



Islamised English Language Teaching (ELT) Materials as Culturally Responsive Pedagogy: A Systematic Review

Ainol Mardhiah¹, Hayatul Muna², Diana Purwati³, Sari Diana^{4*}

¹International Islamic University, Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia

¹Universitas Bumi Persada, Lhokseumawe, Indonesia

²UIN Sultanah Nahrasiyah, Lhokseumawe, Indonesia

³STKIP Yapis Domp, NTB, Indonesia

⁴STAIN Teungku Dirundeng Meulaboh

*Corresponding Author: sarisaridiana20@staindirundeng.ac.id

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Abstract

This systematic review examines the conceptualisation, pedagogical benefits, and challenges of Islamised English Language Teaching (ELT) materials in Muslim educational contexts. Using the PRISMA framework, 24 peer-reviewed studies published between 2022 and 2026 were systematically identified from Google Scholar. The review included empirical journal articles on Islamised ELT materials or the integration of Islamic values into English language teaching, while books, conference proceedings, theses, dissertations, review articles, inaccessible publications, and non-ELT studies were excluded. The selected timeframe captures recent developments in culturally responsive pedagogy and the growing interest in contextualising English education within Muslim educational settings. The findings show that Islamised ELT materials are generally viewed as culturally responsive resources that integrate Islamic values, learners' identities, and local contexts into English learning while still supporting global communication. The reviewed studies indicate that these materials can enhance students' motivation, engagement, identity affirmation, character development, and contextualised learning experiences. They also encourage more reflective and value-based teaching practices. However, challenges remain such as limited teacher preparation, lack of contextualised resources, rigid curricula, and concerns about balancing local values with global perspectives. The review suggests that Islamised ELT materials have strong potential to make English learning more meaningful and relevant for Muslim learners when supported by appropriate material design, teacher training, and institutional support.

Abstrak

Tinjauan sistematis ini mengkaji konseptualisasi, manfaat pedagogis, dan tantangan materi Pengajaran Bahasa Inggris (ELT) keislaman dalam konteks pendidikan Muslim. Menggunakan kerangka kerja PRISMA, 24 peer-reviewed studi yang diterbitkan antara tahun 2022 dan 2026 diidentifikasi secara sistematis dari Google Scholar. Tinjauan ini mencakup artikel jurnal empiris tentang materi ELT keislaman atau integrasi nilai-nilai Islam ke dalam pengajaran bahasa Inggris, sementara buku, prosiding konferensi, tesis, disertasi, artikel ulasan, publikasi yang tidak dapat diakses, dan studi non-ELT dikecualikan. Kerangka waktu yang dipilih mencakup perkembangan terkini dalam pedagogi yang responsif budaya dan meningkatnya minat dalam mengkontekstualisasikan pendidikan bahasa Inggris dalam lingkungan pendidikan Muslim. Temuan menunjukkan bahwa materi ELT keislaman umumnya dipandang sebagai sumber daya yang responsif budaya yang mengintegrasikan nilai-nilai Islam, identitas peserta didik, dan konteks lokal ke dalam pembelajaran bahasa Inggris sambil tetap mendukung komunikasi global. Studi yang ditinjau menunjukkan bahwa materi ini dapat meningkatkan motivasi, keterlibatan, penegasan identitas, pengembangan karakter, dan pengalaman belajar yang kontekstual bagi siswa. Materi ini juga mendorong praktik pengajaran yang lebih reflektif dan berbasis nilai. Namun, tantangan tetap ada, seperti keterbatasan persiapan guru, kurangnya sumber daya yang kontekstual, kurikulum yang kaku, dan kekhawatiran tentang menyeimbangkan nilai-nilai lokal dengan perspektif global. Tinjauan ini menunjukkan bahwa materi pengajaran bahasa Inggris keislaman memiliki potensi besar untuk membuat pembelajaran bahasa Inggris lebih bermakna dan relevan bagi pelajar Muslim bila didukung oleh desain materi yang tepat, pelatihan guru, dan dukungan kelembagaan.



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Introduction

English language teaching (ELT) materials are not merely instructional tools for practising language skills; they also function as cultural and ideological instruments that shape learners' understanding of identity, values, and worldview. Through texts, dialogues, images, and classroom activities, ELT materials implicitly promote particular cultural assumptions about acceptable behaviours, lifestyles, and perspectives. Tomlinson (2011) argues that materials influence not only linguistic development but also learners' engagement and interpretation of meaning. In many educational contexts, globally published ELT textbooks dominate classrooms because they are accessible and aligned with international standards (Liu et al., 2022). However, these materials often reflect Western cultural orientations that may not correspond with learners' local realities and cultural identities (Cahyo et al., 2019; Darmayenti et al., 2021; Keles & Yazan, 2023). Consequently, English learning may position students as passive recipients of external

cultural values rather than learners whose identities and lived experiences are recognised within the learning process.

This concern is particularly significant in Muslim educational contexts, where education is expected to integrate intellectual, moral, and spiritual development. From an Islamic perspective, knowledge cannot be separated from values and ethics. Al-Attas (1991) emphasises that education aims to cultivate *adab* by integrating knowledge with moral and spiritual understanding, while Al-Ghazali (2005) argues that education should refine the soul and promote holistic human development rather than merely intellectual achievement. Similarly, Al-Faruqi (1986) advocates the integration of knowledge within an Islamic worldview, arguing that disciplines, including language learning, should reflect coherence between faith, knowledge, and practice. He further highlights the importance of preserving authentic Islamic concepts in English through accurate representations of terms such as *salah*, *zakah*, and *hajj*. In addition, Wan Daud (Daud, 2013) stresses that education in Muslim societies should harmonise revealed and acquired knowledge so that learning contributes to both professional competence and moral responsibility. Collectively, these perspectives challenge the assumption that ELT materials are culturally neutral and argue that language learning should remain connected to learners' religious and cultural identities.

This perspective resonates with Culturally Responsive Pedagogy (CRP), which recognises students' cultural identities, experiences, and ways of knowing as valuable resources for learning rather than barriers to academic achievement. Gay (Gay, 2021) argues that culturally responsive teaching involves using learners' cultural knowledge, prior experiences, and values to make instruction more meaningful, engaging, and effective. Beyond improving learning outcomes, CRP seeks to affirm students' identities, promote educational equity, and develop critical awareness by enabling learners to connect classroom knowledge with their social and cultural realities. Accordingly, culturally responsive learning materials should not merely represent students' cultures but should integrate those cultures into the learning process, which will allow students to construct new knowledge without distancing themselves from their own identities.

In response to this issue, Islamised English language teaching materials have emerged as an effort to contextualise English learning within Muslim learners' cultural and value systems. This approach does not reject English as an international language nor oppose global knowledge. Rather, it seeks to make ELT materials more meaningful and relevant by incorporating culturally familiar contexts, ethical themes, and experiences rooted in Muslim daily life.

Viewed through the lens of CRP, Islamised ELT materials embody several of its core principles. First, they promote cultural relevance by incorporating Islamic values and

contexts that are familiar to Muslim learners. Second, they affirm learners' religious and cultural identities by positioning those identities as assets in English learning rather than obstacles. Third, they foster meaningful learning by connecting language instruction with students' lived experiences, ethical values, and community practices. Finally, they encourage learners to engage with English as a global language while maintaining their own cultural and religious identities, thereby supporting intercultural competence instead of cultural assimilation. Such contextualisation is important because learning becomes more effective when students can connect classroom content with their own identities and realities. Therefore, Islamised ELT materials can be understood as a context-specific manifestation of culturally responsive pedagogy within Muslim educational settings. At the same time, the integration of local and religious values into ELT materials must remain balanced, since excessive localisation may limit learners' exposure to intercultural communication and global perspectives that are essential in English learning.

The argument for contextualised ELT materials is further supported by pedagogical frameworks such as English for Specific Purposes (ESP) and Content and Language Integrated Learning (CLIL). Hutchinson and Waters (1987) define ESP as an approach that responds to learners' specific needs and contexts, while Dudley-Evans and St John (1998) emphasise that effective materials should be authentic, relevant, and purpose-driven. In Muslim educational settings, learners' cultural and religious backgrounds can therefore be regarded as part of their educational needs. Similarly, CLIL promotes the integration of meaningful content with language instruction. Coyle, Hood, and Marsh (2010) explain that CLIL combines content and language learning through a dual-focused approach, enabling ethical, cultural, and value-based content to be integrated into language classrooms without neglecting linguistic objectives. Together with CRP, these frameworks support the view that effective ELT materials should not only develop learners' linguistic competence but also respond to their cultural identities, educational needs, and meaningful social contexts.

Despite these theoretical foundations, the application of CRP to Islamised ELT materials has received limited scholarly attention. Although previous studies have examined Islamic values, identity, or culture in ELT separately, they have rarely synthesised how Islamised ELT materials operationalise the core principles of culturally responsive pedagogy. This review addresses that gap by interpreting the literature through the CRP framework, thereby offering both theoretical synthesis and practical implications for material developers and teachers.

Although existing theories strongly support contextualised and culturally relevant language learning, research on Islamised ELT materials remains limited and fragmented. Previous studies have discussed the relationship between ELT, culture, and identity, yet there is still insufficient synthesis regarding how Islamised ELT materials are

conceptualised, what pedagogical benefits they offer, what challenges arise in their implementation, and how they relate to broader ELT theories and practices. Therefore, this systematic review aims to critically examine the conceptualisation, pedagogical benefits, and implementation challenges of Islamised ELT materials. Specifically, it addresses the following research questions: (1) How have Islamised English teaching materials been conceptualised in previous studies?; (2) What pedagogical benefits are associated with Islamised ELT materials?; and (3) What challenges emerge in designing and implementing such materials?.

Methodology

This study employed a qualitative research design using the PRISMA framework (Preferred Reporting Items for Systematic Reviews and Meta-Analyses) to systematically identify, screen, and review relevant literature. PRISMA is widely used in systematic review studies because it offers a clear and transparent process for reporting the purpose of the review, the methods applied, and the findings generated from the analysis (Page et al., 2021). Through this framework, the researcher were able to organize the literature review process in a structured and reliable manner.

The data for this study were collected from articles indexed in Google Scholar. To find relevant studies, Boolean operators and proximity operators were used to improve the accuracy of the search process. The operator AND was used to combine keywords and narrow the search results, OR was used to include synonyms or related terms and broaden the search. Parentheses () were also applied to group keywords, helping the search engine prioritize specific combinations of terms. In addition, several proximity operators were used to refine the search results. Quotation marks (" ") were applied to search for exact phrases.

Using these strategies, the researchers applied the following search in Google Scholar: ("English teaching") AND ("Islamization") AND (implementation OR challenges). This initial search produced 304 relevant articles. After collecting the articles, the researchers established inclusion and exclusion criteria to determine which studies were most relevant for further analysis. These criteria are presented in the following table:

Table 1. Inclusion and Exclusion Criteria of Reviewed Articles

No.	Criteria	Inclusion	Exclusion
1	Full paper access	✓	
2	Articles published within the last five years, from 2022 to 2026.	✓	
3	Topics related to Islamization of English Language Teaching or Materials	✓	

4	Proceeding or conference paper		✓
5	Book		✓
6	Thesis and Dissertation		✓
7	Inaccessible journal		✓
8	Literature Review		✓
9	Not related to English Language Teaching and/ or not written in English		✓

Based on the criteria mentioned, the articles were then organised into the PRISMA flow diagram illustrated as follow:

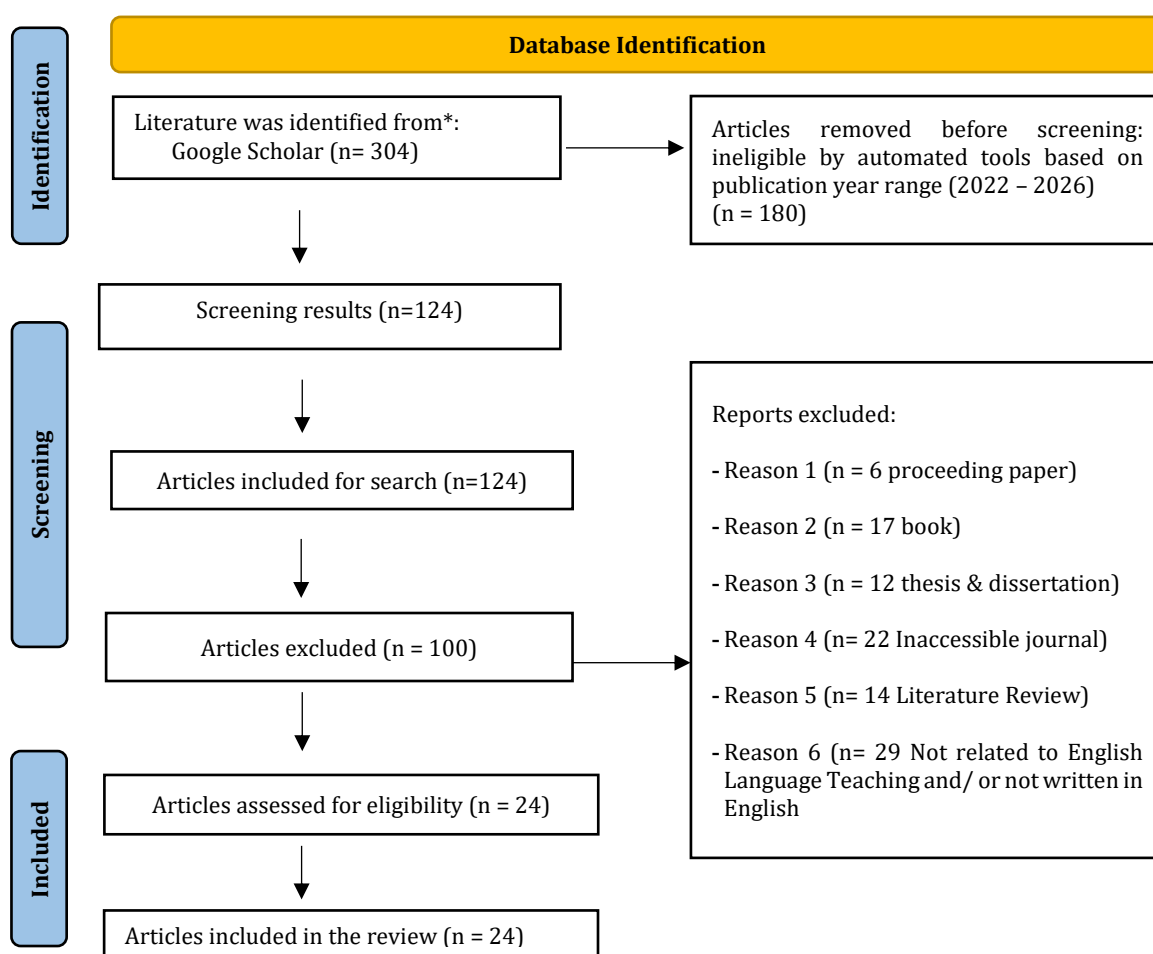


Figure 1. PRISMA flow diagram illustrating the systematic review process, including database searches (adapted from Page et al., 2021).

Results and Discussion

This systematic review analysed 24 studies published between 2022 and 2026 to examine how Islamised English Language Teaching (ELT) materials embody the principles of Culturally Responsive Pedagogy (CRP) in Muslim educational contexts. The findings reveal that Islamised ELT materials align with five key dimensions of CRP proposed by Gay (2021): cultural relevance, identity affirmation, academic success, critical consciousness, and learner empowerment. Together, these dimensions demonstrate how culturally responsive materials can make English learning more meaningful while preserving learners' cultural and religious identities.

1. Cultural Relevance

The reviewed studies consistently conceptualise Islamised ELT materials as culturally responsive resources that integrate learners' cultural, religious, and moral values into English learning rather than treating English as culturally neutral. Instead of rejecting English as an international language, these materials contextualise language learning through Islamic themes, local experiences, and ethical values that are familiar to Muslim learners (Habiburrahim et al., 2022; Mazlum, 2022; Rahmatika & Izzah, 2024). Evidence from Bangladesh, Iran, and Indonesia further demonstrates that Islamised ELT materials respond to the predominance of Western-oriented textbooks by incorporating culturally familiar content while maintaining learners' communicative competence (Hamid & Ali, 2023; Iranmehr et al., 2024; Nadhif, 2026). These findings illustrate the CRP principle that meaningful learning occurs when instructional materials are connected to learners' cultural backgrounds and lived experiences (Gay, 2021).

2. Identity Affirmation

Beyond cultural relevance, the reviewed studies show that Islamised ELT materials contribute to identity affirmation by positioning learners' religious and cultural identities as valuable educational resources. Integrating Islamic stories, values, and classroom discussions enables students to perceive English as compatible with their beliefs while simultaneously supporting character development (Deng, 2023b; Lashari et al., 2023; Mazlum, 2022). Similarly, Habiburrahim et al (2022) and R & Maulidiyah (2026) reported that embedding Islamic values into English instruction strengthened both language development and moral growth. Rather than creating tensions between English learning and Islamic identity, these materials reinforce learners' confidence in participating in English language education while maintaining their religious values.

3. Academic Success

The findings also indicate that culturally responsive Islamised ELT materials contribute to students' academic success by increasing motivation, engagement, and language achievement. Students responded more positively to English learning when materials incorporated Islamic stories, culturally familiar contexts, and value-based content because these reflected their own experiences and realities (Almaithalony & Al-Jamal, 2025; Rahmatika & Izzah, 2024; Yulianti et al., 2025). In addition, contextualised materials designed for English for Specific Purposes (ESP), such as Islamic economics, enhanced the relevance of English learning to students' academic and professional needs (Solehan et al., 2021). Teachers likewise adopted more reflective and culturally responsive instructional practices when integrating Islamic values into language teaching (Almayez, 2022; Jobori & Abdullah, 2024). Collectively, these findings support CRP's emphasis on promoting academic excellence through culturally meaningful instruction.

4. Critical Consciousness

Another important dimension emerging from the reviewed studies is critical consciousness. Rather than encouraging learners to reject Western culture, Islamised ELT materials promote critical engagement with diverse cultural perspectives while maintaining learners' own identities. Murwantono and Muna (2022) found that students were able to appreciate Western literary works without compromising their Islamic worldview. However, Daneshfar and Moharami (2025) cautioned that excessive localisation may limit learners' opportunities to develop intercultural communicative competence. These findings suggest that culturally responsive ELT materials should balance cultural preservation with global engagement so that it will enable students to participate confidently in international communication while remaining grounded in their own values.

5. Learner Empowerment

The reviewed studies further demonstrate that Islamised ELT materials promote learner empowerment by making English learning more meaningful, relevant, and accessible. Contextualised learning materials increased students' confidence, classroom participation, and willingness to use English because they reflected learners' lived experiences and cultural values (Assalihee & Boonsuk, 2022; Jobori & Abdullah, 2024). Recent studies also indicate that technology-enhanced instruction, including artificial intelligence (AI)-supported learning, can further strengthen learner autonomy and engagement when implemented in culturally appropriate ways (Guo, 2025; Mardhiah et al., 2025; Purwati et al., 2025). These findings suggest that culturally responsive materials empower both learners and teachers by creating more inclusive, meaningful, and student-centred learning environments.

6. Challenges in Implementing Islamised ELT Materials

Despite these benefits, the reviewed studies identify several challenges in implementing Islamised ELT materials. Teachers frequently lack sufficient expertise in integrating Islamic values with language pedagogy and in developing culturally responsive teaching materials (Habiburrahim et al., 2022; Maghsoudi & Khodamoradi, 1403). In addition, contextualised teaching resources remain limited, requiring teachers to modify predominantly Western-oriented textbooks independently (Assalihee & Boonsuk, 2022; Deng, 2023a, 2024). Institutional constraints, including rigid curricula, political ideologies, and limited educational resources, further restrict teachers' autonomy in contextualising learning materials (Hamid & Ali, 2023; Karimpour et al., 2022). Finally, balancing local identity with global communicative competence remains a continuing challenge, highlighting the need for carefully designed materials, sustained teacher professional development, and supportive educational policies (Daneshfar & Moharami, 2025; Murwantono & Muna, 2022).

The findings demonstrate that Islamised ELT materials embodies the core principles of Culturally Responsive Pedagogy by integrating Islamic values, culturally familiar contexts, and learners' lived experiences into English instruction. As a result, they promote cultural relevance, affirm learners' identities, enhance academic engagement, foster critical intercultural awareness, and empower learners while supporting English proficiency. These findings reinforce Gay's (2021) view that culturally responsive teaching connects learners' cultural identities with meaningful academic experiences. Rather than rejecting English or global knowledge, Islamised ELT materials represent a context-sensitive approach that aligns with the learner-centred principles of English for Specific Purposes (Hutchinson & Waters, 1987) and Content and Language Integrated Learning (Coyle et al., 2010). However, their successful implementation depends on well-prepared teachers, contextualised learning resources, and institutional support to ensure that the integration of Islamic values is pedagogically meaningful rather than symbolic.

Conclusion

This systematic review demonstrates that Islamised ELT materials represent a context-specific application of Culturally Responsive Pedagogy (CRP) in Muslim educational settings. Rather than viewing English as culturally neutral, these materials integrate Islamic values, learners' identities, and culturally familiar contexts to support meaningful and inclusive language learning while maintaining learners' engagement with English as a global language. In doing so, this review extends current discussions on culturally responsive pedagogy by showing that CRP can be effectively adapted to faith-based educational contexts, where religious identity serves as a pedagogical resource rather than a barrier. The review also contributes to English language education in Muslim

contexts by providing a synthesized conceptual framework that connects Islamised ELT materials to the key dimensions of CRP, thereby offering a stronger theoretical foundation for future research and practice. Practically, the findings highlight the importance of developing contextually relevant materials, strengthening teacher professional development, and providing institutional support to ensure the effective implementation of culturally responsive English instruction. Future research should move beyond conceptual discussions by evaluating the long-term impact of Islamised ELT materials on learners' language proficiency, intercultural competence, and identity development across Muslim educational contexts.

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