

## THE IMPLEMENTATION OF CHARACTER-BASED ENGLISH LANGUAGE INSTRUCTION IN ENHANCING STUDENTS' COMPETENCE AT MUHAMMADIYAH KWALA MADU ISLAMIC BOARDING SCHOOL

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### Abstract

This study aims to examine the implementation of character-based English language learning in enhancing the competence of students at Muhammadiyah Kwalu Madu Islamic Boarding School. The research is grounded in the importance of integrating character education values into language learning to foster not only linguistic proficiency but also positive attitudes and moral development among students. This study employs a qualitative approach with a case study design. Data were collected through classroom observations, interviews with teachers and students, and documentation. The data were analyzed using data reduction, data display, and conclusion drawing techniques. The findings reveal that the implementation of character-based English learning is carried out through the integration of character values such as discipline, responsibility, cooperation, and respect within teaching activities. Teachers incorporate these values through interactive methods, including group discussions, role-plays, and daily English communication practices. The results indicate that this approach contributes significantly to improving students' English competence, particularly in speaking and listening skills, while also strengthening their character development. In conclusion, character-based English language learning is effective in enhancing both students' language competence and character formation. Therefore, it is recommended that educators consistently integrate character values into English language instruction, especially in Islamic boarding school contexts.

**Keyword: Character-Based Learning, English Language Learning, Students' Competence, Islamic Boarding School, Character Education**

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## PENDAHULUAN

English plays a crucial role as an international language used in communication, education, and global interaction. In the context of Islamic boarding schools (pesantren), English learning is not only aimed at improving students' linguistic competence but also at preparing them to face global challenges while maintaining strong moral and religious values. Therefore, the integration of character education into English language learning becomes highly important.

Character education is a fundamental aspect of the Indonesian education system, particularly in religious-based institutions such as pesantren. It focuses on developing students' moral values, attitudes, and behaviors, including discipline, responsibility, respect, and cooperation. According to Ginting (2021), English language teaching should not only emphasize linguistic mastery but also incorporate character values to produce competent and ethical learners. This indicates that language learning and character building should go hand in hand in the educational process.

Moreover, the use of innovative teaching strategies is essential in enhancing students' engagement and learning outcomes. Sari (2022) states that the integration of interactive media and modern instructional approaches can significantly improve students'

motivation and language competence. In this case, methods such as communicative language teaching, role-playing, and collaborative learning are effective in promoting active participation while embedding character values in classroom activities.

In addition, the integration of Islamic values in education contributes significantly to students' character formation. Nur Sakinah (2020) emphasizes that incorporating religious and moral values into the learning process can positively influence students' behavior and academic achievement. This aligns with the educational principles of pesantren, which prioritize both intellectual and moral development.

Pesantren Muhammadiyah Kwala Madu, as one of the Islamic educational institutions, provides a unique environment that supports the implementation of character-based learning. The daily activities of students, which emphasize discipline, religious practices, and communal living, create strong opportunities for integrating character education into English learning. However, challenges remain in terms of effective implementation, teaching strategies, and evaluation of learning outcomes.

Based on these considerations, this study focuses on the implementation of character-based English language learning in enhancing students' competence at Pesantren Muhammadiyah Kwala Madu. This research is expected to provide valuable insights into effective teaching practices and contribute to the development of innovative and character-oriented English language learning models in pesantren contexts.

## **METODE PENELITIAN**

This study employed a qualitative research approach with a case study design to investigate the implementation of character-based English language learning in enhancing students' competence at Pesantren Muhammadiyah Kwala Madu. A qualitative approach was chosen because it allows the researcher to explore the teaching and learning process in depth and to understand how character values are integrated into English instruction within a natural setting. According to Sugiyono (2019), qualitative research is suitable for examining social phenomena in their real contexts and for obtaining rich, descriptive data.

The research was conducted at Pesantren Muhammadiyah Kwala Madu, focusing on English learning activities involving both teachers and students. The participants of this study consisted of an English teacher and several students (*santri*) who were actively involved in the learning process. The participants were selected using purposive sampling, in which individuals are chosen based on specific criteria relevant to the research objectives. Lexy J. Moleong (2018) states that purposive sampling enables researchers to select participants who can provide meaningful and relevant information.

Data were collected through observation, interviews, and documentation. Classroom observations were conducted to examine the actual implementation of teaching practices, particularly how character values such as discipline, responsibility, cooperation, and respect were integrated into English learning activities. Semi-structured interviews were carried out with the teacher and students to gain deeper insights into their experiences, perceptions, and challenges in implementing character-based learning. Documentation, including lesson plans, teaching materials, and students' assignments, was also analyzed to support the findings. This is in line with John W. Creswell (2014), who emphasizes that multiple data collection techniques are essential in qualitative research to obtain comprehensive and valid data.

The data analysis in this study followed the interactive model proposed by Matthew B. Miles and A. Michael Huberman (2014), which involves data reduction, data display, and conclusion drawing. In this process, the researcher first reduced the data by selecting relevant information, then organized and presented the data systematically, and finally drew conclusions based on the patterns identified during analysis.

To ensure the trustworthiness of the findings, this study applied triangulation techniques. Data triangulation was conducted by comparing information obtained from different sources, namely the teacher and students, while method triangulation was carried out by using multiple data collection techniques such as observation, interviews, and documentation. As stated by Norman K. Denzin (2017), triangulation is an important strategy in qualitative research to enhance the credibility and validity of research findings.

## **HASIL DAN PEMBAHASAN**

The findings of this study reveal that the implementation of character-based English language learning at Pesantren Muhammadiyah Kwala Madu has been carried out through various instructional practices that integrate both language competence and character development. The English teacher plays a significant role in embedding character values such as discipline, responsibility, cooperation, and respect into the teaching and learning process. These values are not taught separately but are integrated into classroom activities and daily interactions.

Based on classroom observations, it was found that the teacher applied interactive and student-centered learning methods, including group discussions, role-playing, and daily English communication practices. These activities encouraged students to actively participate in the learning process while simultaneously practicing positive character traits. For example, during group discussions, students were trained to respect others' opinions, collaborate effectively, and take responsibility for their tasks. This finding supports the view of Creswell (2014), who emphasizes that meaningful learning occurs when students are actively engaged in the learning process.

Furthermore, the results of the interviews indicate that students showed improvement in their English competence, particularly in speaking and listening skills. They became more confident in expressing their ideas in English and were more willing to participate in classroom activities. The integration of character values also contributed to creating a positive and supportive learning environment. This aligns with Ginting (2021), who states that integrating character education into language learning can enhance both students' academic performance and personal development.

In addition, documentation analysis revealed that the teacher had incorporated character values into lesson plans and teaching materials. Although not always explicitly written, these values were reflected in the learning objectives, classroom rules, and types of activities conducted. This indicates that the implementation of character-based learning was systematically planned, although further improvement is still needed in terms of documentation and evaluation.

However, the study also found several challenges in implementing character-based English learning. One of the main challenges is the limited time allocation for English subjects, which makes it difficult for teachers to balance between achieving language learning objectives and integrating character education. Another challenge is the varying levels of students' English proficiency, which affects their participation in learning activities. Additionally, not all students consistently apply character values outside the classroom, indicating the need for continuous reinforcement.

From the discussion, it can be understood that the success of character-based English learning depends on several factors, including teacher competence, teaching strategies, learning environment, and institutional support. The pesantren environment, which emphasizes discipline and religious values, provides a strong foundation for character education. This is in line with Sakinah (2020), who highlights that integrating moral and religious values into education significantly influences students' behavior and character development.

Overall, the findings of this study indicate that the implementation of character-based English language learning at Pesantren Muhammadiyah Kwala Madu is effective in improving students' competence and character. However, continuous efforts are needed to optimize its implementation, particularly in terms of time management, teaching strategies, and evaluation methods.

## **KESIMPULAN**

Based on the findings and discussion, it can be concluded that the implementation of character-based English language learning at Pesantren Muhammadiyah Kwala Madu has been carried out effectively and contributes positively to both students' language competence and character development. The integration of character values such as discipline, responsibility, cooperation, and respect into English learning activities enables students to not only improve their linguistic skills but also develop positive attitudes and behaviors.

The use of interactive and student-centered teaching methods, such as group discussions, role-playing, and daily English communication practices, plays an important role in enhancing students' participation and confidence, particularly in speaking and listening skills. These findings support the idea proposed by Ginting (2021) that character-based learning can strengthen both academic achievement and personal development.

However, this study also identifies several challenges, including limited instructional time, differences in students' English proficiency, and the need for more consistent application of character values outside the classroom. These challenges indicate that while the implementation has been successful, further improvement is still necessary.

In conclusion, character-based English language learning is a relevant and effective approach in the context of pesantren education. It is recommended that teachers continue to develop innovative teaching strategies and consistently integrate character values into the learning process. In addition, institutional support and continuous evaluation are needed to ensure the sustainability and effectiveness of this approach in improving students' competence and character.

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