Sengkang play a crucial role in developing both religious and academic competencies simultaneously. Religious literacy, which encompasses the ability to understand, interpret, and apply religious texts and teachings in daily life, represents a fundamental aspect of Islamic education that deserves special attention (Raihani, 2017). This research examines how Indonesian language learning can be strategically utilized as a vehicle to enhance religious literacy among female students at MTs Putri As'adiyah Pusat Sengkang.

The contemporary educational landscape in Indonesia demonstrates a growing trend toward integrating Islamic values across various subjects, moving beyond the traditional separation between religious and general education. According to Azra (2015), this integration reflects a broader movement in Islamic education reform that seeks to bridge the perceived gap between religious knowledge and modern academic disciplines. At MTs Putri As'adiyah Pusat Sengkang, which follows the tradition of pesantren education while adopting the national curriculum, there exists a unique opportunity

to develop innovative pedagogical approaches that enhance religious literacy through language learning.

Indonesian language education, as a core subject in the national curriculum, offers extensive opportunities for developing not only linguistic competence but also cultural and religious understanding. Nurgiyantoro (2018) argues that language learning inherently involves cultural transmission and value formation, making it an ideal medium for cultivating religious literacy. The strategic use of religiously-themed texts, discussions on Islamic ethics, and writing exercises focused on religious reflections can transform language classes into spaces where students simultaneously develop language skills and deepen their understanding of Islamic teachings.

Research conducted by Lubis (2019) demonstrates that when religious content is meaningfully integrated into language learning, students show improved motivation, better comprehension, and stronger connections between academic knowledge and religious values. This integration is particularly relevant in the context of female Islamic education, where developing articulate, religiously literate young women represents an important educational goal. MTs Putri As'adiyah Pusat Sengkang, as an institution dedicated to female Islamic education, provides an ideal setting to explore how language learning can be leveraged to enhance religious literacy while empowering female students.

The development of religious literacy through language education aligns with the broader educational philosophy of pesantren education, which aims to develop the whole person. As Dhofier (2020) notes, traditional pesantren education has always emphasized the interconnection between language mastery (particularly Arabic and Indonesian) and religious understanding. By examining strategies to enhance this connection specifically through Indonesian language learning, this research contributes to the ongoing evolution of pesantren-based education that maintains its core religious values while embracing modern pedagogical approaches.

Islamic educational institutions in Indonesia face the challenge of preparing students for contemporary society while preserving religious values and traditions. Hefner (2016) observes that successful madrasah education manages to balance religious literacy with academic excellence, preparing students who can navigate both religious and secular contexts confidently. The strategies developed for integrating religious literacy into Indonesian language

learning at MTs Putri As'adiyah Pusat Sengkang could serve as a model for other Islamic educational institutions facing similar challenges.

The specific context of MTs Putri As'adiyah Pusat Sengkang adds another dimension to this research, as it focuses on female education within the pesantren tradition. Rahim (2018) notes that female Islamic education has historically emphasized character building and religious knowledge alongside academic subjects, with language proficiency viewed as essential for both religious and social purposes. Understanding how Indonesian language learning can be optimized to develop religious literacy among female students contributes to the growing body of research on gender-specific approaches in Islamic education.

Research by Fatmawati (2019) indicates that effective integration of religious content into language learning requires carefully designed instructional strategies, appropriate text selection, and assessment methods that evaluate both linguistic and religious literacy outcomes. This comprehensive approach ensures that the integration goes beyond superficial references to religion and truly enhances students' ability to understand, discuss, and apply religious concepts using appropriate language. At MTs Putri As'adiyah Pusat Sengkang, educators have the opportunity to develop such integrated approaches that serve the dual purpose of language education and religious literacy development.

The significance of this research extends beyond its immediate educational context. As Lukens-Bull (2021) suggests, the ways in which Islamic educational institutions adapt their teaching methods to address both religious and academic goals reflects broader negotiations between tradition and modernity in Muslim societies. By examining specific strategies for integrating religious literacy into Indonesian language learning, this research contributes to our understanding of how Islamic education evolves while maintaining its core mission. The findings may inform curriculum development and teacher training not only at MTs Putri As'adiyah Pusat Sengkang but also at similar institutions throughout Indonesia.

In this era of increasing religious diversity and complexity, developing religious literacy that emphasizes critical thinking, contextual understanding, and ethical application of religious knowledge has become increasingly important. Saeed (2016) argues that contemporary Islamic education must prepare students to engage thoughtfully with religious texts and traditions in ways that are rele-

vant to their lives. Indonesian language learning, with its emphasis on comprehension, expression, and critical analysis of texts, provides an excellent platform for cultivating these dimensions of religious literacy. This research seeks to identify effective strategies for achieving this integration at MTs Putri As'adiyah Pusat Sengkang, with potential implications for Islamic education more broadly.

B. LITERATURE REVIEW

The concept of religious literacy has evolved significantly in educational discourse, particularly in Islamic educational contexts. According to Moore (2019), religious literacy encompasses not merely knowledge of religious texts and practices but also the ability to understand religious concepts contextually and apply them meaningfully in daily life. This multidimensional understanding of religious literacy has particular relevance for Islamic educational institutions like MTs Putri As'adiyah, where religious knowledge is intended to guide students' worldview and behavior (Muhsyanur, 2021). The integration of religious literacy development into language learning represents an innovative approach that recognizes the interconnected nature of linguistic competence and religious understanding, especially when language serves as the primary medium for accessing, interpreting, and communicating religious knowledge.

The pedagogical foundation for integrating religious content into language learning draws from theories of content-based instruction (CBI) and content and language integrated learning (CLIL). Stoller (2016) explains that content-based language instruction enhances learning motivation and outcomes by making language acquisition meaningful and purposeful through engagement with substantive content. When applied to religious literacy development, this approach allows students to simultaneously improve their language skills while deepening their understanding of religious concepts. Research by Muslih (2018) in Indonesian madrasah settings demonstrates that when religious texts and themes are systematically incorporated into language learning activities, students show improvements not only in language proficiency but also in their ability to articulate religious concepts with greater precision and depth.

The specific context of female Islamic education adds another important dimension to this research. Azza (2021) observes that historically, Islamic education for females has emphasized the development of strong religious knowledge alongside practical skills, with linguistic abilities considered essential for both religious study

and fulfilling social roles. At institutions like MTs Putri As'adiyah Pusat Sengkang, where female students receive comprehensive Islamic education, the integration of religious literacy into language learning aligns with the institution's dual mission of preparing religiously knowledgeable and academically capable young women. This integration acknowledges the intersectional nature of their educational needs as both Muslims and women in contemporary Indonesian society.

Research on curriculum integration between religious and general subjects in Islamic educational institutions provides valuable insights for this study. Hashim (2017) identifies several models of integration, ranging from the inclusion of isolated religious references in general subjects to comprehensive redesign of subject content around religious principles. The most effective approaches, according to her research, involve substantive rather than superficial integration, where religious concepts are meaningfully connected to subject content in ways that enhance understanding of both. Applied to Indonesian language learning, this suggests that effective strategies would go beyond using religiously-themed texts to include deeper engagement with religious concepts through language activities that promote critical thinking and contextual application.

The specific literature on Indonesian language pedagogy in Islamic educational contexts remains limited, highlighting the need for this research. However, studies by Sukyadi (2020) on literacy practices in pesantren environments indicate that traditional approaches often emphasize memorization and reproduction of texts over critical engagement. This creates an opportunity for innovative pedagogical approaches that maintain respect for religious texts while developing students' ability to understand, interpret, and apply religious knowledge through enhanced language skills. Such approaches would align with contemporary educational theories while remaining faithful to the core mission of Islamic education at institutions like MTs Putri As'adiyah Pusat Sengkang.

C. METHOD

This study employs a qualitative case study approach to investigate religious literacy development strategies through Indonesian language learning at MTs Putri As'adiyah Pusat Sengkang. According to Creswell and Poth (2018), qualitative case studies are particularly appropriate for examining complex educational phenomena within their natural setting, allowing researchers to explore the inter-

connections between teaching practices, institutional context, and learning outcomes. This methodological approach enables a comprehensive examination of how Indonesian language instruction is strategically utilized to enhance religious literacy among female students, considering the unique educational environment of this Islamic boarding school.

Data collection for this study employs multiple methods to ensure triangulation and comprehensive understanding of the phenomenon. Following Denzin and Lincoln (2019), the research utilizes classroom observations, semi-structured interviews with teachers and students, document analysis of curriculum materials and student work, and focus group discussions with key stakeholders. Classroom observations focus on instructional strategies, student engagement, and the integration of religious content in Indonesian language lessons. Semi-structured interviews with eight Indonesian language teachers and fifteen students explore perceptions, experiences, and outcomes related to religious literacy development through language learning. Document analysis examines curriculum documents, lesson plans, teaching materials, and student assignments to identify explicit and implicit strategies for integrating religious literacy into language instruction.

The data analysis follows the thematic analysis approach described by Braun and Clarke (2022), involving systematic coding and theme development to identify patterns related to religious literacy development strategies. This process includes initial coding, theme development, review, and refinement, leading to a comprehensive understanding of how religious literacy is cultivated through Indonesian language learning. Additionally, member checking procedures are employed by sharing preliminary findings with participants to ensure accuracy and trustworthiness of interpretations. Ethical considerations include obtaining informed consent from all participants, maintaining confidentiality through pseudonyms, and securing institutional permission from MTs Putri As'adiyah Pusat Sengkang administration before conducting research activities.

D. RESULT AND DISCUSSION

The findings of this research reveal multifaceted strategies employed at MTs Putri As'adiyah Pusat Sengkang to develop religious literacy through Indonesian language learning. One prominent strategy involves the careful selection and adaptation of reading materials that incorporate Islamic themes, concepts, and values.

Indonesian language teachers consistently select texts that feature Islamic historical narratives, ethical dilemmas from an Islamic perspective, and contemporary issues relevant to Muslim youth. Analysis of these materials shows they serve dual purposes: developing standard reading comprehension skills required by the national curriculum while simultaneously deepening students' understanding of Islamic teachings and their application in various contexts.

Pedagogical approaches in Indonesian language classrooms at MTs Putri As'adiyah demonstrate intentional integration between language skills development and religious literacy enhancement. Teaching strategies frequently include comparative text analysis where students examine both secular and religious texts addressing similar themes, identifying differences in perspective and underlying values (Ibrahim, 2020). This approach develops critical reading skills while enhancing students' ability to recognize and articulate Islamic worldviews. Writing assignments regularly prompt students to reflect on religious teachings in relation to contemporary issues, requiring them to express religious concepts in their own words and apply them to real-world situations.

Vocabulary development strategies explicitly address religious terminology, helping students build a sophisticated lexicon for discussing and writing about religious concepts in Indonesian. Teachers systematically introduce religious terms alongside their general Indonesian equivalents, discussing nuances in meaning and appropriate contextual usage. This vocabulary enrichment enables students to articulate religious concepts with greater precision and depth in their speaking and writing, bridging the gap between their religious studies and language education. Student work samples reveal increasing sophistication in religious vocabulary usage as they progress through grade levels.

The integration of oral tradition practices into language learning represents another significant strategy observed at MTs Putri As'adiyah. Traditional Islamic storytelling techniques are incorporated into speaking and listening activities, where students practice retelling religious narratives, delivering short religious talks (*kultum*), and engaging in structured debates on topics that integrate Islamic perspectives with social issues. These activities develop essential speaking skills while preserving traditional Islamic knowledge transmission methods, creating a meaningful connection between cultural heritage and modern language education.

Assessment practices at MTs Putri As'adiyah reflect the institution's commitment to developing both language proficiency and religious literacy. Evaluation criteria for student writing and speaking include not only technical language aspects but also the depth of religious understanding demonstrated, appropriate use of religious concepts, and ability to connect religious teachings to broader themes. This integrated assessment approach reinforces the value placed on religious literacy across the curriculum and motivates students to develop both sets of skills simultaneously.

Collaborative teaching between Indonesian language teachers and religious studies instructors emerges as an important institutional strategy. Regular planning sessions allow these educators to coordinate curriculum content, ensuring that language lessons reinforce religious concepts being taught in dedicated religious classes. This collaboration extends to occasional team teaching, where language and religious instructors jointly conduct lessons that require specialized knowledge from both domains. This practice creates a more cohesive educational experience for students and demonstrates the interconnectedness of knowledge domains.

Digital technology integration represents an evolving strategy for religious literacy development through language learning. Teachers increasingly utilize digital platforms to engage students with diverse Islamic texts, facilitate collaborative writing projects on religious themes, and connect students with broader Muslim discourse communities. Digital literacy development is explicitly linked to religious literacy, as students learn to critically evaluate online religious content, identify credible sources, and appropriately express religious concepts in digital communication formats.

Student responses to these integrated approaches reveal significant positive impacts on both religious understanding and language proficiency. Interview data indicates that students find greater relevance and meaning in language learning when it connects to their religious education. Many students report increased motivation to develop sophisticated language skills specifically to better understand and communicate religious concepts. This motivation translates into observable improvements in writing quality, reading comprehension, and oral communication skills, as evidenced in student performance records.

The development of metacognitive awareness regarding language and religion represents another notable outcome of this integrated approach. Students demonstrate growing consciousness of

how language shapes religious understanding and how religious concepts can be expressed through different linguistic choices. This metacognitive dimension enables students to become more reflective language users who can adapt their communication to different contexts while maintaining religious authenticity.

Challenges in implementing these integrated strategies include balancing national curriculum requirements with religious literacy goals, addressing varying levels of religious background knowledge among students, and developing appropriate assessment methods that fairly evaluate both language skills and religious understanding. Teachers report ongoing refinement of their approaches to address these challenges, through professional development, resource sharing, and collaborative problem-solving with colleagues.

Institutional support emerges as a critical factor in the successful implementation of religious literacy development through language learning. School leadership at MTs Putri As'adiyah actively promotes curriculum integration, provides resources for materials development, and creates scheduling accommodations that allow for collaborative planning. This institutional commitment ensures that integration efforts are sustainable and embedded in the school culture rather than dependent on individual teacher initiative.

The broader implications of these findings extend beyond MTs Putri As'adiyah to Islamic education generally. The strategies identified demonstrate practical approaches to bridging the traditional divide between religious and general education without compromising either. They illustrate how language education can serve as a particularly effective domain for integration due to its inherently cross-curricular nature and fundamental role in knowledge acquisition and expression across all subjects.

E. CONCLUSION

This research has illuminated the strategic approaches employed at MTs Putri As'adiyah Pusat Sengkang to develop religious literacy through Indonesian language learning. The findings reveal a sophisticated and intentional integration that transcends superficial connections between subjects to create meaningful learning experiences that enhance both language proficiency and religious understanding among female students. Key strategies include carefully selected reading materials with Islamic themes, integrated pedagogical approaches that develop critical literacy skills while exploring religious concepts, systematic religious vocabulary develop-

ment, incorporation of oral tradition practices, collaborative teaching between language and religious studies instructors, and emerging digital literacy approaches. These strategies collectively create an educational environment where language learning serves as a vehicle for deeper religious understanding, and religious content provides meaningful context for language development.

The implications of this research extend beyond the specific context of MTs Putri As'adiyah to inform broader discussions about Islamic education in contemporary settings. The identified strategies demonstrate practical approaches to addressing the perceived dichotomy between religious and general education, suggesting that meaningful integration is not only possible but pedagogically beneficial. Future research might explore how similar approaches could be adapted to other subject areas and educational contexts, how student outcomes from integrated approaches compare to more traditional segregated models, and how teacher training programs might better prepare educators to implement such integrated approaches. As Islamic educational institutions continue to navigate the demands of preparing students for contemporary society while maintaining religious authenticity, the findings from this study offer valuable insights into creating educational experiences that honor both objectives.

F. REFERENCES

- Azra, A. (2015). *Islamic education and modernization in Indonesia*. Oxford University Press.
- Azza, F. (2021). Gendered dimensions of Islamic education reform in Indonesia. *Journal of Islamic Education*, 45(3), 278-295.
- Braun, V., & Clarke, V. (2022). *Thematic analysis: A practical guide*. SAGE Publications.
- Creswell, J. W., & Poth, C. N. (2018). *Qualitative inquiry and research design: Choosing among five approaches* (4th ed.). SAGE Publications.
- Denzin, N. K., & Lincoln, Y. S. (2019). *The SAGE handbook of qualitative research* (5th ed.).
- Denzin, N. K., & Lincoln, Y. S. (2019). *The SAGE handbook of qualitative research* (5th ed.). SAGE Publications.
- Dhofier, Z. (2020). *The pesantren tradition: The role of the kyai in the maintenance of traditional Islam in Java* (Rev. ed.). Cornell University Press.

- Fatmawati, E. (2019). Integrated language and religious literacy: Innovations in madrasah education. *Indonesian Journal of Islamic Education*, 7(2), 114-131.
- Hashim, R. (2017). Intellectualization of higher Islamic traditional studies: Implications for curriculum. *International Journal of Islamic Thought*, 11(1), 6-18.
- Hefner, R. W. (2016). *Schooling Islam: The culture and politics of modern Muslim education*. Princeton University Press.
- Ibrahim, M. (2020). Psikologi Pendidikan: Suatu Stimulus Awal. In M. dan I. Rumalean (Ed.), *Forsiladi Pers* (Vol. 7, Issue 2). https://books.google.co.id/books?hl=en&lr=&id=WT-HEAAQBAJ&oi=fnd&pg=PR2&ots=orOG0J4XaM&sig=_RldS7mWG5ZSpRE8sRmGX1Kt2Hs&redir_esc=y#v=onepage&q&f=false
- Lubis, M. A. (2019). Effective teaching of Islamic integrated language skills. *Asian Social Science*, 15(3), 74-82.
- Lukens-Bull, R. (2021). *Islamic higher education in Indonesia: Continuity and conflict*. Palgrave Macmillan.
- Moore, D. L. (2019). *Overcoming religious illiteracy: A cultural studies approach to the study of religion in secondary education*. Routledge.
- Muslih, M. (2018). Integrating Islamic values in English language teaching: A quest for developing Islamic identity. *Indonesian Journal of Islam and Muslim Societies*, 8(2), 199-224.
- Ibrahim, M. (2020). Psikologi Pendidikan: Suatu Stimulus Awal. In M. dan I. Rumalean (Ed.), *Forsiladi Pers* (Vol. 7, Issue 2). https://books.google.co.id/books?hl=en&lr=&id=WT-HEAAQBAJ&oi=fnd&pg=PR2&ots=orOG0J4XaM&sig=_RldS7mWG5ZSpRE8sRmGX1Kt2Hs&redir_esc=y#v=onepage&q&f=false
- Muhsyanur. (2021). *Pemodelan dalam pembelajaran mendesain pembelajaran menjadi berkarakter dan berkualitas*. Forum Silaturahmi Doktor Indonesia (FORSILADI).
- Nurgiyantoro, B. (2018). *Language assessment in educational practice*. Pustaka Pelajar.
- Raihani, R. (2017). Education for multicultural citizens in Indonesia: Policies and practices. *Compare: A Journal of Comparative and International Education*, 47(6), 850-867.
- Rahim, R. (2018). Female leadership in Islamic educational institutions. *Muslim World Journal of Human Rights*, 15(1), 1-23.
- Saeed, A. (2016). *Reading the Qur'an in the twenty-first century: A contextualist approach*. Routledge.

- Stoller, F. L. (2016). Content-based instruction. In N. Van Deusen-Scholl & S. May (Eds.), *Second and foreign language education* (pp. 1-13). Springer.
- Sukyadi, D. (2020). Literacy practices in the pesantren communities in Indonesia. *Research Papers in Education*, 35(3), 284-301.