

INTERNATIONALIZING PESANTREN HIGHER EDUCATION BY BILINGUAL TEACHING

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DOI:

Received: May 2024

Accepted: June 2024

Published: September 2024

Abstract :

After the government decreed Minister of Religious Affairs Regulation No. 18/2019 regarding the legality of pesantren, these days pesantren have grown significantly. The law also makes a clear distinction between pesantren and Islamic boarding schools. Currently, pesantren is growing rapidly and have established higher educations in order to preparing their graduates to survive and competing in the challenges of globalization era. This research was conduct with the qualitative descriptive method. The first finding of this research was there are three types of pesantren higher education, they are: university at pesantren, pesantren based university and university-level pesantren. Secondly, students of pesantren universities need to master at least two languages, namely Arabic and English in order to compete internationally and this can be obtained from the learning system at pesantren higher education which already provided bilingual learning programs. The two main languages that are commonly applied in the teaching system in pesantren are expected to be a provision for its graduates in facing the increasingly open free international trade competition.

Keywords : *pesantren higher education, internationalizing, bilingual teaching*

Abstrak :

Setelah pemerintah menetapkan Peraturan Menteri Agama No. 18/2019 tentang legalitas pesantren, saat ini pesantren telah berkembang secara signifikan. Peraturan ini juga membuat perbedaan yang jelas antara pesantren dan pondok pesantren. Saat ini, pesantren berkembang pesat dan telah mendirikan perguruan tinggi untuk mempersiapkan lulusannya agar dapat bertahan dan bersaing di tengah tantangan era globalisasi. Penelitian ini dilakukan dengan metode deskriptif kualitatif. Temuan pertama dari penelitian ini adalah ada tiga jenis pendidikan tinggi pesantren, yaitu: universitas di pesantren, universitas berbasis pesantren, dan universitas di pesantren. Kedua, mahasiswa perguruan tinggi pesantren perlu menguasai setidaknya dua bahasa, yaitu bahasa Arab dan bahasa Inggris agar dapat bersaing di dunia internasional dan hal ini dapat diperoleh dari sistem pembelajaran di perguruan tinggi pesantren yang telah menyediakan program pembelajaran bilingual. Dua bahasa utama yang lazim diterapkan dalam sistem pengajaran di pesantren ini diharapkan dapat menjadi bekal bagi para lulusannya dalam menghadapi persaingan perdagangan bebas internasional yang semakin terbuka.

Kata Kunci : *perguruan tinggi pesantren, internasionalisasi, pengajaran dwibahasa*

INTRODUCTION

Indonesia has a rich history and a unique education system called pesantren. This education system has attracted the attention of many foreign scholars, who have conducted research on its dynamics and impact. These scholars include Clifford Geertz (1961), Karel A. Steenbrink (1986), Manfred Ziemek (1986), and others. Their analysis has provided valuable insights into the role of pesantren in shaping the future of Indonesia. The pesantren tradition holders are encouraged to play a greater role in the development of modern Indonesian civilization. Indonesia should take pride in its growing pesantren system and use it as a means to showcase the nation's educational prowess globally. Pesantren not only represents the Islamic faith but also played a significant role in the struggle for Indonesian independence. By promoting and sharing the benefits of the pesantren system, Indonesia can demonstrate its commitment to education and its ongoing efforts towards self-liberation.

Pesantren have a rich history deeply rooted in the Islamic tradition. The spread of Islam in Nusantara began with the formation of Islamic kingdoms and even before that through trade, so the people that time were already familiar with the religion. Over time, as Islamic propagation increased, knowledge seekers and pilgrims from the Malay world, known as Ashab Al-Jawiyyin, traveled to the Middle East and returned to the archipelago as transmitters of religious and intellectual traditions. One prominent trend that emerged was the harmonization between sharia and Sufism, which is embedded in the way of life of pesantren.

Generally, there are two opinions regarding the origin of the pesantren education system. The first tough is that pesantren are rooted in the Islamic tradition itself. Starting from the first verses that the Prophet Muhammad received (Q.S Al-Alaq 1-5), until the preaching reached Nusantara at 14th centuries. In 17th centuries, Scholars (*Ashabul Jawiyyin*) from the Middle East brought back a learning system that combined elements from the Kuttab institution and the Halaqoh system. These two approaches worked together to create a comprehensive educational experience in pesantren (Azra, 2007).

Secondly, pesantren system in Nusantara originated from the takeover by Hindu Buddhists during the pre-Islamic period based on language terms used in pesantren components. The term pesantren, which means a place where students live, is derived from the word *santri* in the Tamil language, meaning a recitation teacher, according to Professor Johns, an anthropologist from Australia. On the other hand, C.C. Berg believes that the term *santri* comes from the word "*shastri*" in the Indian language, referring to a person knowledgeable in the sacred texts of Hinduism or a scholar of Hindu scriptures. This theory is based on the extensive research of Zamakhsyari Dhofier. In essence, the pesantren system embodies the living and learning environment of *santri* students (Dhofier, 2022).

Ki Hajar Dewantara, in his writings published by Taman Siswa in 1961, discusses the concept of pesantren and emphasizes the importance of the school being the teacher's house. He argues that in the old Javanese and Indonesian languages, as well as in the teaching system in general, the school and the

teacher's house should be integrated. He highlights that students in boarding schools experience a family-like environment and suggests that the personality of the teacher can eliminate the need for strict discipline rules, allowing students to develop beyond mere paper rules. This integrated form of education and teaching is called "paguron," which includes the dormitory and its related institutions. The paguron system is not just a literary and dramatic tradition but is still prevalent today, particularly in the form of Islamic boarding schools or pesantren. Despite the passage of turbulent centuries, the national paguron continues to exist as a significant cultural heritage (Dewantara, 1977).

In the beginning, the pesantren was an unstructured institution and only known between salaf and modern models. However, nowadays the pesantren education system has begun to be neatly organized and more models have developed. This is the time for pesantren to develop by establish the higher education that could compete internationally to face the challenges of globalization.

The process of internationalization of higher education is an adaptive response to the global context which is the impact of globalization. One aspect that supports the internationalization process is the ability of prospective students in information literacy about international universities (Winarni, Minasari, & Purwasito, 2022).

Internationalization of a Higher Education is a process at Higher Educations that integrates an international component into the goals, functions, or delivery of education to improve its quality and enhance its competitiveness. The primary key to internationalization is the standardization of measurement tools recognized internationally (Nurhaeni, Anggreni, Kusumawati, Permitasari, & Putri, 2021).

The internationalization of universities involves a range of activities from policy decisions to practical measures aimed at improving language skills and adaptation to the process. Important decisions need to be made regarding the language of instruction, the language to be taught, the desired level of proficiency, scholarly communication, and the overall language environment on campus. These decisions should be guided by factors such as the country and region's language, neighboring countries, university networks and exchange programs, the university's specialization and goals, and other relevant considerations. Overall, universities must carefully analyze and consider the specific conditions of their institution to effectively implement internationalization strategies. This may involve implementing language training programs, accrediting language skills, and providing incentives to support faculty and staff. By doing so, universities can create an inclusive and comprehensive internationalization approach (González-Álvarez & Rama-Martínez, 2020).

Higher education institutions around the world similarly are responding to strategic demands for internationalization of the curriculum (IoC) to provide students with relevant global perspectives so they can work and function within complex and multicultural environments. As partnerships expand internationally, language learning is likely to become a more important part of

internationalization, and thus require increased attention and resources (Clarke & Kirby, 2022).

It highlights that IoC involves various stakeholders like students, faculty, and administration, who collectively contribute to creating a valid IoC environment. It also emphasizes that IoC is closely linked to language, as it involves activities such as teaching by visiting professors, addressing global issues, and using references from diverse sources. Understanding different ways of acquiring knowledge in different countries is another facet of IoC. The text emphasizes that the relationship between language and culture is crucial in IoC, and thus, IoC should consider both language and cultural dimensions (Murphy & Costa, 2020).

The majority of students at pesantren universities are graduates of the pesantren themselves. Alumni of pesantren have a strong background in Arabic and religious education based on their studies focus on these subjects. Although modern pesantren also provide English lessons, less time is allocated for learning English compared to Arabic. As a result, their Arabic skills are generally better than their English skills. However, to be able to compete in the global market, English proficiency is essential as a lingua franca. One potential solution is to use a bilingual teaching strategy that incorporates Arabic as an approach to help pesantren college student better in understanding English. By combining both languages, students can more easily navigate English lessons while still building a strong Arabic foundation. This approach aims to bridge the gap between Arabic and English teaching and facilitate language learning for the students.

The consideration in terms of seven dimensions of bilingualism as stated by Baker (2011): age, ability, use, culture, context, balance of two languages, and elective bilingualism. The concept of bilingualism can be defined in many ways by the people depending on how the person interprets it and the context of the language in which it is used as well. Thus, it can be concluded that a bilingual person is an individual who uses two languages and able to perform it well (Mulyani, 2017).

The threshold hypothesis, proposed by Cummins, explains the difference in academic achievement among bilingual students. According to this hypothesis, there is a decline in mother tongue proficiency or a shift in language dominance from the first language (L1) to the second language (L2). The level of linguistic competence achieved by a bilingual child mediates the impact of bilingual learning experiences on their cognitive growth. Low proficiency in reading and language skills contributes to low academic achievement in bilingual children. Overall, the threshold hypothesis suggests that bilingual students may face challenges in academic achievement due to changes in language dominance and proficiency (Macswan, Thompson, Rolstad, McAlister, & Lobo, 2017).

As Cummins Threshold Hypothesis stated before, the type of bilingualism suitable for pesantren higher education is semilingualism that the speaker are low level in both languages (may be balanced or dominant). This is because students in pesantren universities are not native speakers of Arabic or

English and the students are native Indonesians who are not used to using Arabic and English in their daily lives in the common society.

The bilingual program implemented in pesantren has also been proven to be successful in improving the language skills of students, as has been proven in research by Moh Mujib and Abd. Majid with the title "The Effect of the Bilingual Program in Improving Students' Language Achievement of Students at Pesantren Mambaul Ulum Bata-Bata". The research result proves that there is a positive and significant influence between bilingual programs in improving the language achievement of students by the bilingual program in well organized preparation.

Therefore, the purpose of this study is how to develop a bilingual teaching strategy for pesantren university using the existing facilities. The goal that is expected to be achieved is that students of pesantren university will be able to improve their English language skills and compete internationally with foreign university.

RESEARCH METHOD

The research method use is a qualitative research method with a phenomenological approach in the data collection process. It highlights that data collected from key informants is deemed more accurate and valid as it aligns with their direct experiences. Phenomenology aims to understand a problem or phenomenon from the perspective of those who have first-hand experience and the meanings they attach to it. The research is carried out in a natural setting, allowing for unrestricted interpretation and understanding of the phenomenon under study. The text also emphasizes that phenomenology does not rely on hypotheses or temporary conjectures in the analysis process, although it can generate hypotheses for further testing. Unlike other research approaches, phenomenology does not aim to test a theory through a hypothesis (Larsen & Adu, 2022).

The data source used is comes from participants than initially recommended with heterogeneous demographic background or situational context. The techniques to collect research data using interview question to the rector of Darunnajah University Jakarta and Kiyai of Pesantren Darunnajah Jakarta. The results of the interview are equipped with additional data from various previous similar researches and results from meetings or seminars.

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

This study succeeded in explaining the types of pesantren higher education in Indonesia. Juridically, pesantren higher education is under two ministries in Indonesia. The first is the Ministry of Religious Affairs (Kemenag) and the second is the Ministry of Education, Culture, Research, and Technology (Kemenristekdikti).

First category is pesantren colleges that registered as religious higher education at the Ministry of Religious Affairs. Regulation of the Minister of Religious Affairs of the Republic of Indonesia Number 32 of 2020 regarding *Ma'had Aly*. Chapter 1, Article 1 number 4 and 5. *Ma'had Aly* is a higher education level of pesantren education organized by the pesantren and is

within the pesantren environment by developing Islamic studies in accordance with the peculiarities of the yellow Islamic classic book-based pesantren in a tiered and structured manner. Students at *Ma'had Aly* are called *Mahasantri* (Kementrian Agama RI, 2020).

Second category is pesantren higher education registered under the Ministry of Education, Culture, Research, and Technology. Based on the law of the Republic of Indonesia number 20 year 2003 on the National Education System, Articles 19, 20 and 21 explain that as long as the pesantren in concern is able to meet the criteria of the conditions outlined in the law, its establishment is considered valid after going through the established procedures (Kemenristekdikti, 2003).

Actually, pesantren higher education is different from higher education in general. Apart from having the typical characteristics of pesantren, pesantren universities also had several different types. As one of the Gontor's pioneers K.H Ahmad Suharto speaks for Darunnajah University IHT (In House Training) at June 6 2022. He explained there is three types of pesantren university, they are:

- 1) University at pesantren, is a pesantren that have a college or university with the different system from its pesantren. For the example is Sekolah Tinggi Ilmu Tarbiah Nahdaul Ulama Al Farabi Pangandaran (Mustopa, Hapidin, Rayana, Bumaeri, & Ahyani, 2021).
- 2) Pesantren based university, is a pesantren that makes their university as one as the pesantren system. Darunnajah University is one of the examples.
- 3) University-level pesantren, is the university that implemented pesantren values in higher education. The difference is in the level of education, the pesantren is at the middle level while the university is at the higher level. This is the type of UNIDA (Universitas Darussalam, Gontor)

He also said that so far, pesantren still focus on *ma'had 'aly/ معهد عالي* which concentrates on religious knowledge, even though the challenges of the times are getting bigger. In reality, the world of pesantren education is conventional and the science is still basic. Meanwhile, in universities, education is based on research, inventions, novelty and so on. The distinctive feature of pesantren-based universities and university-level pesantren is the Islamization of knowledge, not just providing propositions from Quran and hadith. This means interconnecting or integrating with the thought of Islamizing science. This is also one of the efforts to internationalize pesantren higher education.

Based on the results of interviews with Dr. Much Hasan Darojat as the Rector of Darunnajah University, it is known that there are differences between students at pesantren universities and students on general campuses. Students at general campuses only have a duty to study, while most students at pesantren universities are in charge of teaching in the pesantren and are directly involved in pesantren activities for 24 hours in their daily lives. In addition, pesantren-based universities have a different curriculum from universities in general. This is related to the learning program that is

interconnected with activities in the pesantren.

In establishing Darunnajah University, K.H Hadiyanto Arief explained that Darunnajah is in the fifth stage from six phases growth model theory from Greiner's (growth through creativity, direction, delegation, coordination and monitoring, collaboration, and extra organization solution). In 2022 for the grand launching of Darunnajah University, was hold the international conference of pesantren to build collaboration system to aiming the last stage. He also said that so far there have been several pesantren in Southeast Asia established by alumni of Indonesian pesantren. The pesantren higher education is expected to be a training ground for students in honing their skills to be able to compete internationally. Therefore, two languages are needed so that students can face the challenges of globalization. The first is of course Arabic as the root of Islamic religious knowledge sourced from the Quran and the Prophet's hadith. With Arabic language skills they will have a strong root understanding of religious knowladge. "Furthermore in order to *syi'ar* and to preach internationally, we need to use the language their usually use (English)" he said. Likewise, the results of interviews with many pesantren alumni who do not qualify for scholarships abroad or find it difficult to get LoA because one of the reasons is not yet competent in English language skills.

In The White Book of Pesantren Muadalah (Fathullah, Amal, 2022), we can see in the teaching curriculum in modern pesantren in general based on the KMI curriculum from Gontor, there are only 3 English lessons out of a total of 38 lessons taught in modern pesantren. Judging from the allocation of lesson hours, English only gets a percentage of time as much as 8% each week. This is one of the reasons for the lack of English language skills of pesantren graduates.

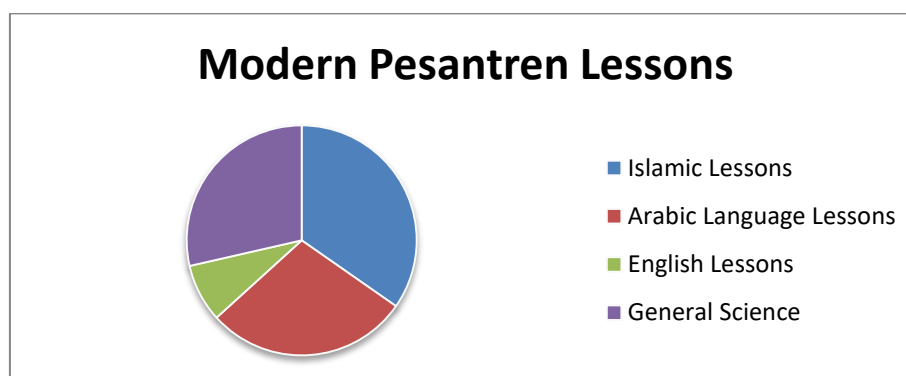
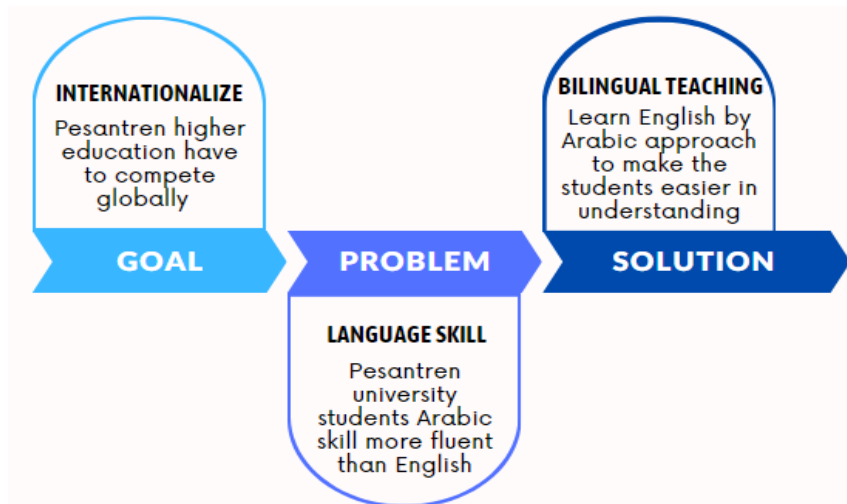


Chart 1: Percentage of lesson hour allocation in modern pesantren

From the results of the data analysis above, it is necessary to hold an English teaching strategy that makes it easier for pesantren university students to understand English by using Arabic as a bridge of understanding and approach in learning English at pesantren universities.



Schemes 1: Bilingual English Teaching in Pesantren University

The learning design can be adjusted to the needs and situation of the institution. An example can be seen in the picture below.

Present Tense and Present Continuous Tense (فعل المضارع)

أَذْهَبُ إِلَى الْمَدْرَسَةِ 1. Present Tense: I go to school (everyday).

2. Present Continuous Tense: I am going to school.

1. PRESENT TENSE

POV 1 Singular (I = أَنَا)
Plural (We = نَحْنُ)

POV 2 Singular (You = أَنْتَ)
Plural (You two or more = أَنْتُمْ/أَنْتِمْ)

POV 3 Plural (They = هُمْ/هُنَّ)

Verb 1

Singular (She = هِيَ and He = هُوَ + It = ذَلِكَ/تِلْكَ) → **Verb 1+s**

Example: (+) She goes to school.
(-) She doesn't go to school.
(?) Does she go to school?

Picture 1: English Bilingual Teaching Design

When the English bilingual learning design was introduced to students at Darunnajah University, they rated it as easier to understand the meaning of English lessons with the Arabic approach that they are more familiar with. In addition to learning English grammar with the Nahwu (Arabic grammar) approach, this method can also be applied to speaking and reading exercises to make it easier to understand the meaning of conversations and reading texts.

CONCLUSION

As a result of this study, pesantren as indigenous Islamic education system is developing the higher education now days. It can be concluded there are two juridical divisions of pesantren colleges, namely *Ma'had Aly* registered under the auspices of the Ministry of Religious Affairs and pesantren colleges registered under the Ministry of Research, Technology and Higher Education.

Then according to the type of teaching system, pesantren higher education can be described into three types. First is university at pesantren, is a pesantren that have a college or university with the different system from its pesantren. Second is pesantren based university, is a pesantren that makes their university as one as the pesantren system. Third is university-level pesantren, is the university that implemented pesantren values in higher education. The difference is in the level of education, the pesantren is at the middle level while the university is at the higher level.

Today's open market has created higher global competition. To deal with the era of globalization, pesantren higher education institutions need to equip their students with various skills. One of them is the ability to speak English as a lingua franca that becomes an international language.

The students who study at pesantren colleges are mostly graduates of the pesantren. Therefore, English teaching strategies for students with pesantren alumni backgrounds can be given English teaching with a bilingual approach. Arabic was chosen because the pesantren alumni are more proficient in Arabic than English. This may be useful for students in pesantren higher education in understanding English lessons with an Arabic approach that they are more familiar with.

For further researchers who research in similar fields, they can deepen the study of English language learning in pesantren colleges because each pesantren has its own characteristics. Research on the internalization of pesantren colleges is also related to cooperative relations and diplomacy with foreign campuses abroad.

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