THE INTEGRATION OF ISLAMIC PERSPECTIVES IN TEACHING ENGLISH AS A FOREIGN LANGUAGE: A SYSTEMATIC LITERATURE REVIEW

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ABSTRACT

The integration of Islamic perspectives in teaching English as a Foreign Language (EFL) represents a growing area of interest in education, aiming to align pedagogical practices with faith-based values. This study systematically reviews the literature to explore how Islamic principles have been incorporated into EFL teaching methodologies and curricula. A systematic approach was employed, analyzing peer-reviewed articles from reputable databases, focusing on conceptual frameworks, practical applications, and pedagogical challenges. The findings reveal a significant emphasis on moral education, cultural sensitivity, and the alignment of language instruction with Islamic values. Islamic-based EFL approaches enhance student engagement by fostering ethical awareness and respect for diverse cultures while simultaneously achieving language proficiency goals. However, challenges such as balancing religious content with secular learning objectives and adapting materials for global contexts persist. This study highlights the need for further research into innovative strategies that address these challenges and ensure effective implementation. The findings contribute to the body of knowledge in educational practices by offering a framework for integrating Islamic perspectives into EFL teaching, benefiting educators, policymakers, and curriculum designers. Future research directions and policy implications are discussed, underscoring the importance of culturally responsive pedagogy in a globalized educational landscape.

INTRODUCTION

The English language has solidified its position as the global lingua franca, driving communication, commerce, and education across borders. Its prominence stems from historical, economic, and cultural factors, enabling unprecedented opportunities for global collaboration. Studies emphasize English as a medium for fostering cross-cultural understanding, which is critical in a world marked by interconnectedness and diversity (Atasheva, 2024; Jenkins et al., 2018). Furthermore, English's integration into education systems worldwide reflects its role as a tool for academic and professional growth (Crystal, 2003; Dewey, 2014). However, the pedagogical focus on standardized English often neglects linguistic and cultural variations, raising questions about

inclusivity and adaptability in English as a Foreign Language (EFL) classrooms (Galloway, 2013; Fang & Ren, 2018). Scholars have highlighted the need for integrating global perspectives to make English teaching more relevant and culturally responsive (Canagarajah, 2013; Fang, 2011). Particularly in Islamic contexts, aligning language instruction with religious and cultural values presents unique challenges and opportunities, emphasizing the importance of contextualized curricula (Galloway & Rose, 2015; Eslami et al., 2019). This study explores these dynamics, aiming to bridge gaps in the literature by systematically analyzing Islamic perspectives in EFL teaching to promote holistic, culturally sensitive pedagogies.

The integration of Islamic perspectives into teaching English as a Foreign Language (EFL) presents multifaceted challenges in aligning pedagogical objectives with religious principles. Although embedding Islamic values in EFL curricula aims to nurture students' ethical and cultural identity, teachers frequently encounter difficulties in reconciling these goals with the predominantly Western-centric nature of English learning materials (Khoiriyah et al., 2022; Mulyati & Kultsum, 2023). This complexity is exacerbated by limited resources that explicitly incorporate Islamic ethics within English teaching frameworks, making it challenging for educators to design culturally responsive lesson plans (Rambe & Salminawati, 2019). Furthermore, the perceived dichotomy between Islamic values and the global orientation of the English language often generates apprehension among educators, particularly regarding potential cultural dissonance in students (Mardiani et al., 2023). In Islamic educational institutions, there is a growing demand for tailored syllabi that balance linguistic proficiency with moral development, yet practical implementation remains inconsistent (Lailiyah, 2022). These challenges reflect broader systemic issues, such as inadequate teacher training on integrating religious themes into secular subjects and the scarcity of research-backed pedagogical strategies (Masita, 2022). Additionally, the evolving digital landscape introduces complexities in maintaining the authenticity of Islamic values amidst the proliferation of online English learning platforms, which predominantly prioritize linguistic functionality over ethical considerations (Muttaqin, 2022; Rabiah, 2020). As educators strive to create inclusive classrooms, they must navigate these pedagogical barriers while fostering an appreciation for diversity and global competence (Rahmadany et al., 2021). Addressing these challenges is critical to enhancing the efficacy of Islamic value integration in EFL, particularly in the context of Indonesia's diverse educational settings, where cultural pluralism underscores the necessity for innovative teaching approaches (Nafiah, 2020).

The integration of Islamic perspectives in teaching English as a foreign language has gained significant attention due to its potential to harmonize linguistic competence with cultural and ethical development. By embedding Islamic values into language education, educators can cultivate a deeper sense of identity and moral responsibility among learners, aligning with global educational goals that promote diversity and inclusion (Lubis et al., 2021; Rahmadany et al., 2021). This approach ensures that English learning extends beyond communication skills, fostering critical thinking and

ethical awareness rooted in Islamic principles (Khoiriyah et al., 2022). Furthermore, the relevance of this integration is heightened by the increasing globalization of education, which necessitates culturally contextualized teaching methodologies, particularly in Muslim-majority regions (Rohmana, 2020). Scholars have emphasized that curriculum frameworks incorporating Islamic values not only enhance pedagogical effectiveness but also reinforce the moral foundation necessary for students to navigate contemporary challenges (Irawan, 2020; Elfi, 2018). This synthesis of language and values is essential in creating a balanced educational paradigm that respects religious traditions while addressing global educational standards (Farhang et al., 2023). Notably, the Content and Language Integrated Learning (CLIL) approach has emerged as a promising pedagogical model, effectively integrating content knowledge with Islamic cultural elements to enrich learning experiences (Mulyati & Kultsum, 2023). By adopting such innovative strategies, educators can address existing gaps in English language teaching while ensuring alignment with Islamic educational objectives (Hidayat, 2017). This study, therefore, contributes to the broader discourse on educational reform by advocating for pedagogical practices that integrate linguistic and ethical dimensions, ultimately fostering holistic student development (Ahmed, 2017).

In this study, the primary objective is to examine the integration of Islamic perspectives into the Teaching of English as a Foreign Language (TEFL) to identify effective strategies that align with both linguistic and cultural objectives. Specifically, it seeks to explore how incorporating Islamic values can enrich the pedagogical process, enhancing students' engagement with English while also promoting their understanding of Islamic culture and beliefs (Elhoshi et al., 2017). The research aims to address the need for curriculum frameworks that reflect Islamic perspectives, ensuring the teaching materials respect students' cultural and religious backgrounds (Aeni et al., 2018). Additionally, this study aims to explore the potential challenges teachers face in incorporating these perspectives, such as resource limitations and training deficits, and how these challenges can be mitigated through thoughtful curriculum design (Songbatumis, 2017). The research will also evaluate the impact of such integration on students' academic performance, particularly in developing critical thinking and intercultural competence (Ahmed, 2017). Furthermore, this study will assess the role of Islamic values in shaping moral development and character education within the TEFL context, considering the holistic nature of education as outlined in Islamic teachings (Lubis et al., 2021). Ultimately, the study intends to provide a comprehensive analysis of the benefits and challenges of this integration, offering recommendations for educators and policymakers to create more inclusive and culturally sensitive teaching environments (Hidayat, 2017). By combining linguistic and cultural objectives, this study aims to contribute to the broader discourse on inclusive language education (Embong et al., 2020). The research will also offer insights into the role of community involvement and religious institutions in supporting the integration of

Islamic values in TEFL (Sholihah et al., 2019). Through these objectives, the study hopes to promote a more culturally responsive teaching framework in ESL contexts.

The Research Questions for this study aim to guide the investigation into the integration of Islamic perspectives in the teaching of English as a Foreign Language (EFL). The first question seeks to explore how Islamic values can be effectively incorporated into EFL curricula to enhance both linguistic and cultural learning experiences for students. This is critical, as studies have shown that cultural integration in language learning can foster greater engagement and understanding, especially in contexts like Islamic studies (Farooq, Uzair-Ul-Hassan, & Wahid, 2012). The second research question focuses on identifying the challenges faced by educators when attempting to integrate Islamic perspectives, particularly in non-Islamic educational environments. Challenges such as resistance to religious content and the lack of relevant teaching materials have been documented in previous studies (Fatsah, Ashrafiany, & Basalama, 2021). A third research question examines the effectiveness of these integrations in improving students' English proficiency, particularly in academic writing and reading comprehension, which are central to their academic success (Gunantar & Transinata, 2019). The fourth question delves into the specific outcomes of using Islamic teachings, such as increased motivation and cultural pride, in learning English, which is often an important factor in language acquisition (Hyland, 2015). Lastly, the study seeks to understand how these Islamic-integrated methods impact students' overall academic performance, offering a broader perspective on the role of culturally responsive pedagogy in EFL contexts (Kristiawana, Ferdiansyah, & Picard, 2022). This set of questions will guide the empirical exploration of how Islamic values can be blended with EFL pedagogy, aiming to contribute to a more inclusive and culturally sensitive approach to language teaching.

The Structure of the Article is carefully designed to provide a comprehensive examination of the integration of Islamic perspectives in Teaching English as a Foreign Language (EFL). This article begins with an Introduction that highlights the importance of incorporating Islamic values into EFL curricula and sets the stage for the research by discussing the background, problem statement, relevance, and objectives. It presents the significance of cultural integration in language teaching, which is increasingly recognized as a pivotal factor in enhancing students' engagement and linguistic competencies (Ahmad, 2021). Following this, the Research Methodology section explains the systematic approach employed in this study, including data collection techniques, participant selection, and analytical methods (Gürkan, 2020). The Results section will present the findings from the reviewed literature, identifying trends and patterns regarding the effectiveness of Islamic perspectives in EFL settings (Nasr, 2019). In the Discussion, the article interprets these results, offering insights into how Islamic perspectives can be integrated into EFL classrooms to improve both cultural awareness and language proficiency (Zhang & Wang, 2022). Lastly, the Conclusion summarizes the key findings, reflects on the implications for EFL

pedagogy, and suggests avenues for future research to further explore the intersection of Islamic values and language teaching (Ali & Akhter, 2020). This structure ensures a logical flow of ideas and a clear presentation of the study's contribution to the field of language education.

METHOD

This study adopts a systematic literature review methodology, which is a widely used approach for synthesizing research evidence in educational contexts (Aveyard, 2019). The review process involved the selection of peer-reviewed journal articles, books, and conference papers published within the last two decades, ensuring that the sources are relevant and up-to-date (Cooper, 2017). The search criteria focused on keywords related to Islamic perspectives, English as a Foreign Language (EFL), teaching methodologies, cultural sensitivity, systematic literature review, which were used across several academic databases, including Google Scholar, JSTOR, and Scopus. To maintain rigor and transparency, only studies that explicitly discussed the integration of Islamic values into language pedagogy were included. The inclusion criteria also prioritized articles that provided empirical data, theoretical frameworks, or practical guidelines for implementing cultural values in the EFL classroom (Bhatti, 2020). Articles that focused on unrelated cultural integration or were limited to specific geographical regions were excluded from the review. Each selected study was carefully analyzed for its relevance to the research questions, particularly those that addressed the challenges, strategies, and outcomes of integrating Islamic perspectives in EFL teaching (Haque, 2018). The analysis was conducted in three stages: data extraction, synthesis of key findings, and thematic coding. This approach allowed for the identification of recurring themes, such as pedagogical challenges, teacher perceptions, and student outcomes, which were then categorized and discussed in relation to the broader context of EFL teaching (Sullivan & Preece, 2016). The review also considered studies that discussed the broader concept of culturally responsive pedagogy, linking it with Islamic perspectives and examining its impact on learners' motivation and language acquisition (Yilmaz & O'Toole, 2020). This method ensures that the study provides a comprehensive and balanced understanding of the integration of Islamic perspectives into EFL education, allowing for practical implications to be drawn for future teaching practices (Fahmi, 2021).

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Cultural Integration in EFL Improves Student Engagement

Cultural integration in English as a Foreign Language (EFL) has been found to significantly enhance student engagement in the classroom. The incorporation of culturally relevant content, such as Islamic perspectives, allows students to connect with the material on a deeper level, fostering a sense of belonging and interest in the

subject matter. By integrating cultural elements that resonate with students' personal beliefs and backgrounds, teachers can make the learning experience more meaningful. This approach has been shown to increase students' motivation to participate actively in lessons, as they feel that the content is relevant to their lives and experiences. Furthermore, cultural integration encourages students to take ownership of their learning, as they see the value of incorporating their own cultural perspectives into the language acquisition process. It also promotes a sense of community within the classroom, where students from diverse backgrounds can share and learn from each other's cultural experiences.

This collaborative atmosphere has been linked to improved communication skills, as students are more likely to engage in discussions that draw on their cultural knowledge. Additionally, students are more likely to retain the language and concepts being taught when they can relate to the cultural context in which they are being taught. Teachers who successfully integrate cultural perspectives into their teaching strategies have reported an increase in student participation and enthusiasm for learning. This cultural relevance not only boosts engagement but also helps students develop critical thinking skills, as they are encouraged to analyze and reflect on how cultural values influence language use. As students become more aware of the cultural dimensions of language, they also begin to understand the role that cultural sensitivity plays in effective communication. This awareness fosters a more inclusive classroom environment, where students from all cultural backgrounds feel respected and valued. The integration of cultural perspectives into EFL classrooms also provides opportunities for students to develop intercultural competence, preparing them for effective communication in a globalized world. In conclusion, cultural integration in EFL is a powerful tool for enhancing student engagement, as it connects language learning with the students' own cultural identities and experiences, ultimately leading to a more dynamic and participatory learning environment.

Pedagogical Challenges in Integrating Islamic Values

Integrating Islamic values into English as a Foreign Language (EFL) teaching presents a number of pedagogical challenges. One of the primary issues faced by educators is the lack of appropriate resources that support the integration of these values within the EFL curriculum. Many teachers report that their textbooks and teaching materials do not sufficiently address cultural and religious perspectives, making it difficult to seamlessly incorporate Islamic values. Additionally, teachers often find themselves struggling with limited professional development opportunities to gain the necessary skills for culturally responsive teaching.

This gap in training results in uncertainty about how to address sensitive topics related to Islamic beliefs and practices without offending students or deviating from the curriculum's academic objectives. Teachers also face the challenge of balancing Islamic values with the educational goals of language proficiency. This is particularly complex

when teaching students from diverse cultural backgrounds, where the introduction of Islamic values may not resonate with all learners. Moreover, the general lack of institutional support for integrating religious and cultural content into the EFL classroom further complicates the teaching process. In some educational contexts, there is resistance to including Islamic perspectives, stemming from a broader hesitancy to incorporate religious topics into the curriculum due to concerns over neutrality and inclusivity. Furthermore, the teacher's own familiarity and comfort level with Islamic values can vary, which affects their ability to teach these values with confidence. T

he perceived risk of inadvertently promoting religious biases or stereotypes can also discourage teachers from addressing Islamic perspectives in their lessons. Another challenge involves ensuring that the integration of Islamic values does not overshadow the primary focus of language learning. Teachers must be cautious not to overemphasize cultural elements to the point that it disrupts the language acquisition process. Lastly, students' diverse backgrounds and varying levels of familiarity with Islamic values add complexity to the pedagogical approach. For instance, students from non-Muslim communities may feel alienated if the integration of Islamic perspectives is not handled with sensitivity and respect for their own cultural identities. Despite these challenges, many educators acknowledge the value of integrating Islamic values, as it can create a more inclusive and culturally aware learning environment. However, these pedagogical challenges highlight the need for more targeted resources, teacher training, and institutional support to successfully incorporate Islamic values into the EFL curriculum.

Positive Impact on Language Acquisition

The inclusion of Islamic perspectives in English as a Foreign Language (EFL) teaching has shown a positive impact on language acquisition. When students are introduced to cultural contexts that align with their personal experiences and beliefs, they tend to feel more engaged and connected to the learning material. This cultural relevance leads to a deeper understanding of language, as students are able to relate linguistic structures and vocabulary to their own lives. Moreover, Islamic values can provide a rich context for learning, offering opportunities to explore themes such as ethics, family, community, and social responsibility, which are essential aspects of language use. By drawing on these themes, students not only learn vocabulary and grammar but also gain insights into how language functions within a specific cultural framework.

This approach fosters an environment where students can practice language skills in real-life contexts, thus enhancing their ability to apply what they have learned outside the classroom. In addition, the integration of Islamic perspectives helps students develop a more comprehensive understanding of the language, as they are exposed to a variety of linguistic forms, expressions, and idioms tied to cultural contexts. The emotional connection that students feel towards their cultural values strengthens their

retention of language material, as they are more likely to remember and use words and phrases that resonate with their identity. This connection also encourages students to participate more actively in class discussions, where they can share personal experiences and perspectives related to the topics being studied. Furthermore, the integration of cultural content, including Islamic values, enhances students' ability to communicate effectively with speakers of the language from different cultural backgrounds. By engaging with diverse cultural perspectives, students develop intercultural competence, which is an essential skill for language learners.

This process also helps to break down barriers between students from different cultural backgrounds, fostering a more inclusive and respectful classroom atmosphere. Ultimately, the positive impact of incorporating Islamic perspectives into EFL teaching extends beyond language proficiency, as it contributes to the holistic development of students as global citizens who are culturally aware and linguistically proficient. This approach creates a dynamic learning environment where language learning is not only about mastering grammar and vocabulary but also about understanding the cultural nuances that shape communication. Through the integration of Islamic values, students gain a deeper appreciation for the interconnectedness of language and culture, which enriches their overall learning experience.

Teacher Perceptions of Cultural Integration

Teachers' perceptions of cultural integration in English as a Foreign Language (EFL) classrooms reveal a complex landscape of attitudes, challenges, and opportunities. Many educators recognize the importance of integrating cultural elements into language teaching as it enhances student engagement and motivation. Teachers feel that when students can relate the content to their own cultural experiences, the learning process becomes more meaningful and personal. However, there are varying levels of comfort among teachers when it comes to addressing cultural integration, particularly with sensitive topics like religion. Some teachers express concern about the potential for misunderstanding or miscommunication when introducing Islamic values in the classroom, especially in diverse settings where students may not share the same cultural background. Despite these challenges, many teachers believe that cultural integration, including Islamic perspectives, enriches the classroom experience and contributes to a more inclusive learning environment.

Teachers report that when cultural perspectives are presented thoughtfully and respectfully, they can foster a deeper understanding of the language and promote intercultural competence among students. Furthermore, educators emphasize the need for appropriate training and resources to effectively teach cultural integration. Teachers who have received training in intercultural communication and culturally responsive teaching techniques tend to be more confident in integrating cultural perspectives into their lessons. Some teachers also highlight the value of student feedback, as it helps them gauge the effectiveness of their teaching strategies and adapt

their approaches accordingly. In classrooms where cultural integration is actively encouraged, teachers observe that students develop stronger interpersonal skills and a greater appreciation for diversity. However, there is also a recognition that cultural integration is not always straightforward, and there may be instances where students resist or are uncomfortable with certain cultural elements, particularly those that challenge their own cultural norms. Nevertheless, many teachers argue that these challenges should not deter efforts to integrate cultural perspectives but rather encourage further reflection and adaptation of teaching methods.

Teachers' perceptions of cultural integration, especially the inclusion of Islamic values, are shaped by a variety of factors, including their own cultural backgrounds, their professional training, and the specific needs of their students. In general, teachers who view cultural integration as an essential part of language learning are more likely to invest time and effort into incorporating cultural content into their lessons. Ultimately, teachers believe that cultural integration, when done thoughtfully and with sensitivity, can positively impact students' language learning experiences and prepare them for successful communication in a globalized world.

Need for Comprehensive Teacher Training

The need for comprehensive teacher training in the integration of Islamic perspectives into English as a Foreign Language (EFL) teaching has emerged as a significant finding in this study. Teachers have expressed the necessity of acquiring specific skills and knowledge that allow them to incorporate cultural elements, particularly Islamic values, in a way that is both effective and respectful. Many teachers acknowledge that while they understand the importance of cultural integration, they feel underprepared to address sensitive topics such as religious beliefs and practices. There is a strong consensus among educators that professional development programs should focus on equipping them with the tools to navigate these cultural elements within the classroom setting. Such training programs would ideally cover areas such as cultural sensitivity, understanding the core tenets of Islam, and methods for incorporating Islamic perspectives into lesson plans in a manner that enhances student engagement without alienating them.

Teachers also emphasized the need for ongoing support throughout their careers to ensure they remain informed about new teaching methods and the evolving needs of diverse student populations. Comprehensive teacher training would also provide educators with strategies for fostering a classroom environment that values cultural diversity and encourages open-mindedness among students. Furthermore, teachers suggested that the training should be both theoretical and practical, offering real-life examples and case studies that illustrate successful integration of cultural elements. Teachers who have participated in specialized training report increased confidence and effectiveness when introducing Islamic values into their lessons, highlighting the positive impact on student engagement and language acquisition. However, it was

also noted that teachers often lack access to such professional development opportunities due to limited resources or institutional constraints. This has led to a call for greater investment in teacher training programs, particularly in areas where there is a high demand for culturally responsive teaching.

In addition, teachers expressed a desire for training that includes collaborative learning opportunities, where they can share experiences and strategies with peers from different educational backgrounds. This collaborative approach would enable teachers to learn from one another and refine their teaching practices based on collective experiences. In conclusion, the need for comprehensive teacher training is seen as a crucial factor in ensuring that cultural integration, particularly the inclusion of Islamic perspectives, is implemented effectively in EFL classrooms. By providing teachers with the necessary skills and resources, educational institutions can better support their educators and ultimately improve the overall quality of language teaching.

Impact on Students' Intercultural Competence

The integration of Islamic perspectives in English as a Foreign Language (EFL) classrooms has shown a positive impact on students' intercultural competence. Many students reported a greater understanding of cultural diversity and the role of Islamic teachings in shaping global societies. They noted an increased appreciation for cultural differences and an enhanced ability to interact respectfully with peers from diverse backgrounds. The exposure to Islamic cultural norms, values, and practices has fostered greater empathy among students, encouraging them to engage in meaningful discussions about cultural identity and values. Through lessons incorporating Islamic perspectives, students have been able to draw connections between the target language and their own cultural frameworks, leading to a deeper understanding of both. Additionally, students indicated that learning about Islamic culture has helped them develop more critical thinking skills when analyzing global issues, particularly those related to religion, ethics, and societal norms. They felt better equipped to navigate multicultural environments and engage in respectful dialogue with people from different cultural and religious backgrounds.

The study also revealed that students' intercultural competence was enhanced not only in terms of knowledge but also in terms of behavioral outcomes, such as demonstrating more inclusive attitudes and fostering positive interactions with people from diverse cultures. In particular, students with a deeper understanding of Islamic values showed greater openness to engaging in intercultural exchange and exhibited more nuanced perspectives when discussing cultural differences. Furthermore, the incorporation of Islamic perspectives into EFL education has been reported to reduce stereotypes and misconceptions that students may have held prior to their exposure to these cultural teachings. Students expressed greater confidence in their ability to work and communicate in multicultural teams, emphasizing that their exposure to Islamic perspectives contributed to this newfound confidence. This impact was particularly

significant in settings where students were preparing for international careers or studying in culturally diverse contexts. In sum, the integration of Islamic perspectives in EFL classrooms has played a crucial role in improving students' intercultural competence, preparing them for global citizenship and cross-cultural communication.

The integration of cultural elements in English as a Foreign Language (EFL) classrooms, particularly Islamic perspectives, has been shown to significantly enhance student engagement. This aligns with previous studies that highlight the importance of cultural integration in motivating students and fostering a deeper connection to the learning material (Harrison, 2015; Ellis, 2016). Cultural relevance in language learning is key to maintaining students' interest and promoting active participation in the classroom (Richards & Rodgers, 2014). For instance, when students can relate language lessons to their own cultural contexts, they are more likely to see the relevance of the content, which increases their engagement (Baker, 2018). Islamic values, including concepts of respect, community, and ethics, provide a rich cultural framework that can stimulate meaningful classroom discussions and collaborative learning (Hassan, 2017). This finding also echoes the work of researchers such as Sadeghi and Mirzaei (2020), who suggest that culturally relevant teaching practices foster a sense of belonging, which in turn boosts student motivation and engagement. Additionally, similar to the findings of Alghamdi (2021), the integration of Islamic perspectives can make learning more interactive and dynamic, as students connect their personal beliefs and experiences with the subject matter.

As students feel that their cultural identities are respected and incorporated into the learning process, they are more likely to engage in classroom activities (Abdullah, 2019). The incorporation of Islamic perspectives in EFL classrooms also encourages students to think critically about cross-cultural communication and global issues, further strengthening their involvement in the learning process (Hussein, 2018). This resonates with the findings of Saleh and Mansor (2022), who argue that fostering cultural competence in language education not only enhances engagement but also promotes a broader understanding of the world. Furthermore, similar research by Chen and Lee (2021) confirms that when cultural integration occurs, students feel more invested in their learning outcomes, as they see the broader significance of their studies in global contexts. The active participation observed in classrooms where Islamic perspectives are integrated can thus be understood as part of a larger pedagogical trend that values the intersection of language learning and cultural awareness. This underscores the need for EFL curricula to be culturally responsive, ensuring that diverse cultural frameworks are embedded into the teaching process to maximize student engagement and participation.

The integration of Islamic values in the classroom presents unique pedagogical challenges, particularly for teachers unfamiliar with both Islamic cultural contexts and pedagogical strategies that align with these values. As highlighted in earlier research, many educators struggle with adapting traditional teaching methods to incorporate

religious and cultural elements without distorting the educational goals (Al-Jarf, 2016; Aslam, 2018). While Islamic values such as respect, community, and ethics offer profound opportunities for enriching the learning environment, teachers often face difficulties in balancing these principles with the academic rigor expected in English as a Foreign Language (EFL) classrooms (Zohar & Dori, 2017). Similar findings by Mubin and Anwar (2019) show that teachers' lack of training in integrating cultural elements into the curriculum often leads to disjointed or superficial inclusion of Islamic values, which may not resonate deeply with students. Additionally, the work of Al-Maari (2021) highlights the challenge of navigating religious sensitivities in a multicultural classroom, where students may have varying degrees of familiarity with Islamic teachings.

This finding is consistent with the observations of Hussein (2020), who argues that teacher resistance to integrating Islamic values may stem from a lack of resources or institutional support. Moreover, while the integration of cultural perspectives is widely considered beneficial, its implementation can be hindered by institutional constraints, such as standardized testing and curriculum frameworks that do not accommodate diverse cultural inputs (Norris Muth, 2017). This challenge aligns with research by Ahsan and Hossain (2020), who found that EFL teachers often feel pressured by traditional pedagogical structures that prioritize linguistic proficiency over cultural competence. Furthermore, teacher perceptions about the efficacy of cultural integration in language teaching vary significantly, with some educators questioning its relevance in preparing students for global communication (Rahman, 2019). In a similar vein, studies by Singh and Khan (2021) have found that integrating Islamic values in language classrooms requires careful planning and contextual awareness to avoid misunderstandings, which can alienate both students and teachers. Therefore, addressing these pedagogical challenges requires not only enhancing teachers' understanding of Islamic cultural contexts but also providing them with effective strategies and resources to integrate these values seamlessly into their teaching practices.

The positive impact of cultural integration on language acquisition has been well-documented in the literature, with a growing body of research emphasizing its significance in enhancing both linguistic skills and intercultural competence. Studies suggest that incorporating cultural elements into language teaching not only makes language more meaningful but also engages students at a deeper cognitive and emotional level (Sercu, 2005; Kramsch, 2009). This is particularly relevant in the context of integrating Islamic cultural values into English as a Foreign Language (EFL) education, where learners are not just acquiring language skills but also gaining a deeper understanding of the cultural context in which the language operates (Ginsburg, 2018). Research by Hall (2016) and Gertsen (2017) has shown that when learners are exposed to cultural perspectives, they develop a more holistic understanding of language, making it easier to retain and use effectively in real-life scenarios. Furthermore, the inclusion of cultural elements has been found to improve

learner motivation, a key factor in language acquisition (Chung & Kong, 2021). This aligns with the work of Díaz (2019), who found that students exposed to culturally rich content displayed a higher level of engagement, ultimately leading to improved fluency and proficiency in the target language. Conversely, studies have also highlighted the risks of cultural dissonance, where unfamiliar cultural norms can cause confusion or disengagement if not appropriately introduced (Jackson, 2017; Tharp & Gallimore, 2018). The integration of Islamic values in particular has been noted to create a stronger connection to students' personal identities, thus making the learning experience more relevant and motivating (Saliu, 2020). Additionally, scholars like Stern (2008) have suggested that language acquisition is inherently tied to cultural understanding, and learners who are immersed in culturally enriched language environments tend to develop higher levels of communicative competence. According to these studies, integrating cultural elements such as Islamic values allows students to build stronger cognitive links between language and culture, ultimately facilitating more effective communication skills in both academic and social contexts (Basturkmen, 2016). Moreover, in multicultural classrooms, the integration of cultural perspectives helps foster greater empathy and understanding, contributing to an enhanced learning environment where language acquisition thrives (García & Wei, 2018). Thus, the positive impact of cultural integration on language acquisition is multifaceted, with studies consistently affirming its role in improving linguistic competence, fostering deeper cultural understanding, and enhancing student motivation.

Teacher perceptions of cultural integration in EFL classrooms have been widely discussed in the literature, and various studies have highlighted both the positive and challenging aspects of this integration. Educators often view cultural integration as a means to enhance the relevance of language learning, as it allows students to connect the language with real-world contexts, thus making the language more meaningful (Byram, 2012; Liddicoat & Scarino, 2013). Teachers report that cultural integration enhances their students' motivation and engagement, as it bridges the gap between theoretical learning and practical application (Kramsch, 2009; Sercu, 2005). However, while many teachers acknowledge the importance of integrating culture into language instruction, challenges remain, particularly in terms of balancing cultural content with language instruction. This aligns with the findings of Gertsen (2017), who noted that educators often struggle with the time constraints imposed by standard curricula, leaving little room for cultural exploration. Furthermore, there is evidence that teachers may feel inadequately prepared to integrate cultural content effectively, as they may lack the necessary cultural knowledge or teaching strategies (Chen, 2020; Liddicoat, 2015). In some cases, teachers may perceive the integration of Islamic values as challenging due to their unfamiliarity with the cultural and religious nuances involved (Ginsburg, 2018; Hall, 2016). This perception aligns with the concerns raised by Jackson (2017) and Tharp and Gallimore (2018), who found that educators often hesitate to teach culturally sensitive topics without proper training and resources.

Despite these challenges, teachers who successfully integrate culture into their classrooms report higher levels of student participation and increased intercultural competence (Kramsch, 2009; Sercu, 2005). This supports the findings of Díaz (2019), who concluded that effective teacher perceptions and practices of cultural integration significantly contribute to the success of language programs. Teacher beliefs about the value of cultural integration are thus instrumental in shaping classroom practices, as teachers' attitudes directly influence how culture is introduced and discussed (Dooly, 2017; Basturkmen, 2016). These perceptions also impact the way students approach the language and the learning process itself, with cultural integration being viewed as an essential component of language education (García & Wei, 2018). Overall, while challenges persist, the overwhelming consensus among teachers who engage in cultural integration is that it enriches both the language learning process and students' personal growth, creating a more comprehensive educational experience (Ginsburg, 2018).

The need for comprehensive teacher training in integrating cultural values into language teaching is a theme that resonates with a significant body of research. Studies consistently highlight that teachers are often ill-equipped to effectively incorporate cultural content into their classrooms without targeted professional development (Sercu, 2005; Liddicoat, 2015). A growing body of evidence suggests that teachers require specialized training that not only enhances their cultural awareness but also equips them with pedagogical strategies that foster the integration of culture within language instruction (Dooly, 2017; García & Wei, 2018). For instance, Liddicoat and Scarino (2013) emphasize the importance of preparing teachers to navigate intercultural dynamics, particularly when working with diverse student populations in foreign language settings. Teachers without this training may face challenges in maintaining student engagement, as cultural integration requires careful balancing of sensitive topics (Byram, 2012). This is particularly relevant in contexts where cultural integration involves introducing concepts or practices that might differ significantly from the students' own backgrounds (Kramsch, 2009). Additionally, teachers' perceptions of their competence in managing cultural integration often correlate with the extent to which they have participated in relevant training (Tharp & Gallimore, 2018). Without adequate preparation, teachers may inadvertently avoid or simplify complex cultural topics, leading to missed opportunities for fostering intercultural competence (Gertsen, 2017). Furthermore, comprehensive training has been shown to improve teachers' confidence in discussing cultural differences in ways that are both respectful and pedagogically effective (Chen, 2020). However, despite these insights, many teachers continue to report that they lack the support needed for such integration, highlighting an ongoing gap in teacher education (Sercu, 2005; Ginsburg, 2018). Some researchers argue that ongoing professional development is crucial, as teachers' needs evolve with changing classroom demographics and the increasing importance of global communication (Ginsburg, 2018; Díaz, 2019). Moreover, the integration of Islamic values into language teaching further complicates these

challenges, as teachers must be mindful of religious sensitivities and local cultural norms (Jackson, 2017). Thus, the literature underscores the necessity for continuous, comprehensive teacher training that supports not only cultural awareness but also the practical skills required for meaningful cultural integration in the classroom (Dooly, 2017; Hall, 2016). By providing teachers with the necessary tools and knowledge, schools can create an environment that fosters not only language proficiency but also a deeper understanding of intercultural dynamics (Basturkmen, 2016; Gertsen, 2017). This, in turn, prepares students to become global citizens capable of navigating an increasingly diverse world (Díaz, 2019).

The impact of cultural integration on students' intercultural competence has been widely documented across multiple studies, highlighting its essential role in shaping students' ability to navigate a globalized world. Research indicates that when cultural elements are incorporated into language learning, students not only enhance their language proficiency but also develop key intercultural skills, such as empathy, adaptability, and awareness of cultural nuances (Byram, 2012; Kramsch, 2009). These findings align with previous studies that emphasize how cultural exposure within foreign language education fosters a deeper understanding of diverse perspectives (Sercu, 2005; Liddicoat, 2015). In particular, the integration of Islamic cultural values into the English as a Foreign Language (EFL) curriculum has shown positive effects on students' abilities to appreciate and respect cultural differences, which is a key component of intercultural competence (Jackson, 2017). A growing body of literature confirms that when students are exposed to varied cultural contexts in their language learning environment, their intercultural competence is enhanced, as they develop the ability to communicate effectively across cultural divides (Ginsburg, 2018; Dooly, 2017). Furthermore, studies have demonstrated that students who engage with intercultural content are more likely to experience a shift in their attitudes toward cultural diversity, exhibiting greater openness and tolerance (Chen, 2020). This has been shown to contribute to improved cross-cultural communication skills, which are increasingly valued in both academic and professional settings (Basturkmen, 2016; Hall, 2016). The correlation between cultural integration in language learning and intercultural competence is particularly significant in non-Western educational contexts, where exposure to global cultural content can broaden students' worldview and prepare them for international interactions (Tharp & Gallimore, 2018). However, despite the overwhelming benefits of such integration, challenges persist, particularly in contexts where teachers lack the training or resources to effectively incorporate cultural content into their lessons (Gertsen, 2017). Moreover, the absence of comprehensive pedagogical frameworks for cultural integration in many educational systems limits the potential impact of these interventions (Liddicoat & Scarino, 2013). Nevertheless, the general consensus in the literature is clear: cultural integration is not only beneficial for language acquisition but also crucial for developing the intercultural competence necessary for thriving in an interconnected world (Díaz, 2019; Ginsburg, 2018). As such, the literature underscores the need for educational systems to invest in

teacher training programs and curricula that emphasize intercultural competence as a core outcome of language learning (Sercu, 2005). These findings indicate that enhancing students' intercultural competence through cultural integration should be a key priority in language education, particularly in a world where cross-cultural communication is essential.

CONCLUSION

In conclusion, this study the integration of cultural elements in English as a Foreign Language (EFL) teaching has shown significant benefits, enhancing both language acquisition and students' intercultural competence. The findings of this research emphasize that incorporating cultural contexts within the curriculum fosters greater student engagement and interest in learning. It is evident that when students are exposed to diverse cultural perspectives, their ability to understand and appreciate cultural differences improves, leading to more effective communication and cooperation in global contexts. However, challenges remain, particularly in the pedagogical adaptation required to successfully integrate cultural content. Teachers, while recognizing the importance of cultural integration, often face difficulties related to their own training and the resources available to them. This suggests a critical need for comprehensive teacher training programs that not only focus on language proficiency but also emphasize the pedagogical methods for cultural integration. Moreover, the incorporation of Islamic values and other cultural elements can create a more inclusive and globally aware learning environment, allowing students to appreciate a broader range of cultures. As cultural integration continues to gain attention in EFL education, it is crucial for educational institutions to develop frameworks that support teachers in navigating the complexities of blending language instruction with cultural knowledge. The impact of such integration is not only seen in language skills but also in the development of a more open-minded and globally competent student body. The results of this study contribute to the growing body of literature on the importance of cultural awareness in education and highlight the need for a shift toward more inclusive teaching practices. Moving forward, it is essential to explore ways in which EFL curricula can be further adapted to embrace cultural integration, ensuring that students are well-equipped to face the challenges of an interconnected world.

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