

## Integrating Islamic Contextual Authentic Materials in English Language Learning for Islamic Community Development Students

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### Abstract

Authentic materials are learning materials that are not specifically created for educational purposes but are used in the real world, such as texts, audios, videos, and other sources (Fitria, 2022; Fitriana et al., 2019). Integrating Islamic contextual authentic material into English language learning can help students develop English language skills while strengthening their understanding of Islamic values in a global context. This study examines the integration of Islamic contextual authentic materials into English Language Learning for students of Islamic Community Development at the State Islamic University (UIN) Datokarama Palu, Indonesia. Using a qualitative descriptive design, data were collected through classroom observations and semi-structured interviews with two lecturers and nineteen students. The findings indicated that authentic materials grounded in Islamic contexts, such as the Qur'an and Hadith, videos, Islamic songs, and English texts on social issues related to Islamic themes, enhance students' motivation, improve their linguistic skills, and strengthen their spiritual identity. However, challenges include a lack of suitable materials and difficulty balancing linguistic authenticity with religious sensitivity. The study recommends structured teacher training, institutional repositories of Islamic authentic materials, and curriculum guidelines aligning English learning with Islamic community development competencies.

**Keywords:** Authentic Materials, Islamic Context, English Learning, Community Development.

### 1. Introduction

English language education in Indonesia's Islamic higher education institutions plays a vital role in preparing students to face globalization (Saputra et al., 2025). This is in line with Minister of Education and Technology Regulation No. 39 of 2025 concerning the quality assurance of higher education and is based on the vision and mission of the Islamic Community Development Department of UIN Datokarama Palu in producing graduates for global engagement and community development. However, in many Islamic higher education institutions in Indonesia, English instruction often lacks contextual and religious context (Riswanto & Khermarinah, 2025; Wijayanto, 2020). Conventional English materials are typically developed in Western settings, focusing on communicative situations that may not reflect students' lived realities or religious worldviews (Madkur et al., 2024). By integrating culturally relevant content and strategies with student needs, teachers can create a more inclusive and engaging learning environment and increase student engagement (Herda et al., 2025). The students of Islamic Community Development require not only linguistic competence but also moral consciousness and the

ability to articulate Islamic values in global and intercultural contexts. The disconnection between ELT materials and Islamic community realities risks reducing students' engagement, as they find little resonance between what they learn and what they practice (Maesaroh et al., 2025; Siregar et al., 2024).

Authentic materials expose learners to real-world language use, while Islamic contextualization situates that language in culturally and spiritually relevant frames (Kozhevnikova, 2014; Munif et al., 2025). Authentic materials are texts or media created for real communicative purposes rather than classroom use and promote natural language exposure and pragmatic competence (Tomlinson, 2023). The use of authentic materials in English as a foreign Language classes can enrich the learning process (Namaziandost et al., 2021). Islamic contextualization refers to embedding Islamic values, texts, and perspectives in the learning process. Munif et al. (2025) argue that contextualization not only increases relevance but also allows students to negotiate identity and spirituality through English.

The use of authentic materials in learning English can produce social and academic benefits, such as increasing motivation and cultural awareness (Albiladi, 2019). Applying authentic materials encourages the students and improves their achievement in learning English (Dewi, 2018). Moreover, Maesaroh et al. (2025) developed English materials based on Islamic stories and found that students were more engaged and morally reflective. Similarly, Erdianti et al. (2025) demonstrated that storytelling and role-playing with Islamic themes improved speaking fluency and character building. Siswoyo and Yuniarti (2023) reported that students perceive Islamic-based English materials as motivating and spiritually enriching, especially given their Muslim background, which necessitated the provision of material related to Islamic values. Collectively, these studies suggest that Islamic authentic materials are not merely supplementary tools but function as pedagogically significant content that aligns linguistic development with learners' religious and cultural identities.

However, while prior research has established the benefits of Islamic contextual authentic materials at the instructional level, their systematic integration at the tertiary level, particularly within Islamic Community Development programs, remains underexplored. Existing studies largely focus on general EFL contexts or character education outcomes, with limited attention to how such materials can be integrated and utilized to support community development competencies. Building on the insights of these earlier works, the present study positions Islamic contextual authentic materials as a foundation for developing English learning content that not only enhances language proficiency but also equips students with communicative resources relevant to Islamic-based community development. In doing so, this study extends previous research by linking Islamic authentic materials to the broader goals of higher education, namely, community empowerment.

This study aims to explore the integration of Islamic contextual authentic materials into English language learning for students of Islamic Community Development, where authentic materials are integrated into English language learning with an Islamic perspective and the goal of community empowerment. So that learning not only strengthens language skills, but also fosters an Islamic perspective that encourages students to play an active role in advancing their communities. It also offers practical recommendations for lecturers and curriculum designers seeking to create culturally and spiritually grounded English instruction. Integrating Islamic contextual authentic materials such as texts, audio, and visual media derived from Islamic sources can expose learners

to real-world language use, while Islamic contextualization situates that language in culturally and spiritually relevant frames. When thoughtfully designed, such integration can enhance learners' motivation, identity, and communicative effectiveness in community work.

## 2. Method

This study employed a qualitative descriptive design to explore the integration of Islamic contextual authentic materials into English language learning. This approach enables a holistic understanding of lived experiences within their natural educational context (Creswell & Poth, 2018). A purposive sampling strategy was used to select participants who had direct experience with the use of Islamic contextual authentic materials in the classroom. The sample consisted of two lecturers and nineteen students, including ten second-semester students and nine fourth-semester students, with five males and fourteen females from the Department of Islamic Community Development, Faculty of Dakwah and Islamic Communication, UIN Datokarama Palu in the 2024-2025 academic year. For data organization and to ensure participant privacy, all interviewees were assigned codes. The lecturers were coded Lecturer 1 and Lecturer 2, while the student participants were coded sequentially as Student 1 to Student 19 throughout the data analysis. Data were gathered through semi-structured interviews and classroom observations conducted over four weeks. Thematic analysis was applied to identify major themes and ensure data credibility through triangulation and member checking.

## 3. Results

### 3.1. Findings

The data from interviews with students and lecturers related to integrating Islamic contextual authentic materials in English language learning for the Islamic Community Development major. It can be seen in the following table.

**Table 1.** Integrating Islamic Contextual Authentic Materials experienced by Lecturers and Students

Exemplary Descriptions	Coding
I often use <i>English translated Qur'anic stories</i> so students can learn moral values while practicing reading (lecturer 1).	Types of Islamic Contextual Authentic Materials
<i>In addition to text, I also usually use videos, such as community empowerment videos, to help students better understand and become more interested in the learning process</i> (lecturer 2)	
Listening to <i>Islamic songs in English</i> makes learning enjoyable (student 3)	
I adapt <i>Islamic sources</i> to get some <i>vocabularies</i> , so students in the classroom can understand texts well (lecturer 2).	Integration Strategies
We <i>role-play community service</i> using English expressions (student 5).	
It's <i>more meaningful</i> because I can talk about Islamic values in English (student 7).	Motivation and Identity
<i>I feel proud</i> when presenting da'wah materials in English (student 9)	

*It is difficult to find Islamic authentic materials that fit students' level (lecturer 1 and 2)*  
*We need workshops on how to adapt these materials properly (lecturer 2)*

Challenge

Overall, the responses given by lecturers and students indicate that the use of Islamic contextual authentic materials has a positive impact on English language learning for students majoring in Islamic Community Development. The learning materials used by lecturers vary greatly. During structured classroom observation of material type aspects, lecturers consistently used authentic materials that reflected the Islamic context including English translations of Qur'anic verses and short hadiths for reading comprehension exercises, vocabulary building, and moral reflection. Their authentic and sacred nature provided students with linguistically rich content grounded in familiar religious concepts. Lecturers employed Islamic songs in English for listening activities, reading texts taken from articles such as zakat, Muslim youth challenges, and gender equality for vocabulary learning, and served as real-world reading material. YouTube video related to community empowerment and da'wah speeches for speaking tasks. These multimedia materials supported listening practice and stimulated reflective discussions about spiritual and social values. The materials were presented alongside discussions on their moral and social implications, encouraging students to link linguistic learning with Islamic teachings.

Lecturers employed group discussion and role-play strategies, where the students simulated da'wah or community service scenarios in the English learning process. These tasks allowed students to practice authentic communicative functions while engaging with familiar Islamic themes and encouraged critical thinking, ethical reasoning, and deeper comprehension beyond vocabulary and grammar. The lecturers asked the students work in pairs, translating Islamic quotes or articles, and reflection by asking the students to express what Islamic lesson or value they learned. These activities blended language learning with religious and cultural literacy, giving learners opportunities to articulate Islamic concepts in English. The lecturers frequently paraphrase difficult religious texts, use code switching to explain Arabic terms, and provide a vocabulary list to support comprehension. These strategies helped mitigate the linguistic complexity often found in Islamic texts written in English.

Across the interviews, the students appeared highly motivated and emotionally engaged when exposed to Islamic-based materials. They listened attentively, took active roles in discussion, and often used personal experiences to connect to the lesson. The students showed that the learning process was more meaningful, culturally affirming, and emotionally engaging. Many students described feeling more enthusiastic and confident when the materials reflected Islamic values familiar to them. Drawing on both interview and classroom observation, students described the lessons as '*closer to real life*,' '*more relevant*,' and '*spiritually uplifting*.' This motivational boost was especially noticeable in speaking tasks, where students felt more comfortable expressing ideas rooted in their own cultural and religious background. The students viewed English not just as a global language but as a tool that could be used for da'wah and community service. The ability to articulate Islamic principles in English was perceived as a form of empowerment and identity affirmation. Interview data revealed that several students reported a sense of pride when successfully presenting or discussing Islamic topics in English. One participant stated, '*It's more meaningful because I can talk about Islamic values in English*,' and another participant stated, '*I feel proud when presenting da'wah materials in English*'.

Despite the overall positive response, the fourth theme identifies several challenges that hinder the effective implementation of Islamic contextual authentic materials in English learning. These challenges are reported not merely as limitations, but to illustrate how lecturers adjusted their pedagogical practices to sustain learning effectiveness. For instance, many authentic Islamic sources are written in academic, classical, or rhetorical English, making them difficult for lower-level learners. In response, the lecturers employed linguistic simplification, paraphrasing, and selective use of bilingual explanations to make the texts more accessible. The students with limited vocabulary struggled to understand the texts without heavy guidance from lecturers; therefore, the lecturers provided scaffolding through key vocabulary and guided reading activities. Because materials involve both linguistic and moral discussion, teachers often struggle to complete all aspects of the lesson within standard class time. Meaningful integration requires space for reflection, which is difficult to manage within rigid schedules. Moreover, differences in students' English proficiency and Islamic literacy affected the depth of engagement. While advanced students thrived with complex materials, beginners relied heavily on peers or on teacher explanations, leading to inconsistent learning outcomes.

### **3.2. Discussion**

This article discusses the integration of Islamic contextual authentic materials in learning English and demonstrates several positive impacts on students' learning experiences. The findings indicate that integrating Islamic contextual authentic materials not only improved linguistic engagement but also strengthened affective and moral dimensions of learning. From a theoretical perspective, Kozhevnikova (2014) argues that authenticity enhances communicative competence, and Munif et al. (2025) emphasize that Islamic contextualization deepens learner identity and relevance. This statement is in line with Hakim et al (2020), who stated that contextual religious learning can help teachers link material taught with real-world situations of students and encourage them to make connections between knowledge and its application in their lives. In this model, contextualization acts as the mediating element that transforms English instruction from a purely linguistic activity into a socially and spiritually empowering process.

From classroom observations, it is demonstrated that Islamic contextual authentic materials have a positive impact on creating meaningful and value-oriented English learning experiences. This can be seen from the students' active participation in discussions, their ability to relate lesson content to Islamic social values, and collaborative interaction during role-play activities centred on community development themes. The students did not merely acquire linguistic competence but also reflected upon Islamic social values, linking classroom learning to community engagement as the essence of the Islamic Community Development major. This engagement reflects what Oanh & Van (2024) the emotional component in teaching English as a foreign Language (EFL) may be the main argument for using authentic documents. The students often mention that authentic resources motivate them because they find them interesting, exciting, culturally insightful, and relevant. As mentioned by the students during the interview, they were very interested because they were able to present such as Islamic materials in English, and in the classroom, the students also listened attentively and played an active role in the discussion. The integration of Islamic contextual authentic materials fosters interactive, spiritually grounded, and socially meaningful English learning.

#### **3.2.1. Types of Islamic Contextual Authentic Materials**

Several previous studies have proven that there are many sources that can be used in teaching English using authentic materials. This study found that lecturers use the

Qur'an and Hadiths, texts, videos, and Islamic songs in the English language learning process. Marita (2022) revealed that using the Qur'an, Hadith, and books related to Islam in learning can improve spiritual abilities and have a positive impact on students. Similarly, the use of English songs and videos can improve students' English language skills (Erlina et al., 2023). Using authentic materials can help students to understand more about English in a real language, and Islamic content-based materials could positively affect students' character building (Munir & Hartono, 2016). Through the integration of Islamic religious texts and real-world Islamic community documents, the lecturer provided materials that were both linguistically rich and culturally meaningful. This aligns with Bensalah & Gueroudj's (2020) argument that grounded materials can enhance EFL comprehension because they activate learners' prior knowledge and shared cultural schema. In the context of Islamic Community Development students, whose academic focus is community service informed by Islamic values, such materials also serve a professional purpose, connecting English learning with the practical domains of da'wah, empowerment programs, and social development. Thus, the variety and relevance of Islamic authentic materials support the argument that authenticity is not limited to Western sources; it can be deeply rooted in culturally significant texts that reflect learners' unique identities and worldviews.

### **3.2.2. Integration Strategies**

The theme integration strategies highlight how instructors integrated Islamic materials through role playing, collaborating, reflective discussions, and translation activities. These strategies reflect contemporary EFL pedagogy that values communicative interaction and sociocultural engagement. Ellis et al (2020) emphasize meaningful communication over mechanical language drills. In this study, tasks such as role plays on community service using English expressions mirrored authentic communicative situations that Islamic Community Development graduates are likely to encounter. By implementing activities that prioritize comfort and cooperation, like role play, teachers can help reduce the anxiety faced by many students, and speaking activities such as informal conversations and role playing in relevant scenarios can encourage active participation and gradual skill development, empowering students to gain confidence in their abilities (Resmayasari et al., 2024). This supports deeper cognitive engagement, especially when students link linguistic content with Islamic values such as compassion (*rahmah*), justice (*adl*), or community responsibility (*maslahah*). The contextual translation tasks further bridge linguistic and cultural understanding, what the translation can facilitate intercultural competence when rooted in students' religious and cultural traditions. In addition, the use of authentic materials can give opportunities for the students in learning and practicing translation (Oanh & Van, 2024). Overall, these integration strategies, like group discussion and role play, show that Islamic authentic materials require thoughtful pedagogical mediation to maximize language learning while preserving cultural and moral significance.

### **3.2.3 Learning Motivation and Identity**

Learning English using Islamic contextual authentic materials can motivate the students of Islamic community development, it was indicated by their enthusiasm and spirit, which is demonstrated by their active participation in role-playing, collaborating, and discussing in class. This finding was in line with what Erlina et al (2023) have reported, authentic materials made students more interested in learning through audio and videos, and enthusiastic in doing their tasks. Additionally, Albiladi (2019) pointed out that students agree that the use of authentic texts can increase their motivation and, according to the students, this is one of the most obvious benefits of integrating learning materials. The use

of authentic materials in language teaching is very effective in motivating students, attracting their interest, introducing them to the language they will actually encounter in the real world, and also has a positive impact on their learning process (Namaziandost et al., 2021). Furthermore, framed within the broader Islamic education discourse, these findings echo Alfian et al (2022)'s work, which notes that integrating Islamic values into English language teaching is not merely an optional addition but an essential component of effective teaching practice. Due to the students' enthusiasm and motivation for learning Islamic concepts in English, the materials function as both linguistic resources and identity-affirming mediators. Therefore, Islamic contextual authentic materials contribute not only to language development but also to the formation of spiritually grounded, socially responsible learner identities.

### **3.2.4. Challenges**

Even though the lecturers revealed that the use of Islamic contextual authentic materials is indeed very important in improving students' abilities and knowledge in learning English, such as a collaborative and spiritually motivated learning environment demonstrated by students in the learning process, there are still difficulties faced by lecturers in selecting and presenting authentic materials that suit the needs of students. This was also reported by Erlina et al (2023) that selecting authentic materials should be in line with the needs and the aims of teaching and learning; moreover, the vocabulary and structure used in the authentic materials are more complex than in the textbook. In addition, Siregar et al (2024) observed that teachers often face challenges in adapting authentic Islamic materials because of limited resources and insufficient training. Therefore, choosing materials, especially Islamic contextual authentic materials, should be based on the students' needs.

Although the integration of Islamic contextual authentic materials produced positive outcomes, several challenges were identified. The students struggled with the linguistic complexity of some texts, such as advanced English translations of religious sources, such as Qur'anic stories in English, which were too linguistically advanced for the students, so the lecturers often had to paraphrase or simplify. This reflects the broader challenge noted by Erkinov (2025), who found that authentic materials often require substantial adaptation to match learners' proficiency levels. Time constraints further limited the depth of both linguistic and moral reflection in class. Integrating ethical discussion into language tasks requires extended time for exploration. The dual nature of the content, combining English learning and value formation, necessitates additional class time that lecturers often do not have. Finally, variations in student proficiency created uneven participation and comprehension. This supports Lee's (2020) argument that authentic materials must be presented with differentiated strategies to address diverse learner backgrounds. Meanwhile, Asrial et al (2019) state that the learning resources are all data sources that can support the learning process, so universities need to prepare all learning resource facilities because this is the responsibility of universities. These challenges underscore that while Islamic contextual authentic materials hold transformative potential, their implementation must be supported through structured curriculum design, resource development, and professional development for instructors.

## **4. Conclusion**

Integrating Islamic contextual authentic materials in English language learning offers significant pedagogical and affective benefits for Islamic Community Development students. The results of this study prove that the use of Islamic contextual authentic

materials can be applied in English language learning in Islamic Community and Development majors by integrating social issues with Islamic studies in English. Various learning resources can be used as learning materials, such as the Qur'an and hadiths, texts, Islamic songs, and videos with various interesting strategies, including role-play, group work, and discussion. Using Islamic contextual authentic materials also enhances the motivation of the students, moral identity, and improves communicative competence. However, lecturers still face obstacles in applying this authentic material, particularly in selecting and adapting the material to the needs of students. To sustain this integration, the study recommends curriculum design aligned with Islamic contexts, teacher training programs, institutional support for material repositories, and further research on long-term impacts

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