



THE INTEGRATION OF ENGLISH INTO KITAB KUNING INSTRUCTION AT AQOBAH INTERNATIONAL SCHOOL JOMBANG

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Abstract

This study analyzes the processes, strategies, challenges, and sustainability of English integration in kitab kuning instruction at Aqobah International School, Jombang. Using a qualitative case study design, the research involved four informants (one director and three students) selected through purposive sampling. Data were collected via in-depth interviews and document analysis. Findings reveal systematic integration design through structured planning involving pesantren leadership, gradual implementation using a tiered system, and support from a bilingual ecosystem based on the Cambridge International curriculum. The main challenges were technical-linguistic in nature, including the complexity of translating Arabic terminology into English, difficulties in selecting appropriate language registers, and adaptation from the pegan script to the Latin alphabet. These challenges were successfully mitigated through strategies such as content limitation, peer learning, and weekly formative evaluation. The program enhances santri's bilingual competence for international da'wah, although it requires further strengthening of educators' capacity, particularly in mastering bilingual kitab kuning terminology.

Abstract

Penelitian ini bertujuan menganalisis proses, strategi, tantangan, dan upaya keberlanjutan integrasi Bahasa Inggris dalam pengajaran kitab kuning di Ponpes Aqobah International School Jombang. Penelitian kualitatif dengan desain studi kasus ini melibatkan empat informan (satu Direktur dan tiga santri) melalui wawancara mendalam dan studi dokumentasi. Hasil penelitian menunjukkan bahwa integrasi dirancang sistematis melalui perencanaan struktural yang melibatkan pimpinan pesantren, implementasi bertahap dengan sistem berjenjang, dan dukungan ekosistem bilingual melalui kurikulum Cambridge International. Tantangan utama bersifat teknis-linguistik meliputi kompleksitas menerjemahkan terminologi Arab-Inggris, kesulitan memilih register bahasa yang tepat, dan adaptasi dari sistem pegan ke latin, namun berhasil dimitigasi melalui strategi pembatasan materi, peer learning, dan evaluasi formatif mingguan. Program ini meningkatkan kompetensi bilingual santri untuk dakwah internasional, meskipun memerlukan penguatan kapasitas tenaga pendidik khusus dalam terminologi kitab kuning bilingual.

INTRODUCTION

Globalization has reshaped the educational landscape worldwide, compelling institutions to preserve local identities while developing global competencies. Within

the context of Islamic education, pesantren, as the oldest educational institutions in Indonesia, face the challenge of maintaining their relevance in the contemporary era without losing their traditional roots. Dhofier, (2011). This transformation requires a balance between preserving the legacy of classical Islamic scholarship and adapting to the demands of 21st-century competencies, including proficiency in international languages as a means of communication and knowledge transfer at the global level Maulida et al., (2019).

Indonesian pesantren education has historically been anchored in the study of *kitab kuning* as the foundational source of Islamic scholarship, transmitted and preserved through centuries of intellectual tradition. In the context of accelerating globalization, pesantren graduates face dual expectations. They must demonstrate deep mastery of religious knowledge while also possessing the communicative competence necessary for transnational *da'wah* and scholarly exchange. This dual demand places pesantren at a critical crossroads, where the preservation of classical Islamic learning must be strategically aligned with the development of global communication skills to ensure their continued relevance and contribution within the international Islamic intellectual landscape. (Muqoyyidin & As'ad, 2020). English, as a global lingua franca, has become an essential skill that enables santri to pursue higher education abroad, participate in international academic discourse, and disseminate Islamic values to a broader audience. The lack of international language competence may limit the scope of *da'wah* and diminish the competitiveness of pesantren graduates within the global academic arena (Syafe'i, 2017).

In response, growing numbers of pesantren have initiated reforms by strategically integrating foreign language learning into their curricula. This integration represents a deliberate effort to enhance students' global engagement, academic mobility, and capacity for transnational religious and intellectual discourse Maskur & Anto, (2018). Aqobah International School in Jombang has taken an innovative approach by directly integrating English into *kitab kuning* instruction through bilingual pedagogy. This program is designed under the vision of "Santri Goes International," aiming to prepare santri to lead *kitab kuning* studies within international academic environments and to engage in *da'wah* across various countries. The program's distinctiveness lies in integrating the deeply rooted tradition of *kitab kuning* learning with the Cambridge International curriculum. This creates an educational ecosystem that balances salaf tradition preservation with global competence demands. (Muthahari & Zaidan, 2024).

Previous research on innovations in pesantren education has examined various dimensions of modernization, yet with a focus that differs from the scope of this study. Study (Hayati, 2015) and (Aggisni et al., 2024) They analyze pesantren curriculum transformation at a macro level, emphasizing institutional management and

development in the face of globalization, but do not specifically discuss the integration of foreign languages within kitab kuning learning. Meanwhile, other studies (Haq, 2015) and (Maskur & Anto, 2018) They examine the teaching of English and Arabic in modern pesantren as separate subjects delivered outside the context of kitab kuning studies; consequently, these studies do not reflect the direct integration of foreign languages into the classical learning tradition. Although such studies contribute to a broader understanding of pesantren modernization, they have not yet addressed the pedagogical dimensions of bilingual integration within kitab kuning instruction as the core of pesantren tradition.

The literature shows a significant research gap concerning English integration in kitab kuning instruction within pesantren. Although pesantren modernization has been widely examined (Hayati, 2015; (Qomar, 2015) there is still a lack of comprehensive studies that critically analyze the processes of directly integrating foreign languages into kitab kuning learning as the core tradition of pesantren. Previous studies tend to position English learning as a separate subject (Ratnadewi, 2009; Maskur & Anto, 2018) or to examine curriculum transformation at a macro level without providing detailed exploration of classroom-level pedagogical practices (Nurlaili, 2020). Furthermore, no studies have specifically explored the linguistic challenges involved in translating Arabic kitab kuning terminology into English, the preparedness strategies of educators in delivering kitab kuning instruction bilingually, or the evaluation systems and sustainability efforts of such integration programs within pesantren implementing international curricula. An in-depth understanding of these aspects is crucial as a reference for other Islamic educational institutions seeking to develop similar models without compromising their traditional identity."

Based on the identified research gap, this study addresses three main questions: (1) how English is integrated into kitab kuning instruction at Aqobah International School , Jombang; (2) what challenges arise in the implementation of this integration, particularly in linguistic and pedagogical aspects; and (3) what efforts are undertaken to ensure the sustainability and development of the program. Accordingly, this study aims to examine the processes, strategies, challenges, and sustainability of English integration in kitab kuning teaching at the institution. Theoretically, this research contributes to the discussion on pesantren curriculum innovation and bilingual learning integration within Islamic education. Practically, the findings may serve as a reference for pesantren and other Islamic educational institutions in developing foreign language integration programs in kitab kuning instruction while maintaining the salaf scholarly tradition.

RESEARCH METHOD

This study employed a qualitative case study design to explore the process of English integration into kitab kuning instruction at Aqobah International School, Jombang (Creswell, 2014). A qualitative approach was selected because it enables researchers to understand complex phenomena of foreign language integration within the traditional pesantren learning context in a holistic and naturalistic manner (Tisdell et al., 2025). Data were collected through in-depth interviews with four key informants selected via purposive sampling: one pesantren director and three students participating in the bilingual kitab kuning learning program. The selection of informants was based on their direct involvement in the integration program, with the Director representing policy-making and curriculum management perspectives, while the santri represented learning experiences at the implementation level. Semi-structured interviews were conducted using an interview guide developed from the study's conceptual framework, covering aspects of the integration process, instructional strategies, linguistic and pedagogical challenges, and participants' responses to the program. In addition to interviews, document analysis was employed to examine bilingual learning manuals, kitab kuning syllabi, and pesantren curriculum documents as supporting data to enrich and triangulate the interview findings. The data collection process was carried out during November 2025.

Data validity and trustworthiness in this study were ensured through source triangulation and method triangulation to enhance the credibility of the research findings (Luthfiyani & Murhayati, 2024). Source triangulation was conducted by comparing and cross-validating information obtained from different perspectives, namely the managerial perspective of the pesantren Director and the empirical perspectives of three santri who directly experienced the learning process. Method triangulation was applied by combining interview data and documentary data to mutually verify and complement the research findings. In addition, this study employed member checking by reconfirming interview transcripts and the researcher's interpretations with the informants to ensure accuracy and alignment with the intended meanings of their statements (Harrison et al., 2020). The entire research process was conducted in accordance with ethical research principles, including obtaining informed consent from all informants, maintaining the confidentiality of participants' identities, and ensuring that participation was voluntary and free from coercion.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

A. Processes and Strategies of English Integration in Kitab Kuning Instruction

An English integration program in kitab kuning instruction at Aqobah International School, Jombang, emerged from a strategic vision to prepare santri capable of conducting da'wah at the international level. According to the director, the initiative arose from the pesantren's aspiration to send santri abroad for undergraduate studies with the ability to lead kitab kuning studies within international campus environments. The program was directly initiated by the pesantren leader, KH. A. Junaidi Hidayat, and subsequently designed at the technical level by the Chairman of the Foundation, Gus H. A. Kanzul Fikri, M.Pd., who also developed a bilingual learning guidebook as the primary reference for instruction.

These findings indicate that the integration of a foreign language into kitab kuning learning is not merely a methodological innovation, but rather a component of a comprehensive institutional strategy aimed at realizing the vision of "Santri Goes International." The planning process, which directly involved the pesantren leader and the foundation chairman, reflects a strong level of institutional commitment. This finding is consistent with (Syaifulah Mustofa, 2021) who emphasizes that the success of educational innovation in pesantren largely depends on structural support from institutional leadership. Furthermore, the implementation strategy adopted in this program demonstrates a gradual and well-structured approach.

Kitab kuning instruction at Aqobah International School is implemented through a tiered system consisting of introductory, intermediate, and advanced levels. The introductory level focuses on text analysis exercises and the mastery of basic nahuw-sharaf, the intermediate level emphasizes the reinforcement of comprehension, and the advanced level is dedicated to independent textual interpretation (maknai). As stated by Yazid, "In kitab studies, learning is not divided arbitrarily by grade but progresses gradually from the introductory, intermediate, to advanced levels; only at the advanced level do santri engage in autonomous interpretation." English integration is specifically applied at the ninth and twelfth-grade levels, with regular setoran sessions conducted every Monday and Tuesday using English. The instructional methods employed include: (1) rewriting the fasil (chapter) to be studied prior to the setoran; (2) interpreting the text using English with the support of dictionaries or reference materials; (3) repeated reading while awaiting one's turn for setoran; and (4) direct corrective feedback from instructors regarding harakat accuracy and translation quality. This approach aligns with the principles of scaffolding in second language learning theory, wherein pedagogical support is provided progressively according to learners' proficiency levels (Mateus, 2015). Faksi further emphasized that "the methods provided by Pak Yayı and Gus Fikri are already sufficient; the outcomes largely depend on how santri respond to the learning process." These findings confirm that systematic instructional strategies, combined

with strong institutional support, serve as the foundation for the successful integration of foreign languages within the context of kitab kuning learning.

The successful implementation of the English integration program is supported by a well-established learning ecosystem at Aqobah International School. The institution adopts the Cambridge International curriculum at the formal school level, enabling santri to become accustomed to using English as a medium of daily instruction. As explained by the Director, "The English language environment at Aqobah is already strong, as the school applies the Cambridge International curriculum, so santri are accustomed to using English." This condition creates what is referred to as an immersive bilingual environment, in which second language learning is naturally embedded within everyday academic activities (Cenoz, 2015). Munik reinforced this view by stating, "At school, we are exposed to English every day by English teachers, and through continuous practice, we gradually begin to understand more, and now our comprehension has improved significantly." Institutional support is also evident in the provision of specialized training programs for ustaz and ustazah to enhance their readiness to teach kitab kuning bilingually. Gus Fikri plays a central role in providing direct guidance to santri, particularly on Saturdays and Sundays through semaan (collective reading) sessions and individual evaluations. As stated by Yazid, "Gus Fikri usually provides guidance on Saturdays and Sundays when we have semaan sessions for interpreting kitab kuning in English."

Furthermore, the instructional approach employed by the teachers does not rely solely on classical textual language but is complemented by experiential references and concrete examples to facilitate santri' understanding. Yazid explained, "The delivery is not entirely based on classical kitab language; it also uses experiential references. Abah Yayi explains it using Indonesian." This approach aligns with the findings of (Zaelani, 2025) who emphasize that the effectiveness of foreign language learning in pesantren is strongly influenced by educators' preparedness and pedagogical strategies that combine traditional approaches with methodological innovation.

Unlike the study by (Ratnadewi, 2009) which examines English instruction as a separate subject, or the research by (Qomar, 2015) which discusses pesantren curriculum modernization from a macro perspective, the present study reveals the direct integration of a foreign language into kitab kuning instruction as the core of pesantren tradition. This model also differs from the findings of (Nurlaili, 2020) which focus on the integration of the national education system into pesantren structures without addressing pedagogical aspects at the classroom level. The uniqueness of the Aqobah International School Islamic Boarding School model lies in its bilingual learning ecosystem, developed through the Cambridge International curriculum,

which creates a conducive environment for integrating foreign languages into traditional learning. This approach aligns with the concept of Content and Language Integrated Learning (CLIL) as proposed by (Cenoz, 2015). Based on the analysis of the findings, it can be concluded that the processes and strategies of English integration at Aqobah International School are systematically designed through structural planning involving the highest levels of pesantren leadership, gradual implementation through a tiered system adapted to santri' proficiency levels, strong support from a conducive bilingual learning ecosystem fostered by the Cambridge International curriculum, and adequate educator preparedness through specialized training programs. Consequently, this integration model is comprehensive, sustainability, and significantly distinct from English learning models in pesantren examined in previous studies.

B. Challenges in Implementing the English Integration Program

A significant challenge encountered in the integration of English lies in the linguistic complexity of translating Arabic vocabulary into English. The Director identified that many Arabic terms found in kitab kuning do not have exact equivalents in English or require more than one word to convey the same meaning. As a result, explanations must be delivered gradually and repeatedly to prevent misinterpretation. This finding is consistent with the concept of untranslatability in translation theory, which suggests that certain religious or cultural terms lack direct equivalents in the target language (Ngamelubun, 2016). Munik provided a concrete example of this difficulty by stating, "Sometimes I do not even know the equivalent meaning in Indonesian, and when it has to be interpreted into English, it becomes quite difficult. For example, ngerekso in Indonesian means menjaga or melindungi, and in English it can be translated as keep or save." This case illustrates that santri face challenges not only in translating from Arabic into English, but also in first understanding intermediary meanings in Indonesian or Javanese. Faksi further emphasized this issue by stating, "The main difficulty lies in vocabulary; sometimes we do not understand certain words, and when they are very difficult, we have to look them up in a dictionary." Previous research by (Syarifah, 2020) found that Arabic language learning in traditional pesantren encounters similar challenges within the Javanese-Arabic linguistic context. However, the present study demonstrates that these challenges are compounded when three or more linguistic systems are involved simultaneously, namely Arabic, Javanese, Indonesian, and English.

Another linguistic challenge that emerged concerns the difficulty of selecting an appropriate English language register for the context of kitab kuning instruction. Yazid explained, "In Javanese, there are different levels, such as Jawa halus for formal contexts and Jawa ngoko for everyday communication. However, in English, we are

not yet familiar with appropriate registers for the context of *kitab kuning*. What we currently master is general English, as commonly used in school for daily conversation." This statement reveals santri' awareness of linguistic register variation and the need to employ a register that is suitable for religious and academic contexts. This phenomenon is closely related to the concepts of diglossia and code-switching in sociolinguistics, where language variation is selected according to social and situational contexts (Ferguson, 2015) while (Syaifullah Mustofa, 2021) found that santri in modern pesantren experience motivational challenges in learning English, the findings of this study indicate that challenges at Aqobah International School are more technical-linguistic than motivational in nature, as santri have been accustomed to a bilingual environment from the outset. These findings suggest that a supportive learning ecosystem can shift the nature of challenges from motivational aspects to technical-linguistic ones, which are fundamentally more manageable through appropriate pedagogical interventions.

Another methodological challenge identified in this study concerns the writing system used in interpreting (maknai) *kitab kuning*. Traditionally, pesantren employ *pegon* script (Arabic script used to write Javanese) to provide interpretations of *kitab kuning*. However, the integration of English requires santri to adapt to the use of the Latin alphabet. Yazid explained, "The interpretation is usually written in *pegon* (interpreting English meanings using Arabic script), which becomes quite difficult when applied to English. For interpretation, we still use Javanese, and only when asked to read do we gradually include some English, so it is not fully in English." This statement indicates that santri tend to adopt a hybrid strategy strategy by maintaining the primary interpretation in Javanese using *pegon* script while adding English equivalents using the Latin alphabet. Munik reinforced this finding by stating, "When the English terms are simple, such as conjunctions, they can be written in *pegon*. However, in my experience, there are still points of difficulty." This adaptive strategy reflects what (Mateus, 2015) describes as *translanguaging*, a practice in which learners utilize their entire linguistic repertoire to construct meaning without rigid boundaries between language systems. The adaptation period to this bilingual writing system requires considerable time. Yazid described his initial experience as follows: "At first, I was shocked by having to use *pegon*, and then I gradually tried to adapt. During this process, adjusting took quite a long time, and eventually, English words were usually written using the Latin alphabet." Munik reported a similar experience, stating, "When I first arrived here, I was very shocked. English was difficult, and I was confused. Eventually, I asked junior and senior santri about how to use English, and they taught me. Over time, I gradually became accustomed to it." These findings are consistent with acculturation theory in second language learning, which posits that

learners experience an initial phase of cultural and linguistic shock before progressing toward adaptation and acculturation.

Interestingly, despite facing significant adaptation challenges, the santri demonstrated strong resilience and developed effective peer-learning strategies. Both Yazid and Munik reported actively seeking assistance from junior and senior santri to overcome difficulties in identifying appropriate vocabulary equivalents. This peer-learning strategy reflects the social construction of knowledge within constructivist theory (Suparlan, 2019), where learning occurs through social interaction and collaboration within the zone of proximal development). (Mulyono & Hadi, 2024)) found that santri in modern pesantren who learn three languages separately tend to experience integration difficulties. However, the findings of this study indicate that with a supportive learning environment, effective peer-learning strategies, and strong personal commitment, santri are able to adapt successfully, albeit requiring additional time and effort. Faksi emphasized the importance of internal factors by stating, "If a student is serious about learning English, they will progress quickly; it does not feel overly difficult when motivation comes from within." This statement aligns with self-determination theory in language learning (Kartono & Kartikawangi, 2018) which highlights the crucial role of intrinsic motivation in overcoming learning challenges. Based on an in-depth analysis of the implementation challenges, it can be concluded that the primary obstacles consist of technical-linguistic issues rather than motivational ones. These include the linguistic complexity of translating Arabic terminology into English, difficulties in selecting appropriate language registers, and methodological adaptation from the pegon script to the Latin alphabet. Unlike findings from previous studies conducted in other pesantren contexts, these challenges were successfully mitigated through strong peer-learning practices, responsive instructional support, and high levels of santri' intrinsic motivation. Consequently, the initial phase of cultural and linguistic shock was gradually transformed into productive adaptation over time.

C. Sustainability and Development Efforts of the Integration Program

To address the challenges encountered, Aqobah International School Islamic Boarding School has implemented several systematic and measurable mitigation strategies. The first strategy involves limiting the number of chapters (fasal) discussed in a single session, allowing santri sufficient time to comprehend and memorize new English vocabulary before progressing to subsequent materials. As explained by the Director, "In one session, not too many chapters are discussed," as an effort to prevent cognitive overload among santri. This approach is consistent with the principles of cognitive load theory (Mindra et al., 2025) which posits that effective learning occurs when cognitive load is carefully managed so as not to exceed learners' working

memory capacity. The second strategy entails gradual and repeated explanations provided by instructors to ensure accurate interpretation of kitab kuning terminology. Yazid noted that the instructional delivery is easy to understand because “the explanation is not delivered entirely using the language of the text, but rather through experiential references. Abah Yayi explains it using Indonesian.” This finding indicates that instructors employ code-switching and translanguaging approaches to bridge santri’ comprehension, aligning with (Cenoz, 2015) findings on the effectiveness of multilingual approaches in academic content learning. The evaluation system of the program is conducted regularly and systematically through weekly sorogan sessions (individual recitation and interpretation). During these sessions, santri are required to read and interpret kitab kuning in English in front of Gus Fikri or Abah Yayi, who then provide direct corrections on vowel markings (harakat) and translations. Yazid described the evaluation process as follows: “During the recitation session, Abah usually corrects the tarkib (sentence structure) to ensure accuracy, as well as the harakat.” Such formative evaluation methods enable instructors to deliver immediate feedback, which is highly effective in correcting errors and strengthening santri’ understanding (Hattie & Timperley, 2007).

Santri’ responses to the English integration program demonstrate a highly positive trend after the initial adaptation phase. The Director stated that the santri were “highly enthusiastic and felt proud, as it became a unique and distinctive skill.” This sense of pride reflects an increase in santri’ self-efficacy and intrinsic motivation which Farhurohman, (2017) identifies as key factors in successful second language learning. Yazid expressed his motivation by stating, “After six years of using only Javanese, we only know Javanese. I wanted to know what it feels like to read kitab kuning in another language. English is an international language used worldwide, so I feel that I can bring one of the characteristics of Islamic scholarship reading classical texts abroad.” This statement indicates santri’ awareness of the strategic value of reading kitab kuning in English for the context of international da’wah, aligning with the pesantren’s vision of “Santri Goes International.” The positive impact of the integration program is also evident in the improvement of santri’ practical competencies across multiple dimensions. Faksi described the benefits he experienced as follows: “We are not only able to read kitab kuning in Javanese, but also in English. It makes us slightly more advanced than others in terms of language skills for reading classical texts. English also helps us practice conversation, which is very important nowadays for entering universities and pursuing higher education.” Munik added a concrete example of her experience: “There are usually guests from abroad staying here, and I have tried speaking directly with foreigners. It turned out that I could do it, and it felt easier. Previously, I thought I was not capable, but now I understand much better than before.” These findings confirm that the integration of English not

only enhances santri' academic ability to read *kitab kuning*, but also strengthens their communicative competence in real-life contexts. This is consistent with the concept of communicative competence proposed by (Hymes, 1972) which emphasizes the ability to use language effectively and appropriately across diverse social situations.

To ensure the sustainability of the program, the pesantren has formulated measurable and continuous development plans. The Director stated that "at present, the bilingual *kitab kuning* program is still limited to *Fathul Qarib*, and further development may extend to other classical texts." Expanding the program to other works, such as texts on *fiqh*, *tafsir*, or *tasawuf*, would enrich santri' competencies across various Islamic disciplines and further strengthen Aqobah International School Islamic Boarding School's position as a pioneer in integrating foreign languages into *kitab kuning* instruction. The pesantren expects the program to be "continuously maintained so that it can truly support international *da'wah*," indicating a strong long-term commitment to the internationalization of santri. However, santri also offered constructive suggestions for improving the program, which should be taken into consideration in future development. Munik suggested that "there should be a collaborative learning method involving teachers, because sometimes the vocabulary used is not quite accurate. There should be a supervising teacher to help identify the most appropriate vocabulary during group work." Faksi added, "There should be a supervising teacher who truly understands *kitab kuning* language in a bilingual context and has deep mastery of the vocabulary, so that it becomes easier for us to read and understand the texts." These suggestions indicate the need to strengthen the capacity of educators who possess expertise in *kitab kuning* terminology in both languages. This finding is consistent with (Aggisni et al., 2024) who emphasize that bilingual teacher competence is a key factor in the success of foreign language learning programs in pesantren. Furthermore, (Syafe'i, 2017) found that pesantren integrating foreign language learning are able to enhance graduates' competitiveness. The findings of this study reinforce this argument by demonstrating that integration within the context of *kitab kuning* instruction provides unique and competitive added value for santri.

Based on a comprehensive analysis of the sustainability and development efforts of the program, it can be concluded that the successful integration of English into *kitab kuning* instruction at Aqobah International School is supported by five key pillars. First, systematic mitigation strategies are implemented through content limitation and repeated explanations to prevent cognitive overload and misinterpretation. Second, a formative evaluation system is conducted through weekly *sorogan* sessions, providing immediate and continuous feedback. Third, santri demonstrate highly

positive responses and strong intrinsic motivation, driven by their awareness of the strategic value of bilingual competence for international da'wah. Fourth, the program generates tangible impacts on santri' communicative and academic competencies. Fifth, sustainability development plans are established through the expansion of the program to other classical Islamic texts and a long-term institutional commitment to maintaining the program. Nevertheless, further strengthening of educators' capacity remains necessary, particularly in developing specialized mastery of bilingual kitab kuning terminology, in order to optimize learning outcomes and address santri' need for more intensive guidance in identifying accurate and appropriate vocabulary equivalents.

CONCLUSION

This study finds that English integration in kitab kuning instruction at Aqobah International School is systematically designed through structural planning involving the highest levels of pesantren leadership, gradual implementation using a tiered system aligned with santri' proficiency levels, and strong support from a bilingual learning ecosystem fostered by the Cambridge International curriculum. This ecosystem creates a conducive environment for program success in line with the vision of "Santri Goes International." The primary challenges encountered are technical-linguistic in nature, including the complexity of translating Arabic terminology into English where no exact equivalents exist, difficulties in selecting appropriate language registers for religious learning contexts, and methodological adaptation from the pegon script to the Latin alphabet. Nevertheless, these challenges have been effectively mitigated through content limitation per session, repeated and gradual explanations by instructors, strong peer-learning strategies, a formative evaluation system through weekly sorogan, and high levels of santri' intrinsic motivation to acquire bilingual competence for international da'wah. Efforts to ensure program sustainability are reflected in the pesantren's long-term commitment to maintaining and expanding the program to classical texts beyond Fathul Qarib, positive student responses characterized by a sense of possessing unique and competitive skills compared to graduates of other pesantren, and tangible impacts in

the form of improved communicative competence with native speakers and enhanced comprehension of English texts. However, further strengthening of educators' capacity remains necessary, particularly in developing specialized mastery of bilingual kitab kuning terminology, in order to optimize learning outcomes.

This study recommends that future researchers conduct comparative studies with other pesantren implementing similar models to identify best practices that may be generalized, explore the long-term impact of the program on alumni's da'wah careers at the international level through longitudinal studies, and examine in depth the psycholinguistic aspects of santri' code-switching and translanguaging processes within a trilingual context (Arabic–Indonesian/Javanese–English) to contribute theoretically to the development of language learning models in modern pesantren. Islamic educational institutions and pesantren education policymakers are advised to consider adopting similar integration models by adapting them to local contexts, allocating resources for intensive training of educators in bilingual Islamic terminology, developing standardized bilingual kitab kuning curricula and teaching materials, and establishing partnerships with international educational institutions to expand santri' opportunities for further study and da'wah across countries. Through these efforts, the vision of pesantren as globally competitive centers of Islamic scholarship can be realized without compromising the preservation of the classical scholarly traditions (salaf) passed down through generations.

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