

Integrating the “Curriculum of Love” into English Language Education

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ABSTRACT

The integration of character education into language teaching has become a major concern in Islamic education discourse in Indonesia, particularly in response to social polarization, moral erosion, and religious intolerance. The Ministry of Religious Affairs has introduced the Curriculum of Love to instill values of love for God, humanity, nature, and the nation in all subjects, including English language education. This study aims to investigate how the Curriculum of Love is internalized through English language teaching and what pedagogical strategies and materials are used to support this integration at Pondok Pesantren Dalwa, East Java. Using a qualitative case study approach, data were collected through in-depth interviews, classroom observations, and document analysis. The results of the study indicate that teachers at Pondok Pesantren Dalwa successfully integrated the values of the Love Curriculum into English language instruction through contextualization of materials, reflective dialogue, journal writing, and ethical discussions. This strategy not only increases student engagement but also encourages deeper moral reflection, transforming English language learning into a holistic educational tool. However, challenges such as a lack of teacher training and relevant materials still exist. This study contributes to the field of spirituality-based English language teaching, reinforcing the potential of English language education as a means of fostering communicative competence as well as ethical and national awareness.

Keywords: Love Curriculum, English Language Education, *Pesantren*, Character Education, Pondok Pesantren Dalwa.

ABSTRAK

Integrasi pendidikan karakter dalam pengajaran bahasa telah menjadi perhatian utama dalam diskursus pendidikan Islam di Indonesia, khususnya dalam menanggapi polarisasi sosial, erosi moral, dan intoleransi agama. Kementerian Agama telah memperkenalkan Kurikulum Cinta (Kurikulum of Love) untuk menanamkan nilai-nilai kasih sayang terhadap Tuhan, kemanusiaan, alam, dan bangsa di semua mata pelajaran, termasuk pendidikan bahasa Inggris. Penelitian ini bertujuan untuk menyelidiki bagaimana Kurikulum Cinta diinternalisasi melalui pengajaran bahasa Inggris dan strategi pedagogis serta materi apa yang digunakan untuk mendukung integrasi ini di Pondok Pesantren Dalwa, Jawa Timur. Dengan menggunakan pendekatan studi kasus kualitatif, data dikumpulkan melalui wawancara mendalam, observasi kelas, dan analisis dokumen. Hasil penelitian menunjukkan bahwa guru-guru di Pondok Pesantren Dalwa berhasil mengintegrasikan nilai-nilai Kurikulum Cinta ke dalam pengajaran bahasa Inggris melalui kontekstualisasi materi, dialog reflektif, penulisan jurnal, dan diskusi etis. Strategi ini tidak hanya meningkatkan keterlibatan siswa tetapi juga mendorong refleksi moral yang lebih dalam, mengubah pembelajaran bahasa Inggris menjadi alat pendidikan holistik. Meskipun demikian, tantangan seperti kurangnya pelatihan guru dan materi yang relevan masih ada. Studi ini berkontribusi pada bidang pengajaran bahasa Inggris yang berlandaskan spiritualitas, memperkuat potensi pendidikan bahasa Inggris sebagai sarana untuk memupuk kompetensi komunikatif serta kesadaran etika dan nasional.

Kata Kunci: Kurikulum Cinta, Pendidikan Bahasa Inggris, Pesantren, Pendidikan Karakter, Pondok Pesantren Dalwa.

INTRODUCTION

In recent years, the integration of character education into language instruction has become a central concern in Islamic educational discourse¹, particularly in response to rising social polarization, moral erosion, and religious intolerance among students. In Indonesia, the Ministry of Religious Affairs (Kementerian Agama) has responded with the introduction of the Curriculum of Love (Kurikulum Cinta), an initiative aimed at embedding the values of love for God (*ḥablun min Allāh*), humanity (*ḥablun min al-nās*), nature (*ḥablun bi al-bi'ah*), and the nation (*ḥubb al-waṭan*) across all subjects, including language education.

Value-based education has gained increasing attention in Islamic educational institutions as a holistic approach to forming morally grounded students². In Indonesia, the Ministry of Religious Affairs introduced the Curriculum of Love (*Kurikulum Cinta*) to instill values of love for God, others, nature, and the nation across all subjects³. This curriculum seeks to combat growing intolerance and moral detachment among students by embedding character values into existing lessons rather than creating a separate subject.

Laili (2024) highlights how the Curriculum of Love is effectively implemented in Arabic language instruction through spiritually enriched texts and dialogic pedagogy⁴. The result is not only improved linguistic proficiency but also heightened empathy and ethical awareness. Similarly, Nurrahmi (2024) shows that Islamic counseling programs rooted in the same values compassion⁵, friendship, harmony help reinforce the affective goals of the curriculum across domains like personal, social, and religious guidance.

Internationally, Mansoor et al. (2025) demonstrate how prophetic pedagogy in Pakistani universities integrates Islamic moral principles into English Language Teaching (ELT)⁶, aligning language instruction with spiritual development. While their study confirms the value of this integration, it also notes implementation challenges such as lack of training and curriculum alignment issues mirrored in Indonesian contexts.

Umar (2023) provides a more contextual perspective by analyzing the development and challenges of ELT in Indonesian pesantren⁷. Despite the increasing demand for English

¹ Nur Hanifansyah and Menik Mahmudah, 'Enhancing Arabic Vocabulary Mastery Through Communicative Strategies: Evidence from Malaysia.', *Al-Ta'rib : Jurnal Ilmiah Program Studi Pendidikan Bahasa Arab LAIN* 12, no. (2) (2024): 263–78, <https://doi.org/10.23971/altarib.v12i2.9082>.

² Agus Purwowododo and Muhamad Zaini, 'Developing a Value-Based Moderate Islamic Education Model: A Case Study of Pesantren Sidogiri Pasuruan', *Jurnal Pendidikan Agama Islam (Journal of Islamic Education Studies)* 12, no. 1 (June 2024): 43–62, <https://doi.org/10.15642/jpai.2024.12.1.43-62>.

³ Zilfania Qathrun Nada and Heni Listiana, 'Analisis Kesiapan Guru Madrasah Dalam Inseri Kurikulum Cinta', *Entita: Jurnal Pendidikan Ilmu Pengetahuan Sosial Dan Ilmu-Ilmu Sosial*, Institut Agama Islam Negeri Madura, 3 May 2025, 385–400, <https://doi.org/10.19105/ejpis.v1i.19188>.

⁴ M Isroul Laili, 'Implementasi Kurikulum Cinta Dalam Pembelajaran Bahasa Arab Di Madrasah', Articles, *Al Yasini: Jurnal Keislaman, Sosial, Hukum Dan Pendidikan* 9, no. 2 (May 2024): 327, <https://doi.org/10.55102/alyasini.v9i2.6835>.

⁵ HESTY NURRAHMI, 'P016 Peran Bimbingan Konseling Islam Dalam Kurikulum Cinta', *Proceedings Borneo Islamic International Conference eISSN 2948-5045*, July 2025, <https://majmuah.com/journal/index.php/kaib1/article/view/712>.

⁶ Hafiza Sana Mansoor et al., 'Prophetic Pedagogy in English Language Teaching in Pakistani Universities', *Forum for Linguistic Studies* 7, no. 5 (April 2025), <https://doi.org/10.30564/fls.v7i5.9345>.

⁷ Umar Umar, 'English Language Teaching In Pesantren In Indonesia: Development And Challenges', *Journal of English Language and Literature (JELL)* 7, no. 1 (March 2022): 55–64, <https://doi.org/10.37110/jell.v7i1.143>.

proficiency, *pesantren* still face systemic barriers, including limited resources, unstandardized curricula, and minimal integration of character education in English classes.

While the Curriculum of Love has been explored in Arabic and Islamic counseling settings, no prior study has specifically addressed its integration into English language education within *pesantren* environments. Moreover, the role of English as a vehicle for character and spiritual development remains under-theorized in Indonesian Islamic boarding schools. This study fills that gap by investigating how ELT can be harmonized with the goals of the Curriculum of Love, offering insights into practical strategies, teacher roles, and student outcomes. This study focuses on how the Curriculum of Love is integrated into English language education at Pondok Pesantren Dalwa, a prominent Islamic boarding school in East Java. It seeks to answer the following research questions: How are the values of the Curriculum of Love internalized through English language instruction? What pedagogical strategies and materials are used to support this integration?

The scope of this study is limited to classroom-level observations and interviews with English language teachers and students at one *pesantren*. It does not aim to evaluate national policy or make generalizations across all *pesantren* in Indonesia. However, its findings offer valuable insights into how ELT can serve as a vehicle for character education in Islamic learning environments. This research is significant for several reasons. First, it contributes to the limited body of knowledge on value-based language instruction in Islamic boarding schools. Second, it provides practical recommendations for teachers and curriculum developers seeking to harmonize linguistic and ethical learning objectives. Lastly, by addressing the spiritual and moral potential of ELT, this study helps reposition English not merely as a utilitarian subject but as a tool for nurturing holistic and compassionate learners.

METHOD

This research employed a qualitative case study approach to explore how the Curriculum of Love is integrated into English language instruction at Pondok Pesantren Dalwa, East Java, Indonesia⁸. The study is grounded in value-based education theory, particularly drawing on Lickona’s (1988) framework of character education⁹ and prophetic pedagogy (Mansoor et al., 2025), which advocate for the moral-spiritual development of learners alongside academic achievement. The selection of Pondok Pesantren Dalwa as the research site was intentional due to its reputation as a *pesantren* that blends traditional Islamic values with modern language instruction. The case offers a unique context where English language learning is positioned not only as a communicative tool but also as a platform for moral and spiritual formation. The unit of analysis consists of English language teachers and senior-level students, as well as selected instructional materials and lesson plans.

Primary data were collected through in-depth interviews with five English teachers and six students, as well as classroom observations over a four-week period. Secondary data included institutional documents, lesson plans (RPP), teaching materials, and relevant policy

⁸ John W. Creswell et al., ‘Qualitative Research Designs: Selection and Implementation’, *The Counseling Psychologist* 35, no. 2 (March 2007): 236–64, <https://doi.org/10.1177/0011000006287390>.

⁹ Thomas Lickona, ‘Kohlberg and Moral Education: Back to Virtue’, *Counseling and Values* 32, no. 3 (April 1988): 187–92, <https://doi.org/10.1002/j.2161-007x.1988.tb00718.x>.

texts on the Curriculum of Love. Data triangulation was applied to ensure the reliability and depth of interpretation. The data collection process involved three stages: (1) preliminary mapping and document review; (2) classroom observations of English lessons where value-based themes were present¹⁰; and (3) semi-structured interviews to explore the perceptions¹¹, strategies, and challenges experienced by both teachers and students. All interviews were transcribed and thematically coded. Data were analyzed using the Miles and Huberman (1994) interactive model, which includes data reduction, data display, and conclusion drawing/verification.¹² Coding focused on identifying recurring themes related to the integration of the Curriculum of Love including indicators of value transmission, teacher strategy, and student response. Reflexive notes and memo writing were also used to track researcher interpretation and mitigate bias. This methodological design enabled the study to capture not only the pedagogical practices but also the affective and cultural dimensions of how love-based values are embedded into ELT in a *pesantren* context.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Pondok Pesantren Darullughah Wadda'wah (Dalwa), located in Pasuruan, East Java, is renowned for its excellence in Arabic language education¹³. Its students are immersed in a multilingual environment that prioritizes not only daily Arabic communication but also mastery of *balaghah* (Arabic rhetoric), *nahw* (grammar), and *ṣarf* (morphology). Dalwa implements diverse methods of instruction ranging from the *muhadathah* (oral drills), intensive memorization, translation of classical texts (*kitab kuning*), to modern linguistic pedagogy which have earned the *pesantren* recognition as a hub for Arabic proficiency in Southeast Asia¹⁴. However, while Arabic has become the primary identity marker of its linguistic culture, English remains in a secondary position, often limited to formal curricula without extensive integration of affective or value-based approaches.

The findings of this study reveal that integrating the *Curriculum of Love* into English language instruction at Dalwa requires a delicate balance between linguistic content and moral messaging. Teachers employed a variety of strategies to ensure that the lessons did not merely focus on grammar or vocabulary, but also served as a platform for cultivating empathy, respect, and national consciousness. For instance, reading materials were selected

¹⁰ Leovani Marcial Guimarães and Renato Da Silva Lima, 'A Systematic Literature Review of Classroom Observation Protocols and Their Adequacy for Engineering Education in Active Learning Environments', *European Journal of Engineering Education* 46, no. 6 (November 2021): 908–30, <https://doi.org/10.1080/03043797.2021.1937946>.

¹¹ Tania Buys et al., 'A Reflexive Lens on Preparing and Conducting Semi-Structured Interviews with Academic Colleagues', *Qualitative Health Research* 32, no. 13 (November 2022): 2030–39, <https://doi.org/10.1177/10497323221130832>.

¹² Lili Sururi Asipi, Utami Rosalina, and Dwi Nopiyadi, 'The Analysis of Reading Habits Using Miles and Huberman Interactive Model to Empower Students' Literacy at IPB Cirebon', *International Journal of Education and Humanities* 2, no. 3 (August 2022): 117–25, <https://doi.org/10.58557/ijeh.v2i3.98>.

¹³ Segaf Baharun Di Pon Pes Dalwa', *Shant Al-Arabiyah* 12, no. 2 (November 2024), <https://doi.org/10.24252/saa.v12i2.52825>.

¹⁴ Menik Mahmudah et al., 'Enhancing Arabic Rhetoric Education through Mind Mapping: A Focus on Bayan & Badi', *Articles, Lughawiyat: Jurnal Pendidikan Bahasa Dan Sastra Arab* 8, no. 1 (April 2025): 32–55, <https://doi.org/10.38073/lughawiyat.v8i1.2208>.

based on themes of cooperation, kindness, environmental care, and spiritual reflection. Dialogues and role plays were designed to simulate ethical dilemmas and interpersonal challenges, allowing students to practice both linguistic expression and moral reasoning simultaneously.

In addition, English teachers at Dalwa have begun to contextualize value-laden phrases and situational conversations. For example, rather than teaching a generic dialogue such as “At the Market,” students were guided to role-play a situation where one must speak politely to a stranger or apologize sincerely, embedding expressions like “*I’m sorry for the misunderstanding*” and “*Thank you for your honesty*” as not only linguistic outputs but ethical behaviors. These teaching moments often sparked spontaneous reflections, where students shared real-life situations and linked them to Islamic teachings and national values.

Another notable strategy involved reflective journaling in English, where students were asked to write short personal thoughts on topics like “Loving My Country,” “Respecting My Parents,” or “Caring for Nature.” Although written in simple English, these journals became spaces where students internalized and personalized the values promoted by the *Curriculum of Love*. This technique was found to significantly increase motivation and emotional engagement, particularly among students who previously saw English as a dry, foreign subject with little relevance to their Islamic identity.

Interestingly, the integration of these values did not weaken students' academic performance. On the contrary, the increased affective engagement seemed to support better comprehension and retention. One teacher observed that students were “more present” and willing to participate in discussions when the material resonated with their personal beliefs and community values. Students themselves expressed appreciation for the relevance of English content that aligned with what they learn in Arabic and religious classes.

Despite these successes, the study also uncovered certain limitations. Some teachers still struggle with how to consistently integrate values into structured English syllabi, especially when using national textbooks that are devoid of local or Islamic context. Furthermore, students with weaker English proficiency sometimes find it challenging to express nuanced moral ideas in a foreign language. This highlights the need for teacher training programs that address not only pedagogy but also value integration in ELT settings.

Love, an emotion that plays a crucial role in individual development¹⁵, serves as the foundation of a virtuous cycle governing maternal well-being¹⁶, child health¹⁷, and related

¹⁵ Nilna Azizatus Shofiyah, Tedy Sutandy Komarudin, and Dewi Rika Juita, “The Meaningful Role of Affection in Education: The Emotional Perspective in Pedagogy”, Articles, *Innovative: Journal Of Social Science Research* 3, no. 2 (June 2023): 9420–34.

¹⁶ Phra Jirawat Ciravaddhano (Kanapongrussamee) and Phra Puttipong Namthep (Tidtametho), ‘Loving-Kindness Meditation with Dhamma Gita for Mental Well-Being of Adolescents’, *วารสาร มจร พุทธศาสตร์ปริทรรศน์* 9, no. 1 (2025): 69–83.

¹⁷ Noel D. Maturu, ‘LOVE: A New Psychological Model of Bliss’, preprint, SSRN, 2025, <https://doi.org/10.2139/ssrn.5020551>.

outcomes¹⁸. Proper education should foster the ability to build loving relationships on a cross-cultural basis and to associate education with the concept of love¹⁹.

In conclusion, the case of Dalwa shows that *pesantren*-based English instruction can be effectively infused with the *Curriculum of Love*, transforming language learning into a space of spiritual and moral development. This supports the broader vision of *pesantren* as institutions that produce not only linguistically capable but also ethically grounded citizens.

National Educational Policy and the Innovation Mandate in Pesantren

The official launch of the *Kurikulum Berbasis Cinta* (KBC) or in more popular terms the *Curriculum of Love*, by the Indonesian Ministry of Religious Affairs on July 24, 2025, marks a pivotal moment in the transformation of Islamic education. This curriculum introduces a humanistic, inclusive, and spiritual framework rooted in values of love and compassion not merely as content knowledge, but as the foundation for character formation. The Ministry's emphasis on integrating KBC across all disciplines, including language instruction, reflects a national commitment to embed ethical values into everyday learning. As stated during the launch in Makassar, this transformation is not about adding a new subject but reorienting all educational practices toward shaping morally conscious individuals.

In alignment with this national directive, *pesantren* such as Pondok Pesantren Dalwa have positioned English language education as part of their broader learning innovation strategy. English is no longer viewed solely as a secular or utilitarian subject but as a channel for nurturing empathy, environmental care, and national loyalty through spiritually and ethically grounded content. The incorporation of English into the *pesantren's* value-based curriculum not only responds to global linguistic demands but also strengthens the *pesantren's* role as a hub of moral and intellectual excellence. This integration affirms that love-centered education, as envisioned by the Curriculum of Love, can thrive even in the domain of foreign language learning, particularly when implemented with intentionality and rooted in institutional values.

English as Part of Learning Innovation in Pesantren

In the broader context of *pesantren* education, English language instruction is increasingly recognized as a component of learning innovation²⁰. Traditionally rooted in Arabic and religious studies, *pesantren* such as Dalwa have gradually embraced English not merely as a functional tool for communication but as a medium for expanding intellectual horizons and intercultural engagement. The integration of English into the *pesantren* curriculum especially when aligned with spiritual and character-building goals such as those outlined in the Curriculum of Love demonstrates a progressive step in harmonizing traditional Islamic education with modern linguistic demands. By doing so, *pesantren* break

¹⁸ Laura Cataldi and Silvia Cataldi, 'Prison and Love: The Role of Affection and Rehabilitative Actions in Reducing Recidivism and Beyond', *Social Sciences* 13, no. 6 (June 2024): 323, <https://doi.org/10.3390/socsci13060323>.

¹⁹ Ekaterina Yurtaeva and Divine Charura, 'Comprehensive Scoping Review of Research on Intercultural Love and Romantic Relationships', *Journal of Social and Personal Relationships* 41, no. 6 (June 2024): 1654–76, <https://doi.org/10.1177/02654075241228791>.

²⁰ Zainal Abidin et al., 'Learning Innovation in Islamic Boarding Schools in East Java: Technology's Role in Enhancing Teaching Effectiveness', *TARBIYA: Journal of Education in Muslim Society*, 12, no. 1 (2025), <https://doi.org/10.15408/tjems.v12i1.45642>.

the binary between “sacred” and “secular” knowledge, positioning English as both a global language and a vessel for moral instruction.

Strengthening the Role of English in Islamic Educational Transformation

This shift toward incorporating English as part of learning innovation reflects a broader transformation within Islamic education in Indonesia²¹. It aligns with national strategies for strengthening *pesantren* contributions to character education, global literacy, and moderate religious understanding. When English instruction is infused with local values and spiritual dimensions, as exemplified at Dalwa, it empowers students to become not only competent communicators but also ethical global citizens²². Thus, the inclusion of English in *pesantren* should no longer be seen as merely supplementary²³, but as a transformative pedagogical strategy one²⁴ that supports the development of balanced individuals who are intellectually capable²⁵, morally grounded²⁶, and globally connected²⁷.

Internalization of Love-Based Values through English Instruction

One of the core findings of this study is that teachers at Pondok Pesantren Dalwa actively integrate the values of the *Curriculum of Love* into their English language teaching by contextualizing materials with moral and spiritual themes. Teachers deliberately select reading passages and dialogue topics that highlight themes such as tolerance, empathy, and national identity. For example, one teacher stated:

“When we talk about ‘introducing people’, I ask students to roleplay introducing someone from a different religion or country, so they practice empathy, not just vocabulary.” (Interview with Teacher A)

Teachers also use Islamic narratives and national themes to reinforce values. For instance, a lesson on descriptive text included an assignment to describe an “ideal student” based on *akhlak* and civic responsibility. These practices show a deliberate effort to embed *ḥablun min al-nās* (love for others) and *ḥubb al-waṭan* (love for the nation) into English lessons.

²¹ Subhan Zein et al., ‘English Language Education in Indonesia: A Review of Research (2011–2019)’, *Language Teaching* 53, no. 4 (October 2020): 491–523, <https://doi.org/10.1017/S0261444820000208>.

²² Ahmad Qusairi, ‘Learning Innovation in Islamic Boarding Schools in Improving the Quality of Islamic Education and Student Skills’, Articles, *Journal of Innovative and Creativity* 5, no. 2 (May 2025): 1819–30, <https://doi.org/10.31004/joecy.v5i2.448>.

²³ Fadhlur Rahman, Ali Al-Nahdi, and Zurriyati Zurriyati, ‘The (In) Famous English Language Policy in Pesantren: What We Already Know and What Remains Unknown’, *Idarah (Jurnal Pendidikan Dan Kependidikan)* 7, no. 2 (December 2023): 165–82, <https://doi.org/10.47766/idarrah.v7i2.821>.

²⁴ Ahmad Madkur, Universitas Pamulang, and Lisnawati Lisnawati, ‘Translanguaging Pedagogy in ELT Practices: Experiences of Teachers in Indonesian Pesantren-Based Schools’, *VELES Voices of English Language Education Society Institut Agama Islam Negeri (IAIN)* 6, no. 1 (April 2022): 130–43, <https://doi.org/10.29408/veles.v6i1.5136>.

²⁵ Tira Nur Fitria, ‘Integrating English Language Teaching (ELT) Into Islamic Boarding Schools: A Review of Strategy and Challenges’, *Journal of English Language and Pedagogy (JELPA)* 1, no. 2 (November 2023): 64–78, <https://doi.org/10.51826/jelpa.v1i2.772>.

²⁶ Irfan Setia Nugraha and Sukarno Sukarno, ‘Environmental Support in Promoting Students’ English Language as Second Language Acquisition: A Case in at-Tawazun Modern Islamic Boarding School’, *Formosa Journal of Sustainable Research* 4, no. 2 (February 2025): 219–36, <https://doi.org/10.55927/fjsr.v4i2.26>.

²⁷ Istiqomah Nur Rahmawati et al., ‘Empowering Students’ English Communication Skills Through Participatory Learning in Pesantren’, Articles, *TAAWUN* 5, no. 02 (July 2025): 493–505, <https://doi.org/10.37850/taawun.v5i02.952>.

In terms of love for God (*hablun min Allah*), teachers often begin classes with short reflections or religious phrases in English, such as “Let’s be grateful today” or “*May Allah ease our task.*” While subtle, these expressions cultivate spiritual awareness within the language environment.

Strategies and Challenges in Integrating the Curriculum of Love

Teachers employ various strategies to support the integration, including value-based questioning, group reflection, role-playing, and the adaptation of local texts into English. A student shared:

“Sometimes we read about Prophet stories in English, then discuss what lessons we can learn. It helps us improve vocabulary and also think about akhlaq.” (Interview with Student B)

However, challenges remain. Several teachers cited the lack of training in designing ELT materials that align with both linguistic goals and value-based content. Others pointed out that commercial textbooks often lack cultural relevance or fail to reflect Islamic or Indonesian moral values. Time constraints within the academic schedule also make it difficult to explore values in-depth during lessons.

These findings resonate with the work of Mansoor et al. (2025), who emphasize the importance of prophetic pedagogy in balancing moral and academic development in ELT. Similar to the Pakistani university context, the teachers at Dalwa face challenges aligning spiritual content with language materials, yet their adaptations show creative solutions.

The integration strategies also reflect the implementation practices discussed by Laili (2024) in Arabic instruction particularly the use of narrative texts and reflective dialogue to nurture ethical awareness. Meanwhile, the obstacles reported such as the need for teacher training and relevant materials mirror those identified by Nada & Listiana (2024), who found that teacher preparedness is a key factor in the success of the *Curriculum of Love*. These findings resonate with broader efforts in Arabic language education where affective and contextual strategies such as mind mapping for rhetoric²⁸, grammar simplification for speaking²⁹, the use of inspirational quotes for vocabulary³⁰, and culturally relevant media like *Ibda’ Magazine*³¹ have proven effective in enhancing both language mastery and character development³². Similarly, the integration of the Curriculum of Love into ELT at Dalwa reflects the same pedagogical spirit: engaging the heart to empower the tongue.

²⁸ Menik Mahmudah et al., ‘Enhancing Arabic Rhetoric Education through Mind Mapping: A Focus on Bayan & Badi’, *Lughawiyat: Jurnal Pendidikan Bahasa Dan Sastra Arab* 8, no. 1 (April 2025): 32–55, <https://doi.org/10.38073/lughawiyat.v8i1.2208>.

²⁹ Nur Hanifansyah and Menik Mahmudah, *Strategi Efektif Simplifikasi Nahwu dalam Percakapan Arab pada Kelas Intensif Daurah Ramadhan*, 3, no. 1 (2025).

³⁰ Moh. Tohiri Habib et al., ‘A Psycholinguistic Approach to Enhancing Arabic Vocabulary and Morphology Mastery Through Inspirational Quotes’, *An Nabighoh* 27, no. 1 (June 2025): 1–24, <https://doi.org/10.32332/an-nabighoh.v27i1.1-24>.

³¹ Zulpina Zulpina et al., ‘Strategic Utilization of Ibda’ Magazine as an Innovative Instructional Medium to Enhance Students’ Arabic Reading Skills’, *An Nabighoh* 27, no. 1 (June 2025): 101–22, <https://doi.org/10.32332/an-nabighoh.v27i1.101-122>.

³² Achmad Makki Lazuardi et al., ‘Enhancing Arabic Writing and Literacy through Ibda’ Magazine: A Culturally Relevant Medium in Islamic Boarding Schools’, *Kalamuna: Jurnal Pendidikan Bahasa Arab Dan Kebahasaaraban* 6, no. 2 (July 2025): 370–85, <https://doi.org/10.52593/klm.06.2.10>.

The Dalwa case, however, adds a unique perspective by showing that even within foreign language instruction often viewed as secular values can be effectively embedded without compromising pedagogical goals. This supports the assertion by Nurrahmi (2024) that character values like empathy, friendship, and harmony are not exclusive to religious education or counseling programs but can flourish in any educational domain when guided by intentionality.

CONCLUSION

This study explored the integration of the *Curriculum of Love* into English Language Teaching (ELT) at Pondok Pesantren Dalwa, focusing on how character and spiritual values such as compassion, empathy, national pride, and care for nature can be harmonized with English instruction. Drawing from interviews, classroom observations, and curriculum analysis, the findings demonstrate that teachers at Dalwa are gradually embedding value-based pedagogy into their English lessons through contextualized dialogues, reflective writing, and ethically oriented materials. These strategies not only enhanced student engagement but also fostered deeper moral reflections, thus transforming ELT into a tool for holistic education in pesantren settings.

However, this study is limited to one pesantren and does not capture broader trends across Indonesia. It also recognizes that some teachers struggle with balancing standardized language instruction and contextual moral content, especially when using national textbooks. Future research could expand to comparative studies among multiple pesantren, explore the long-term impact of value-integrated ELT on student character formation, or design training models for English teachers in faith-based institutions. Nevertheless, this study offers a foundational contribution to the underdeveloped field of spiritually grounded ELT and reinforces the potential of English education as a medium for nurturing not only communicative competence but also ethical and national consciousness.

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