

Content Base Language Teaching : A Significant Way to Teach English in Cadet Madrasha

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Abstract

The goal of education is to develop the potentiality of people to have balanced mastery of science and technology in addition to faith and righteousness. Therefore, the process of teaching and learning must be integrated with the values of faith and righteousness to the Only One Supreme God. This study was conducted in such a context. The study is focused on identifying and describing the phenomena of the integration of the teaching of English with Islamic values. It included how the teachers designed the lesson plan, how they selected and integrated the instructional materials and activities with Islamic values, and the way the English teacher assessed the students' achievement. The result of the study showed that Islamic values were integrated in the lesson plans, the instructional materials, the instructional activities, and the assessment.

Key words : Integration, English, Values, Islam and Context.

Introduction

In today's globalization era, interaction with other nations in the world is unavoidable. It happens every day. However, it is difficult to interact with other nations without understanding the language they use for the nations in the world different languages. Therefore, the mastery of a foreign language (the language of other nations) is very necessary. As a matter of fact, the language most widely used in the world is English. Realizing the importance of English mastery in improving the quality of Bangladeshi human resources, the government of Bangladesh through the Ministry of Education has decided that English is one of the compulsory subjects especially for primary, high school and college students. Since Bangladeshi people are religious, it is very important from very early beginning to integrate all the subjects given, especially at the Islamic schools, with Islamic values in terms of embedding those values in the materials taught and/or in the process of teaching and learning. This is because every Muslim believes that the teaching of their religion covers all aspect of their life.

Recently a few Cadet Madrashas have been established with the aim of elevating Madrasha education to the level of general education. However, establishing cadet type institutions here and there instead of developing a generally acceptable universal educational system is only reinforcing the existing inequalities. These educational facilities are not for the poor. Education costs at these institutions are more expensive and within the reach of the middle and upper middle classes. A large part of resources needed to run the Cadet Madrashas come from student fees. Some of these institutions have classes from Playgroup to Class IX, some

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have Hifzul Qur'an sections. The exact number of these institutions, which also provide boarding facilities for students, could not be determined. Relevant sources estimate that there are no more than 10 Cadet Madrashas.

The Islamic teaching guides Muslims to do any activity from the time they wake up to the time they sleep. It not only regulates the relationship between Muslims and God but also between Muslims and other creatures. By doing so, it is expected that the output of the Islamic education will produce the true Muslims namely the people who have balanced mastery of science and technology in addition to have faith and righteousness (YPI Al-Azhar, 2001 : 2).

In addition, for other researchers, the findings of the present study can be used as an inspiration to conduct further studies, especially on developing materials for the teaching of English which is integrated with Islamic values.

Method

The present research employed a descriptive case study with a qualitative research design. Those data were gained from interviews, observations, recording, and documents. The interviews were conducted at the beginning of the research and after the English classes were over based on the agreement with the teacher in order not to disturb her main duty. The interview conducted after the English class was intended to complete the data obtained from the observations, especially when the data from observation was considered not clear or insufficient. The questions prepared were based on the research questions but the sequence and the wording of the questions were entirely in the hand of the interviewer.

The documents such as curriculum, the syllabus, the lesson plans, the English textbooks used by the teacher, the result of assessment and evaluation, and other written sources necessary for the study were reviewed. They were used to help the researcher understand the application of the content of the documents. They were also necessary to help the researcher interpret some of the teacher's comments during the interview.

All data obtained from the interview, observation, field-notes, recording, and review of documents were analyzed. Before being analyzed, the data obtained were classified on the basis of the instrument used and coded on the basis of the research problems.

There were two phases of data analysis applied in the study. First, the data analysis was done during the activities of data collection. Second, the data analysis was conducted after the data had been collected in the field. After conducting data collection in the field completely, the procedure to analyze the data was determined. The procedure of data analysis applied in this study follows the one proposed by Miles and Huberman (1994 : 10-11) consisting of data reduction, data display, and conclusion drawing.

After following all processes of data analysis, the researcher found the fixed regularity or pattern dealing with the teaching of English integrated with the Islamic values, the researcher then came to the explanation of the findings of the study by describing and interpreting the data and made conclusion of the implementation of the teaching of English at Tanjimul Ummah Cadet Madrasha.

Results and Discussions

The data obtained from observation, field-notes, interview, and recording showed that the integration of the teaching of English with Islamic values at Tanjimul Ummah Cadet Madrasha was done in the lesson plan, the instructional materials, the instructional activities, and the assessment. The description of the integration in each part is presented in the following sections.

How the English Teacher Designs the Lesson Plan for the Teaching of English which is Integrated with Islamic Values

Based on the documentations of the lesson plans made by the English teacher, it was found that the lesson plans were based on the teachers' objective. The components of lesson plan were the standard of competence, the basic competence, the indicators, the instructional objectives, the instructional materials, the teaching-learning activities, the source of material and media, the method/technique used, and the assessment process.

The lesson plans made by the English teacher were integrated with Islamic values. The integration of Islamic values in the lesson plans made by the English teacher was done in the section of the instructional materials and the instructional activities. The material of the Islamic values integrated in the lesson plans was in the form of quotation from verses of the Qur'an and/or Al-Hadith relevant to the topics that would be presented in the learning-teaching activities. For example, the topic "natural disaster" was integrated with (the Qur'an, 30 : 41). This verse of the Qur'an tells us that some natural disasters, like flood, landslide, and famine, happening on the land and in the sea are because of destruction made by human beings. Human beings will feel the effects of their destructive actions.

Meanwhile, in the section of the instructional activities in the lesson plans, the integration of the Islamic values was done by making lists of the activities reflecting Islamic values that would be conducted during the learning-teaching process. For example : (1) greeting students with the Islamic greeting as well as the English greeting; (2) letting students say "bismallah" to begin the lesson; (3) relating the topic discussed to the relevant Islamic values; (4) giving exercises reflecting the Islamic values such as asking students to write a procedure text on "wudlu" and telling them to retell a story on a "Shahabat of the Prophet"; and (5) Closing the lesson by saying "hamdalah".

From the point of view of Muslims, saying "bismillah" before starting an activity is a very essential Islamic value because any activity which is not begun by "bismillah" will be cut from Allah's blessing as it is stated in Al-Hadith :

'Every activity which is not begun by bismillahirrahmanirrahim is cut from Allah's blessing'

Based on the description of the findings above, it was found that the lesson plans designed by the English teacher were based on the *Standar Isi* issued by the government. The 2006 *Standar Isi* contains the coverage of the minimum materials and minimum level of competence that must be mastered by the students to achieve the minimum requirement of the graduation (Mulyasa, 2006 : 45).

According to Mulyasa (2006 : 209), based on the *Standar Isi*, the teachers are given freedom to develop a syllabus. However, they are still allowed to refer to the syllabus developed by the government.

Planning a way that the teacher is going to conduct the teaching in order to achieve the objectives effectively and efficiently. Specifying objectives is important to do before conducting the teaching activity because it directs the teacher to achieve the expected result from her teaching plan. The use of instructional objectives helps the teacher focus on what students should know at the end of the program and helps students know what is expected from them. In other words, instructional objective serves as a map or guideline for both teacher and students. So without planning, the teacher may conduct her teaching effectively but not efficiently, or she can conduct it efficiently but not effectively.

According to Burden and Byrd (1999 : 51) a comprehensive planning preparation is needed for effective teaching in all grade levels. He further states that planning is a critical function to ensure student learning, and it was taken for two reasons : (1) the planning process helps the teacher to organize the content of the curriculum and to address the complex classroom variables. The variables are instructional objectives, time, appropriate teaching strategies, available materials, media, and so forth, (2) the planning process provides the teacher with a sense of direction and feeling of confidence and security. Therefore, Harmer (2002 : 308) suggests that before making a lesson plan a teacher needs considering a number of crucial factors such as the language level of the students, their educational and cultural background, their likely level of motivation, and their different learning style.

How the English Teacher Selects the Instructional Materials for the Teaching of English which is Integrated with Islamic Values

The instructional materials used by the English teacher in the teaching and learning process were in the forms of printed materials and non-printed ones. She used printed materials in the forms of textbooks, handouts or worksheets, and non-printed materials in the forms of cassettes (audio materials) and video materials. Richard (2002 : 66) states that English instructional material may take forms of printed, non-printed material, and materials that comprise both printed and non-printed material.

The integration of Islamic values in the instructional activities was done through several ways:

1. By adding the exercises reflecting the Islamic values to the topic presented. For example, the teacher added the exercise of making procedure text on “wudlu” and “shalat” to the topic “procedure text”. Another example is the teacher added exercise assigning students to make an announcement of praying “IdulFitri” to the topic of the functional text “announcement”. This is because the topics presented in the main materials and supplementary materials available are designed by the writers for the teaching of English at any school without regarding the religious aspect of the

students. Therefore, the English teacher added the exercises reflecting Islamic values which are actually very familiar with the students' daily life;

2. By inserting the Islamic names of person like 'Ahmad' and 'Fatima', names of place like 'mosque' and 'Madrasha', and names of events like "celebration of Idul Fitri day", and the like to the exercises added. The Islamic names of persons, places, and events like 'Ahmad', 'Madrasha', and "Idul Fitri day" are the names accepted internationally. Naming a person with the Islamic name is a very important Islamic teaching; even it is the right of any child that should be fulfilled by their parents as stated in Al-Hadith :
 - a. 'The right of a child from his parents is to be named with good name and to be educated with good education'.
 - b. From the point of view of Islam, a good name is the one containing a compliment or service to Allah as stated in Al-Hadith :
 - c. 'The best name is the one that is complimented or served to Allah'.
3. By embedding the verses of the Qur'an and/or Al-Hadith which are relevant to the topics presented in the main materials. For example, the verse of (*the Qur'an* 2 : 216) was embedded in the topic of expressing likes and dislikes. The Qur'an (2 : 216) tells us that what we like is not always good for us and it can happen that we dislike someone or something that are actually bad for us. Therefore, by embedding this verse in topic of expressing likes and dislikes the students will be exposed to Islamic value of how to behave toward someone or something they like or dislike;
4. By adding the Islamic expressions like 'subhanallah', "innalillahi wainnailahirajun", and the like to the relevant English expressions within the main materials. For example, "subhanallah" was added to the expression of admiration, "innalillahi wainnailahirajun" was added to the expression of sympathy. Islam teaches Muslims that when they admire someone or something, they should remember that actually Allah, the one and the only, who makes someone or something admirable. The Islamic expression used to admire is "subhanallah". Therefore, in teaching the expression of admiration, the teacher can mix this expression with the English expression like "Subhanallah, what beautiful scenery it is!"

How the English Teacher Integrates the Instructional Activities with Islamic Values

Based on the findings, it was revealed that the English teacher of Tanjimul Ummah Cadet Madrasha integrates the instructional activities with the Islamic values. The English teacher's integrating the instructional activities with the Islamic values during the learning-teaching process was done in several ways. First, the teacher conducted code-switching and code-mixing between English and Islamic expressions that are usually expressed in Arabic language such as *Assalamu'alaikum wa rahmatullahi wa barakatuh*, *bismilla hir rahmanir rahim*, *alhamdu lil la hir rabbil 'alamin*, and *subhanallah* based on the situational context. In greeting the students, the teacher used the Islamic greeting *Assalamu'alaikum wa rahmatullahi wa barakatuh* as well as the English greeting. From the point of the Islamic

value, *Assalamu'alaikum wa rahmatullahi wa barakatuh* is not an expression used to open and close a conversation, it is not only a greeting either but it also functions as the way to respect other Muslims as well as a prayer for someone greeted. This greeting is the best greeting in the world because it contains three things that are needed by any human being namely safety or peace, mercy, and blessing. This greeting means "Peace is upon you and Allah's mercy and blessing as well", may Allah give you peace, mercy, and blessing anywhere and anytime, without limitation of time, place, and condition. Therefore, Islam teaches Muslims to spread this greeting whenever they meet or leave each other and before and after doing conversation as stated in Al-Hadith : *'Spread the greeting, give the food, and be the worshiper of Allah in brotherhood!'*

alhamdu lil la hir rabbil 'alamin is also a very important expression in Islam. Muslims should recite this expression every time they finish doing any activity or when they get a grant from Allah or saved from a danger. This is also the case with the other Islamic expressions. They have important meanings toward the shaping of good Muslims' personality and character. Second, the teacher linked the topic discussed to the relevant Islamic teaching. This is done either by quoting the verses of The Qur'an and/or Al-Hadith, or by explaining the relevant Islamic teaching. As it has been discussed in the background of this study, the Islamic teaching covers any aspect of human being from the time they wake up until the time they sleep; even Islam teaches Muslims how to say a prayer before and after going to the rest room. In fact, praying is the core of worshipping Allah as stated in Al-Hadith :

'Saying a prayer is the core of worship'

People who are not willing to pray are regarded arrogant before Allah as stated in (the Qur'an, 40 : 60)

How Should the English Teacher Assesses the Students' Achievement in the Teaching of English which is Integrated with Islamic Values

The ways the teacher used can be classified into two categories : informal and formal assessment. In the case of informal assessment, the teacher assessed the students' participation in the learning-teaching process. Here the teacher used four ways of assessments : oral questions, teacher observations, giving assignments, and reading aloud.

Oral questions were used in order to know whether or not the students understand the lesson being explained. In this case, if the students could perceive the explanation, the teachers keep explaining, but if they did not perceive it, the teachers repeated it to make the explanation clearer. The material of the questions asked by the teacher covered the Islamic values integrated.

The questions asked by the teacher sometimes were addressed to the class generally and students were supposed to answer voluntarily, but some other time the teacher addressed the question to an individual student. Here she chose some students randomly to answer the question.

Teacher's observation was used to monitor the students' active participation in following the learning-teaching activities. Through the observation the teacher noticed the students'

behavior related to the Islamic values. The teacher observed whether or not the Islamic values integrated were understood and implemented by the students. In case there was a student whose behavior was not Islamic, the teacher reminded him/her. For example, when a student teased his/her friend because of his/her black skin, the teacher explained that Allah forbids Muslims to do such a thing. Actually, this Islamic value had been taught to the students when discussing the topic 'introduction'.

Assignment was used to know the students' understanding about the topic presented in each meeting which includes the four language skills and language components. The assignments given to the students during the learning teaching process were usually given in group activity. For example, the students in groups were assigned to write a procedure text on 'wudhu' and to find a recount text on 'shahabat'.

Meanwhile, reading aloud was conducted to assess the students' mastery of pronunciation, stress, and intonation. In conducting this kind of assessment, the teacher usually asked students one by one, in turns, to read one or two sentences, or even one paragraph loudly. For example, each member of the groups was asked to read one different steps of doing 'wudlu' loudly.

Conclusions and Recommendations

Based on the findings and discussions about the integration of the teaching of English at Islamic Schools/Madrashas, it can be concluded that the integration was found in the lesson plans, in the instructional materials, in the instructional activities, and in the assessment.

The integration of Islamic values in the lesson plans was done in the section of the Instructional materials and in the instructional activities of the lesson plans. In the section of the instructional materials of the lesson plans, the integration was done by embedding the Islamic values supported by verses of Al-Qur'an and/or Al-Hadith which is relevant to the main materials selected based on predetermined instructional objectives. Meanwhile, in the section of the instructional activities of the lesson plans, the integration was done by making lists of the activities reflecting the Islamic values that would be conducted during the learning-teaching process.

In the Instructional materials, the integration of the Islamic values was done through several ways i.e.

1. By adding the exercises reflecting the Islamic values to the topic presented;
2. By inserting the Islamic names of persons, places, and events to the exercises added;
3. By embedding the verses of the Qur'an and/or Al-Hadith which are relevant to the topics presented in the main materials; and
4. By mixing the Islamic expressions with the relevant English expressions within the main materials.

In the instructional activities, the integration of Islamic values was done in several ways i.e.

1. By conducting code-mixing and code-switching between English and the Islamic expressions based on the situational context;
2. By linking the topic discussed to the relevant Islamic teaching which is done either by quoting the verses of the Qur'an and/or Al-Hadith, or by explaining the relevant Islamic teaching;
3. By using the Islamic names for persons in making the example of sentences or dialogue scripts;
4. By giving students assignment to write a kind of text related to the Islamic values relevant to the topic discussed.

To the Muslim English teachers, especially who teach Muslim students or at the Islamic schools, it is recommended to integrate the teaching of English with the Islamic values. By doing so, it is expected that there will be no dichotomy anymore between "religious" and "non-religious" knowledge because both religion and knowledge relate to human life.

It is recommended that English textbook writers write English textbooks specifically designed for the integration of the teaching English with Islamic values as the content of the lesson for such a book is really needed by the Muslim English teacher and students of Islamic schools. By doing so, the Muslim English teachers and Muslim students will get easy to find the Islamic English textbooks to be used in the learning-teaching process.

As the present study is aimed to identify the overall phenomena of the integration of English teaching with Islamic values at the SMP level, it is recommended that the interested researchers would conduct a replication study on the same topic at different settings.

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