



DEVELOPING ISLAMIC ELT MATERIALS FOR ELEMENTARY SCHOOLS: A CRITICAL PEDAGOGICAL FRAMEWORK

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Abstract

This study addresses the critical need for culturally and religiously responsive English Language Teaching (ELT) materials for Islamic elementary schools. It argues that mainstream ELT resources often neglect the Islamic worldview, creating a disconnect for young learners. The objective of this research is to establish a framework for developing Islamic ELT materials that not only teach English effectively but also integrate Islamic values, contexts, and knowledge through a critical pedagogical lens. Employing a qualitative design, the methodology includes a critical content analysis of existing textbooks and a thematic analysis of data gathered from interviews with teachers and curriculum experts in Indonesian Islamic elementary schools. The analysis revealed a significant gap in materials that meaningfully incorporate Islamic principles while adhering to modern language acquisition theories. The study proposes a set of principles for material development that promotes critical cultural awareness, uses authentic Islamic contexts, and fosters both linguistic and spiritual intelligence. The study suggests that such a framework has the potential to enhance learner engagement, identity affirmation, and educational relevance while contributing to ongoing discussions on localized and culturally responsive ELT practices.

Keywords: Critical pedagogy; culturally responsive teaching; elementary education; Islamic education; Islamic ELT; localized ELT; materials development.

Introduction

The integration of religious principles with academic learning has traditionally been a central feature of Islamic education. Islamic schools are expected to support not only students'

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cognitive growth but also their moral development, spiritual awareness, and commitment to Islamic values. Within the Indonesian educational context, where Islamic schools play an important role in providing formal education, English has gained increasing prominence because of its status as an international language for communication, education, and global engagement. Despite its importance, implementing English Language Teaching (ELT) in Islamic elementary schools remains challenging due to the limited availability of instructional materials that simultaneously address language-learning goals and the religious mission of Islamic education.

Many ELT textbooks currently used in Indonesian classrooms originate from secular educational traditions and are often shaped by Western sociocultural assumptions. Although such materials offer valuable exposure to English, they frequently present cultural themes, social practices, and visual representations that are unfamiliar to young Muslim learners. This disconnect may reduce students' sense of relevance and weaken meaningful engagement with classroom content. Recent studies in language education increasingly emphasize that language learning is closely connected to identity, culture, and social experience rather than being a culturally neutral process (Crookes, 2021; Li Wei & García, 2022; Pierson & Grapin, 2021; Ossa Parra & Proctor, 2021; Tai, 2022). Similarly, culturally sustaining pedagogies advocate the inclusion of learners' cultural backgrounds as legitimate resources for knowledge construction and language development (Paris & Alim, 2017; Garcia & Kleifgen, 2020). These perspectives suggest that effective language materials should create meaningful links between new linguistic knowledge and learners' existing cultural understandings.

The challenge faced by Islamic schools extends beyond questions of cultural relevance. English instruction is also expected to support broader educational goals related to character formation and religious identity. However, many commercially available materials position English primarily as a technical subject focused on grammar, vocabulary, and communicative competence, with limited attention to moral and spiritual dimensions. As a result, teachers frequently modify existing resources by incorporating Islamic examples, replacing culturally inappropriate illustrations, or introducing additional religious content. While such adaptations may improve contextual suitability, they are often implemented without a systematic framework that can guide curriculum and materials development.

The growing interest in localized ELT, decolonizing language education, and culturally responsive teaching has generated important discussions regarding the need for instructional materials that validate learners' identities while encouraging critical engagement with diverse



perspectives (Crookes, 2021; Siqueira, 2021; Hernandez Garcia & Schleppegrell, 2021). Contemporary scholarship further argues that language education should move beyond simple cultural exposure toward empowering learners to critically examine how knowledge, values, and identities are represented in educational texts (Motha, 2014; Kubota, 2020). Consequently, Islamic-oriented ELT materials should not be limited to the insertion of religious vocabulary or isolated references to Islamic practices. Instead, Islamic values should be integrated into meaningful language-learning experiences that remain compatible with current understandings of second language acquisition, child development, and critical pedagogy.

Recent scholarship has increasingly emphasized the importance of developing instructional materials that are engaging, contextually relevant, and responsive to learners' needs. For example, Nasution (2024) demonstrated that well-designed learning resources can enhance student engagement by promoting meaningful and interactive learning experiences. Similarly, Nasution and Rizka (2024) highlighted the importance of relevance, accessibility, and perceived usefulness in shaping learners' acceptance of educational resources. Although these studies were conducted in different educational contexts, their findings reinforce the broader principle that effective instructional materials should be pedagogically sound, contextually meaningful, and aligned with learners' characteristics and educational needs.

In addition, recent international studies have emphasized that effective educational materials should support learner agency, engagement, and identity affirmation. For example, Rose et al. (2020) highlighted the importance of contextualized language-learning resources that reflect learners' social realities, while Macalister and Nation (2020) argued that materials development should be grounded in learners' needs, cultural backgrounds, and educational goals. Such perspectives reinforce the need for ELT resources that are responsive to the unique characteristics of Islamic elementary school learners.

Although interest in Islamic ELT has expanded in recent years, existing studies have largely focused on secondary schools, higher education contexts, teacher beliefs, or theoretical discussions. Research specifically addressing the development of ELT materials for elementary-level learners remains relatively limited. Furthermore, many available studies concentrate on adapting existing content rather than proposing comprehensive frameworks that integrate Islamic educational philosophy, critical pedagogy, and practical principles of materials design. Consequently, both theoretical and practical gaps remain regarding how Islamic-oriented ELT materials can be systematically developed for young learners.



To address this gap, the present study proposes a critical framework for developing Islamic ELT materials for elementary schools. The term “critical” refers to an approach that examines the cultural assumptions embedded within conventional ELT resources while enabling learners to engage with English through contexts that affirm their religious and cultural identities. Situated within Indonesian Islamic elementary schools, this study contributes to ongoing efforts to promote localized, culturally responsive, and decolonized approaches to language education.

To guide the investigation, the study addressed the following research questions:

1. How do current ELT materials used in Islamic elementary schools align with or diverge from Islamic educational objectives?
2. What principles are essential for developing ELT materials that critically and effectively integrate Islamic content for elementary-level learners?
3. How do teachers perceive the need for and potential implementation of critically developed Islamic ELT materials in their classrooms?

By addressing these questions, the study aims to provide a principled and practical framework for developing ELT materials that support both English language proficiency and holistic character development within Islamic educational contexts.

Literature Review

Critical Pedagogy, Localization, and Language Education

The growing call for culturally responsive and contextually relevant language education has strengthened interest in critical approaches to ELT materials development. Critical Language Pedagogy (CLP) views language education not merely as the transmission of linguistic knowledge but as a process that enables learners to examine social realities, negotiate identities, and engage with diverse perspectives. Crookes (2021) argues that language teaching should promote democratic values, critical awareness, and learner agency, encouraging educators to reconsider the cultural and ideological assumptions embedded within instructional materials. Similarly, Siqueira (2021) emphasizes that English language education should create opportunities for learners to engage critically with global and local realities rather than simply reproducing dominant cultural narratives.

Parallel to developments in critical pedagogy, contemporary scholarship has increasingly highlighted the importance of localization and culturally sustaining education. Culturally sustaining pedagogy recognizes learners’ cultural and linguistic backgrounds as valuable



educational resources rather than obstacles to learning. Hernandez Garcia and Schleppegrell (2021) argue that meaningful learning occurs when educational practices acknowledge and sustain students' existing cultural repertoires. Likewise, Li Wei and García (2022) conceptualize translanguaging as a decolonizing practice that allows learners to draw upon multiple linguistic and cultural resources in constructing knowledge. These perspectives are particularly relevant in Islamic educational contexts, where learners navigate local languages, national identity, religious traditions, and global English simultaneously.

In the field of materials development, recent scholarship continues to stress the importance of learner-centered and context-sensitive resources. Materials should facilitate cognitive engagement, emotional connection, and meaningful communication while reflecting learners' lived experiences and educational needs. Such principles suggest that ELT materials for Islamic elementary schools should not merely transfer linguistic content but also create opportunities for learners to engage with language through culturally familiar and religiously meaningful contexts.

Islamic Perspectives in ELT Materials Development

The integration of Islamic values into English language instruction has attracted increasing scholarly attention, particularly in Muslim-majority countries. Researchers have noted that conventional ELT materials often reflect cultural assumptions that may not correspond to the social and religious realities of Muslim learners. Consequently, educators frequently seek alternative approaches that align language instruction with Islamic educational objectives.

Existing studies indicate that teachers in Islamic schools commonly adapt textbooks to make them more culturally and religiously relevant. Such adaptations may include the incorporation of Islamic stories, moral values, daily religious practices, and examples drawn from Muslim communities. These efforts reflect a broader desire to ensure that English learning supports rather than contradicts the holistic educational mission of Islamic institutions.

Recent empirical investigations also suggest that contextualized materials can positively influence learners' motivation, engagement, and identity formation. When students encounter familiar cultural references and value systems within learning materials, they are more likely to perceive language learning as personally meaningful. However, much of the existing research remains focused on classroom-level adaptations and small-scale interventions. There is still limited guidance regarding how Islamic values can be systematically integrated into ELT



materials while maintaining alignment with contemporary theories of language learning and child-centered pedagogy.

Materials Development for Young Learners

Developing materials for elementary-level learners requires particular attention to cognitive, linguistic, emotional, and social development. Young learners generally benefit from concrete experiences, visual support, meaningful repetition, storytelling, and interactive activities. Effective materials therefore need to balance linguistic objectives with age-appropriate content and engaging learning experiences.

Recent research on multilingual and culturally responsive education highlights the importance of connecting learning materials to students' everyday experiences and identities (Ossa Parra & Proctor, 2021; Tai, 2022; Pierson & Grapin, 2021). For young Muslim learners, such connections may include familiar family practices, community activities, moral values, religious celebrations, and stories from Islamic traditions. Nevertheless, integrating these elements requires more than simply replacing names or inserting religious terminology. Materials must be pedagogically coherent, linguistically appropriate, and capable of supporting communicative language development.

Furthermore, visual literacy has become increasingly important in contemporary materials design. Images, illustrations, and multimodal resources communicate cultural meanings alongside linguistic content. Therefore, the development of Islamic ELT materials should carefully consider not only textual content but also visual representation, ensuring consistency with educational objectives and learners' sociocultural backgrounds.

Research Gap

The literature demonstrates substantial progress in critical pedagogy, localized language education, culturally sustaining pedagogy, and Islamic-oriented ELT practices. Contemporary scholarship provides strong theoretical support for developing materials that acknowledge learners' identities, cultural backgrounds, and value systems. At the same time, empirical studies reveal a growing demand among teachers for resources that better align English language instruction with Islamic educational goals.

Despite these advances, a significant gap remains. Existing research has largely concentrated on teacher perceptions, textbook adaptation practices, and isolated classroom interventions. Few studies have proposed a comprehensive framework that systematically



integrates critical pedagogy, Islamic educational philosophy, materials development principles, and the developmental needs of elementary-level learners. Moreover, research specifically addressing Islamic ELT materials for elementary schools remains comparatively limited.

Accordingly, this study seeks to address this theoretical, methodological, and contextual gap by developing a critical framework for Islamic ELT materials that combines contemporary insights from critical language pedagogy, culturally responsive education, and Islamic educational principles. The proposed framework aims to provide practical guidance for educators and material developers while contributing to broader discussions on localized and decolonized approaches to English language teaching.

Methods

This study employed a qualitative research design combining critical content analysis and framework development procedures. The study aimed to examine existing ELT materials and formulate a principled framework for developing Islamic ELT materials for elementary schools. Qualitative inquiry was considered appropriate because the study sought to explore perceptions, experiences, and contextual factors related to the development of Islamic English Language Teaching (ELT) materials rather than to measure variables quantitatively. Design-Based Research was selected because it enables researchers to develop, refine, and validate educational interventions through iterative processes conducted within authentic educational settings (Anderson & Shattuck, 2012; McKenney & Reeves, 2021).

The study was conducted in two interconnected phases. The first phase focused on critically examining existing ELT materials used in Islamic elementary schools and identifying areas of alignment and misalignment with Islamic educational objectives. The second phase involved the formulation and refinement of a framework for developing Islamic ELT materials through collaboration with teachers and curriculum experts. This design allowed the proposed framework to emerge from both theoretical insights and practical classroom realities.

Participants and Location

The study was conducted in three private Islamic elementary schools (Sekolah Dasar Islam) located in urban areas of Central Java, Indonesia. The schools were selected through purposive sampling because they actively implemented English language programs and expressed interest in improving the quality and contextual relevance of their ELT materials.



Purposive sampling is commonly employed in qualitative research to obtain information-rich cases that can provide in-depth insights into a particular phenomenon (Palinkas et al., 2015).

The participants consisted of three groups. First, nine English teachers (three teachers from each school) participated in the study. All teachers were certified elementary school educators with between five and fifteen years of experience teaching English within Islamic educational settings. Second, two curriculum experts from a local university were involved. Both experts specialized in Islamic elementary education and language pedagogy. Third, documentary data were obtained from four main ELT textbooks and supplementary materials currently used across the participating schools.

Prior to data collection, informed consent was obtained from all participants. Participation was voluntary, and anonymity and confidentiality were maintained throughout the research process. Participants were informed of their right to withdraw from the study at any stage without penalty.

Instruments

Three primary instruments were employed to collect data.

1. Critical Content Analysis Matrix

A critical content analysis matrix was developed based on established frameworks for language materials evaluation (Tomlinson, 2011; Ndura, 2004). The matrix was designed to examine the extent to which existing materials reflected cultural relevance and Islamic educational values. Specifically, the analysis focused on visual representation, thematic content, cultural assumptions, learning activities, language use, and the integration or omission of Islamic and local cultural perspectives. The evaluative categories (e.g., Very Low, Low, Medium, and High) were derived from qualitative judgments based on the frequency and depth of representation observed across the analyzed materials. These categories served as descriptive indicators rather than quantitative scores and were used to facilitate cross-textbook comparisons.

2. Semi-Structured Interview Protocols

Semi-structured interview protocols were designed separately for teachers and curriculum experts. The teacher interview guide explored participants' experiences using existing ELT materials, challenges encountered in classroom implementation, perceptions of students' engagement, and expectations regarding culturally and religiously responsive



materials. The expert interview guide focused on theoretical principles, curriculum considerations, and pedagogical recommendations for developing Islamic ELT materials for young learners.

3. Focus Group Discussion Guide

A Focus Group Discussion (FGD) guide was developed to facilitate collaborative reflection among teacher participants. The discussion was conducted after the preliminary framework had been drafted and aimed to gather feedback regarding the framework's relevance, practicality, and applicability within elementary Islamic school contexts.

Data Collection

Data collection was conducted over a six-month period and followed a sequential process consistent with the iterative nature of Design-Based Research (McKenney & Reeves, 2021).

The first stage involved a critical content analysis of four selected ELT textbooks and supplementary materials using the analysis matrix. This analysis aimed to identify recurring patterns, strengths, limitations, and opportunities for integrating Islamic values and local cultural contexts into language-learning materials.

The second stage consisted of individual semi-structured interviews with all nine teachers and two curriculum experts. Each interview lasted approximately 60–75 minutes. With participants' permission, all interviews were audio-recorded and subsequently transcribed verbatim to ensure accuracy and completeness of the data. The third stage involved the development of a preliminary framework for Islamic ELT material development. This initial framework was constructed based on insights derived from the document analysis and interview findings.

The final stage consisted of a 90-minute Focus Group Discussion involving the teacher participants. During the session, participants reviewed, evaluated, and critiqued the preliminary framework. Their feedback was used to refine and strengthen the proposed principles for material development. All research procedures received ethical approval from the relevant institutional authority before data collection commenced.

Data Analysis

Data analysis was conducted iteratively throughout the research process. Interview and FGD transcripts were analyzed using thematic analysis following the six-phase procedure



proposed by Braun and Clarke (2006). The analysis involved familiarization with the data, generation of initial codes, identification of potential themes, review of themes, definition and naming of themes, and preparation of the final analytical report. NVivo 12 software was used to facilitate data organization, coding, and theme development.

The textbook analysis followed a critical content analysis approach. Findings from the analysis matrix were systematically categorized to identify patterns of representation, omission, bias, cultural assumptions, and opportunities for integrating Islamic perspectives. This process enabled the researcher to critically examine how existing materials positioned learners, cultures, and values within the language-learning process.

To enhance the credibility and trustworthiness of the findings, data were triangulated across multiple sources, including textbook analysis, teacher interviews, expert interviews, and the Focus Group Discussion. Triangulation allowed the researcher to compare and integrate practical classroom experiences, expert perspectives, and documentary evidence, thereby strengthening the validity of the emerging framework (Fusch et al., 2018).

Finally, findings from all data sources were synthesized to construct and refine the proposed critical framework for Islamic ELT material development. This synthesis directly addressed the three research questions and ensured that the resulting framework was grounded in both contemporary theory and the practical realities of Islamic elementary school classrooms.

Results and Discussion

The findings of this study are organized according to the three research questions and are derived from the critical content analysis, interviews with teachers and curriculum experts, and the collaborative validation process conducted through the Focus Group Discussion (FGD).

Analysis of Current ELT Materials

The critical content analysis of the four textbooks revealed a consistent pattern of cultural and contextual mismatch between the instructional materials and the educational goals of Islamic elementary schools. Three major gaps emerged from the analysis.

First, thematic dissonance was evident across the textbooks. A substantial majority of reading passages, dialogues, and visual representations reflected secular Western lifestyles, celebrations, and social settings, such as Halloween celebrations, dating practices, and suburban family life, with little or no representation of Islamic or Indonesian cultural contexts.

Second, value omission was frequently observed. Islamic values such as *ukhuwah* (brotherhood), *amanah* (trustworthiness), gratitude to Allah, respect for parents, and communal responsibility were largely absent. Although some universal values were presented, they were typically detached from the spiritual and ethical foundations emphasized within Islamic education.

Third, the materials demonstrated a lack of critical engagement. Most learning activities relied on drill-and-practice exercises, vocabulary matching, and literal comprehension questions. Few activities encouraged learners to connect the content with their personal experiences, cultural backgrounds, or religious values, and almost none promoted critical reflection or comparative analysis. Table 1 summarizes the findings of the critical content analysis.

Table 1. Critical content analysis of ELT textbooks (n = 4).

Evaluation Indicator	Textbook				Overall Trend
	A	B	C	D	
Cultural Relevance	Low	Very Low	Low	Medium	Predominantly Foreign-Oriented
Islamic Values Integration	None	Token	None	Token	Superficial or Absent
Local Context (Indonesia)	Low	Low	None	Medium	Largely Underrepresented
Critical Thinking Prompts	Few	None	Few	Some	Predominantly Mechanistic
Visual Inclusivity	Low	Very Low	Low	Medium	Underrepresentation

Overall, the analysis suggests that the existing materials insufficiently reflect the sociocultural and religious realities of learners in Islamic elementary school settings.

Teacher Perspectives and Needs

All nine teacher participants expressed dissatisfaction with the cultural relevance of the textbooks currently used in their classrooms. A recurring theme across interviews was the need for contextual bridging between textbook content and students' lived experiences.

One teacher explained:

“I spend more time explaining the context of a ‘picnic in a park’ from the book than teaching the target language because my students are more familiar with silaturahmi at the mosque or family pengajian activities.”

Teachers consistently reported that students demonstrated greater enthusiasm, participation, and comprehension when examples were connected to familiar Islamic practices,

local traditions, or stories from Islamic history. Participants also emphasized that they needed more than ready-made materials; they desired a systematic framework that could guide them in adapting and developing contextually appropriate instructional resources.

The Developed Critical Framework

The synthesis of findings from the document analysis, interviews, and FGD resulted in the formulation of a critical framework consisting of five interconnected principles for developing Islamic ELT materials for elementary schools.

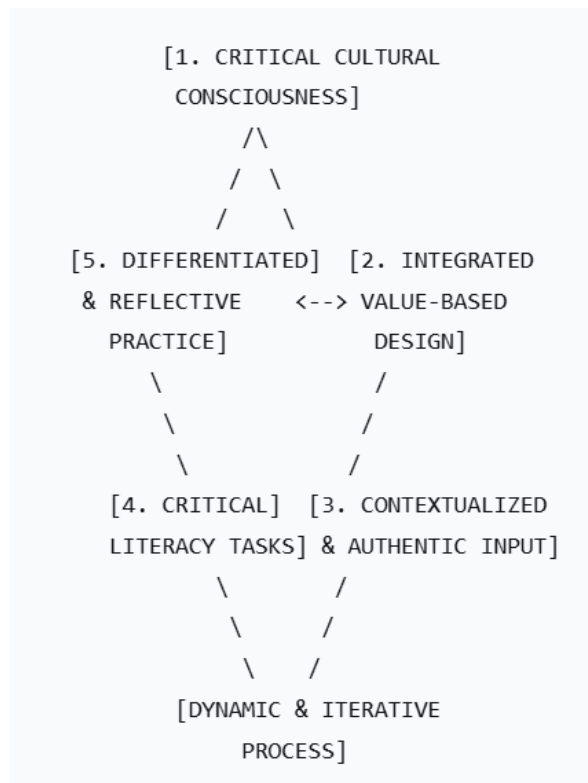


Figure 1. The critical framework for Islamic ELT material development.

Note. The figure illustrates the five cyclical and interconnected principles that emerged from the study. Each principle influences and reinforces the others, emphasizing an iterative and reflective process of materials development.

The five principles are as follows:

1. Critical Cultural Consciousness

This foundational principle encourages learners to understand the relationship between language and culture while maintaining awareness of their own Islamic identity. Materials should enable students to appreciate cultural diversity without losing their cultural and religious grounding.



2. Integrated Value-Based Design

Islamic values such as honesty, responsibility, respect, compassion, and cooperation are embedded within language-learning objectives, themes, examples, and activities rather than being presented as isolated moral lessons.

3. Contextualized and Authentic Input

Language input should be situated within authentic experiences familiar to Muslim learners. Texts, dialogues, visuals, and examples should draw from everyday life, local communities, Islamic traditions, and Indonesian cultural contexts.

4. Critical Literacy Tasks

Learning activities should move beyond mechanical exercises and encourage learners to ask questions, compare perspectives, solve problems, interpret messages, and express opinions using English. Such activities support both language development and critical thinking.

5. Differentiated and Reflective Practice

Materials should accommodate learner diversity and provide opportunities for ongoing reflection. Reflection prompts for both students and teachers can support continuous improvement and contextual responsiveness.

Together, these principles constitute a practical framework for designing ELT materials that are linguistically meaningful, culturally relevant, and educationally aligned with the objectives of Islamic elementary education.

The results of this study provide further evidence that English language teaching materials inevitably carry cultural meanings and ideological assumptions rather than functioning as culturally neutral resources (Crookes, 2021; Siqueira, 2021). The textbook content examined in this study predominantly reflected cultural references that were disconnected from the sociocultural realities of Indonesian Muslim learners. Therefore, the challenge identified is not merely a matter of content suitability but also concerns whose knowledge, values, and identities are represented and legitimized within classroom materials. Similar concerns were reported by Irham et al. (2024), who found that cultural representations in EFL textbooks often prioritize dominant cultural perspectives while providing limited space for learners' local cultural backgrounds.

The findings also support key principles of culturally responsive and culturally sustaining education, which emphasize the importance of connecting learning experiences with students' cultural identities and everyday realities (Hernandez Garcia & Schleppegrell, 2021; Paris & Alim, 2017). For learners in Islamic elementary schools, English instruction is expected to



contribute not only to language development but also to moral and religious growth. This perspective is consistent with Walidin et al. (2026), who demonstrated that integrating Islamic boarding school values into English vocabulary instruction can strengthen both language learning and character development.

Teachers participating in this study consistently highlighted the value of contextualized learning experiences. According to their observations, students showed greater engagement when lesson content was linked to familiar religious practices, family interactions, and community activities. Such findings correspond with previous studies indicating that meaningful learning occurs when new linguistic knowledge is connected to learners' existing cognitive and cultural frameworks (Tomlinson, 2011; Ossa Parra & Proctor, 2021). Likewise, translanguaging scholars have argued that students' linguistic and cultural repertoires should be viewed as educational resources rather than obstacles to learning (Li Wei & García, 2022).

Within this context, the principle of Contextualized and Authentic Input serves both pedagogical and cultural purposes. Presenting vocabulary and communicative expressions through concepts familiar to learners, such as mosque activities, zakat, silaturahmi, and community service, can facilitate comprehension while reinforcing meaningful connections between classroom learning and everyday life.

Another important aspect emerging from the study is the role of Critical Cultural Consciousness and Critical Literacy Tasks. Rather than limiting language learning to the mastery of vocabulary and grammar, the proposed framework encourages students to analyze, interpret, and evaluate cultural meanings embedded within texts. This orientation is consistent with developments in Critical Language Pedagogy that position learners as active meaning-makers capable of questioning assumptions and reflecting on social realities (Crookes & Ziegler, 2021; Tai, 2022).

Importantly, the framework does not promote cultural isolation or rejection of global perspectives. Instead, it seeks to establish a balanced learning environment in which students can engage with international knowledge while maintaining awareness of their own cultural and religious identities. This balance resonates with findings reported by Purnomo et al. (2025), who observed that learners increasingly value educational experiences that combine global competencies with local cultural relevance and identity affirmation.

The principle of Integrated Value-Based Design further extends previous attempts to incorporate Islamic elements into English language education. Rather than inserting religious terminology as isolated content, the framework embeds values throughout learning objectives,



instructional activities, classroom interaction, and assessment processes. Such integration reflects contemporary understandings of values education as an inseparable component of authentic learning rather than a separate instructional domain.

A further contribution of this study lies in its effort to combine theoretical insights with practitioner experiences. While earlier research has acknowledged concerns regarding cultural relevance in instructional materials, relatively few studies have translated these concerns into a practical framework specifically designed for Islamic elementary school contexts. Consequently, the framework developed in this study offers both conceptual guidance and practical direction for future material development initiatives.

Several limitations should nevertheless be recognized. The framework was developed from a relatively small sample of participants and instructional materials, which may not fully represent the diversity of Islamic elementary school contexts across Indonesia. The study involved participants from only three Islamic elementary schools, which may limit the transferability of the findings to other educational settings. Furthermore, the framework was evaluated through expert review and practitioner feedback rather than direct classroom implementation. Future studies should therefore focus on developing complete teaching materials based on the proposed framework and examining their impact on language achievement, learner engagement, critical literacy, and character development. Such investigations would provide stronger empirical evidence regarding the applicability and effectiveness of culturally responsive English materials across diverse Islamic educational environments.

Conclusion

This study has demonstrated the importance of adopting a critical and principled approach to the development of English Language Teaching (ELT) materials for Islamic elementary schools. The findings revealed a substantial gap between the predominantly secular and Western-oriented perspectives represented in commercially available ELT textbooks and the sociocultural and religious objectives of Islamic educational institutions. In response to this gap, the study proposed a theoretically and empirically informed framework consisting of five interconnected principles: Critical Cultural Consciousness, Integrated Value-Based Design, Contextualized and Authentic Input, Critical Literacy Tasks, and Differentiated and Reflective Practice.



The proposed framework offers a systematic foundation for moving beyond the superficial inclusion of religious content toward a more meaningful integration of language learning, cultural relevance, and Islamic educational values. Rather than viewing English solely as a tool for communication, the framework positions language learning as a medium through which learners can strengthen their cultural identity, engage critically with diverse perspectives, and articulate faith-informed understandings within local and global contexts.

A key contribution of this study lies in its integration of theoretical insights from critical pedagogy, culturally responsive education, and contemporary materials development with the practical experiences of teachers working in Islamic elementary schools. By combining these perspectives, the study provides an actionable framework that may assist curriculum developers, materials writers, teacher educators, and classroom practitioners in designing more relevant and meaningful ELT resources for young Muslim learners.

Several limitations should be acknowledged. First, the study was conducted within a specific educational context involving three Islamic elementary schools located in urban areas of Central Java, Indonesia. Consequently, the transferability of the findings to rural contexts or Islamic schools in other countries should be approached with caution. Second, although the framework was refined and validated through expert consultation and teacher feedback, its effectiveness in improving student learning outcomes was not examined through classroom implementation. Third, the study focused on framework development and therefore did not produce a complete set of instructional materials or curriculum documents.

These limitations provide directions for future research. Subsequent studies should investigate the implementation of materials developed using the proposed framework and evaluate their impact on students' English language proficiency, learning engagement, critical literacy skills, and character development. Comparative studies involving Islamic educational institutions in different cultural and national contexts may also provide valuable insights into the adaptability of the framework. Furthermore, action research focusing on teacher professional development could explore effective strategies for enabling teachers to critically evaluate, adapt, and design ELT materials based on the principles proposed in this study.

In conclusion, this study contributes a coherent foundation for developing more culturally responsive, pedagogically meaningful, and contextually relevant ELT materials for Islamic elementary schools. By placing learners' cultural and religious identities at the center of materials development, the proposed framework envisions an approach to English language



education that supports not only communicative competence but also the development of reflective, confident, and culturally grounded learners.

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