

## Strengthening Students' Religious Moderation through English Learning Materials

DOI:10.22515/ljbs.v8i2.7482



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submitted: 18/8/2023 revised: 28/10/2023 accepted: 1/11/2023 published: 12/11/2023 pages: 165-175

### ABSTRACT

This study aims at developing English teaching materials by internalizing religious moderation for non-English students at Islamic higher education. The developed learning materials is in the form of module that is compiled based on students' needs. This is a Research and Development (R&D) with need analysis, planning, development, revision, and production. The subjects of this study were two English lecturers of non-English study program at UIN Raden Mas Said Surakarta. The data were obtained from observation in the classrooms, interviews on Islamic moderation, and the document of English learning book. The expert judgments were applied to validate the development of the English materials. The developed materials do not only contain language competences, but also consist of some topics based on contextual learning with the basis of English for Specific Purposes (ESP) which is integrated with religious moderation values. The themes coming from students' needs are: tolerance, respecting others, false information (hoax), helping each other, multiculturalism, and bullying. The internalization of religious moderation in developing English teaching materials is considered supportive to prevent the students from intolerance and radicalism.

**Key words:** higher education, material development, moderation

### INTRODUCTION

Cultural diversity, race, ethnicity, language, and religious in Indonesia can trigger conflict due to some differences. Some of the reasons behind these conflicts are religious fanaticism. Amrullah (2022) argues that religious fanaticism can lead on terrible problem for sustainability of the nation. Indonesian Ministry of Religious Affair seeks to reduce social and religious conflicts through religious moderation in leaning process. Religious moderation is defined as the balance between the acts of practicing one's own religion (exclusive) and the attitudes and behavior of others who have different beliefs (inclusive) (Sutrisno 2019).

Religious moderation is possible to be integrated in English teaching learning process by establishing learning materials related to Islamic moderation. These developments support the need of practical learning for people around the world (Richard 2001). Knowing the importance of English for global communication, it is crucial to integrate religious moderation in English teaching learning process through the learning materials at Islamic higher education. To prevent students from religious fanaticism, students should be taught Islamic moderation values through the teaching materials. As stated by Amrullah (2022), in order to avoid radicalism, extremism, and intolerance, the comprehension of moderation roles as the first strategy to overcome these cases.

In Islamic higher education, the teaching materials should contain the ideology of Islamic moderation. Suharto (2017) argues that one way to internalize the ideology of Islamic moderation in the curriculum is through Islamic education subject. Implementing religious moderation in teaching learning process can be done through internalization religious moderation values in the curriculum. Further, in Indonesian context, moderation is described into three pillars, namely moderation of thinking which is related to the ability to integrate text and context,

moderation of movement which correlates to the spreading of religion based on goodness principles, and moderation of actions which is correlated to relationship between religious and culture of society (Kementerian Agama RI 2019).

Islamic Higher Education can internalize Islamic moderation both in formal and non-formal situation. In formal education context, the institution can determine curriculum by developing teaching materials oriented to religious moderation. It can be done through providing texts and activities of learning materials that contain Islamic moderation. In informal context, internalization of Islamic moderation can be done through students' discussion and other activities which contain nationality. Afwadzi and Miski (2021) state that in formal academic, Islamic Higher Education can make a policy by assigning curriculum that aimed to Islamic moderation development.

In establishing the curriculum related to Islamic moderation should consider that the main objective of English learning process is to enable students to understand language skills related to students' needs. Thus, the curriculum should involve contextualized language experiences. The contextualization is accommodated in learning materials that create positive vibes, such as: motivation, positive thought. Tomlinson (2008) argues that English learning should attach students both cognitively and affectively. The consequence is that the materials of each level should motivate them to practice English language both oral and written authentically. Further, he emphasizes that if the text does not stimulate them to think and feel the use of foreign language, the chance of learning materials in facilitating English mastery as foreign language is low.

The weakness of English learning as foreign language is the absence of authentic context in practicing it. Students should be facilitated appropriate learning materials to face the real situation in everyday life and social life. According to Kusuma and Apriyanto (2018), students need to be taught in the contextualized topic to give them experiences in practicing English in their daily life. For that reason, teaching materials should be selected for the appropriate textbook related to students' needs. Learning materials should be designed with authentic and related learning activities (Tomlinson 2008). Further, Dewi et al., (2023) state that authentic and meaning materials in teaching process are essential to help them prepare in academic and professional levels.

Good learning materials that are intended for students are those that meet the students' needs. For that reason, need analysis (NA) especially for English for Specific Purposes (ESP) becomes a crucial thing that should be done for the developer or lecturer to identify the weaknesses and strengths of the skills for academic contexts. NA is crucial in learning English for ESP to identify students' needs and determine the areas that they are lacking (Alsamadani 2017). Preliminary research of this study was in the form of in-depth interviews conducted with English lecturers of Islamic Education Study Program of UIN Raden Mas Said Surakarta. The current students' book used by the lecturer is English materials of *New Interchange: Student's Book 1* (1997). The book integrates language skills of listening, speaking, reading, and writing using communicative strategy.

Heretofore, English learning materials that based on students' needs are not yet available on IE study program. It can be said that English learning in non-English study programs in UIN Raden Mas Said Surakarta still uses the teaching materials that are not specifically designed to students' needs. The learning materials for all non-English study programs are still the same, even the students' needs are different. The English learning materials just focus on language skills using general topics rather than considering for ESP.

Language learning should provide learning materials that motivate and engage students. Davies (1995), Nuttall (1996), Urquhart and Weir 1998 (in Wallace 2003) states that sometimes learning a foreign language gives unsatisfactory results. In teaching English as foreign language, supportive atmosphere learning should be built to get the optimal outcomes. The supportive environmental learning could be created by the teaching materials availability on scientific fields studied by the students. Thus, the need of learning materials of one study program is different with other study programs and the learning materials should be distinguished based on students' needs.

English learning in IE study program should also consider the context of the community's needs, especially for students' needs, where they live in a multicultural, religious, ethnic, racial and language environment. As previously mentioned, to prevent students from religious fanaticism, radicalism, extremism, and intolerance can be done through integrating English learning materials with religious moderation. Suprpto (2020) argues that the development of religious moderation in the curriculum of IE study program can be carried out by strengthening tolerance among students, creating an atmosphere of peace, having dialog between religions, open minded, fight against the hate speech inside and outside the educational environment.

In the context of religious moderation in Islamic Higher Education, developing materials by internalization of religious moderation become an urgent case. The urgency to provide teaching materials based on students' needs in IE study program of UIN Raden Mas Said Surakarta requires a Research and Development about English materials which contain religious moderation. This study is aimed at developing teaching materials based on NA of IE study program. The product is English teaching materials which is integrated with religious moderation. As stated by Afwadzi and Miski (2021), one of the primary reasons why religious moderation becomes essential is to prevent radical view in higher education environment, such as students, lecturers, and educational staff. The radical view may affect their mindset without them knowing it. Therefore, it becomes a big challenge for Islamic higher education to anticipate the worst thing happens.

## RESEARCH METHOD

The design of this research was Research and Development (R&D) adopted from Borg and Gall (2007). Research and Development is a model development of the research which is used to design a product and new procedure that is systematically tested in the field, evaluated, and revised as far as it accomplishes the criteria of effectiveness and standard quality (Gall, Gall, and Borg, 2007). The procedure of the research included: (1) need analysis, (2) planning, (3) development of learning materials using expert validation, (4) revision of materials development, and (5) learning products. The validity testing was carried out by experts with the qualifications of English lecturers.

The English materials development based on religious moderation of Islamic Education Study Program used three techniques of data collection. Firstly, data were collected by analyzing the student's book of *New Interchange 2* through need analysis. The other data were in the form of the documents of study results (English learning book). In addition, the researchers also did in-depth interviews related to Islamic religious moderation to the English lecturers of IE program study. There were also data obtained from validator's comments, suggestions, and criticisms toward the design and development prototype of teaching materials product. Besides, observation and reflection on the implementation of religious moderation were conducted to complete the data.

Subsequently, the data were analyzed based on Creswell's (2014) method of data analysis. The steps of the analysis consisted of: (1) data organization and preparation, (2) data reading, (3) data coding, (4) data description, (5) data presentation, and (6) data interpretation (Creswell 2014).

**RESULTS AND DISCUSSION**  
**Need Analysis**

The development of English learning materials appropriate for students of Islamic Education Study Program is analyzed by observation dan interviews. To obtain the data related to students' needs, the researchers also conducted interviews to know students' problems during learning English using the students' book used in the classrooms.

From need analysis, it is known that that the students' handbook officially used for English learning is *New Interchange 2*. The outline of this book can be seen in Table 1.

*Table 1: The Results of Analysis to New Interchange 2 Book*

<b>Indicator</b>	<b>Analysis</b>
Language skills	Each unit is provided by four language skills: listening, speaking, reading, and writing.
Grammar	Each unit is completed by grammar activity.
Pronunciation	Each unit is provided by pronunciation practice.
Vocabulary	Each unit is completed by vocabulary mastery.
Work activity	Each unit is completed by exercises.
Materials	The topics are about general English learning and do not specific to Islamic Education study program. The contents do not provide religious moderation.

The book provides four English language skills, i.e. listening, speaking, reading, and writing. Listening activities are provided in all units with various topics depending on the theme of unit. Speaking materials are also available in the whole parts of the book. In some learning exercises, the activities of speaking skill are combined with those of listening. Students are requested to listen the conversation from the audio and then asked to repeat the conversation based on the text. Likewise, writing activities are presented together with reading activities. Therefore, material topics of the writing activities are the same with those of reading activities. The book is also completed with some language knowledge components, namely vocabulary, grammar, and pronunciation that correlate to the topics. The book uses a communicative approach to develop students' communication skills.

The development of English teaching materials which is started with students' needs analysis aimed at providing appropriate materials for the students of Islamic Education Study Program based on observation, interviews, and documentation. Based on the analysis, it can be seen how are the students' conditions, characteristics, materials learning needs, and material used in teaching learning process.

From the need analysis, there are found some problems related to the teaching materials. First, the existing teaching materials in the students' handbook are considered not appropriate to support students' specific major of Islamic Education Study Program in neither academic nor professional aspects. The book *New Interchange 2* does not provide supportive materials using contextual learning that focus on specific skill for students of Islamic Education Study Program. The contexts of the learning materials that do not represent their

daily lives make the students bored and find it difficult to understand the materials.

Second, most students are passive during the teaching-learning process. Although the lecturer has triggered the students by asking some questions, just few of them respond to the questions. Providing contextual teaching materials related to students' needs can make the students more attractive in the teaching-learning process.

Third, learning outcomes are not achieved optimally. Considering that one of the goals from teaching-learning process is to gain the benefits from learning materials, the students of Islamic Education Study Program do not get optimal advantages from the learning materials due to the lacking contextual learning materials. Learning contexts which relates to the material contents in the students' handbook are considered influential to the success of the teaching-learning process.

Fourth, the teaching materials do not provide Islamic or religious moderation. Providing learning materials based on religious moderation has become students' need due to the urgency teaching religious moderation in Islamic Higher Education. Therefore, it requires a material developer who prepares and develops learning materials containing religious moderation values.

In term of developing English learning materials which becomes the focus of this research, the English students' books need to be improved to concentrate on Islamic Education Study Program. The results of material analysis show that the teaching materials do not accommodate students' needs for their real lives and academic purposes. The materials in the students' book do not contain contextual teaching materials that support both academic or professional aspects for the students of Islamic Education Study Program. Rohimajaya et al. (2021) states that providing English material that correlate to the students' daily lives or professions will make them interested to the lecture. The materials on *New Interchange 2* only focus on giving materials on language skills without any contextual learning of specific themes related to their needs.

Based on the interviews to the English lecturers of Islamic Education Study Program, it is shown that learning materials in *New Interchange 2: Students' Book* are focused on understanding four language skills by using communicative skills. Although the book discusses multiculturalism, the learning materials for students of Islamic Education need to be completed with contextual learning related to the students' needs. This is closely related to the learning of religious moderation values. Therefore, the lecturers agree that developing English learning materials which integrate language skills and religious moderation values need to be done.

Contextual learning based on students' needs in Islamic Education Study Program are also related to the internalization of religious moderation which has been included in the curriculum of the study program. Based on the analysis results, the materials on *New Interchange 2: Students' Book* do not contain the values of religious moderation. In the context of Islamic moderation in Islamic Higher Education environment, internalization of religious moderation is considered something urgent (Afwadzi and Miski 2021).

Internalization of religion moderation plays an important role to prevent students of higher education from radicalism. To actualize the goal, it can be done by providing materials regarding the nationality. For these reasons, the teaching materials need contextual learning which provides specific materials based on students' needs. The researchers intended to provide English learning materials for students of Islamic Education Study Program by integrating religious moderation values in the contents of the teaching materials.

**Planning** After identifying students’ needs, the researchers designed the English teaching materials. The researchers searched for some references of theories and related studies to this research. The development of educational product of this research is in the form of teaching materials (module). The previous theoretical and related studies reviewed for this research are focused on textbooks, curriculums, and teaching English methods. The module designed by contextual learning is based English for Specific Purposes (ESP) and integrated with religious moderation. These basic consideration in developing teaching materials by using ESP is to provide materials related to the environments or students’ daily lives. Rohimajaya et al. (2021) state that some principles coming from ESP are authentic materials, materials based on contextual learning, and the usefulness of learning materials for students (what, why, and how). Therefore, the module consists of themes related to the students of Islamic Education Study Program.

**Material Development** The process of developing the English teaching materials takes several steps as the followings.

**Concept** Based on needs analysis, the development of the learning materials was carried out in the following analysis. The module was developed for students of Islamic Education Study Program based on ESP and integrated to the concept of religious moderation, linguistics knowledge, language skills, and Islamic contents. The the module design is shown in Table 2.

*Table 2: Module Design Planning*

<b>Part of the Module</b>	<b>Description</b>	<b>Theoretical Concept</b>
Snapshot	General information in the theme in form of pictures	Providing learning materials using ESP
Core activity	Providing materials that focus on language skills using contextual materials are correlated to religious moderation	principals which based on students’ needs and using authentic materials
Grammar	Explaining the use of grammar	
Pronunciation	Describing language component in practicing pronunciation	
Evaluation	Giving work activity	

Students are introduced to the materials through a snapshot which describes the general information about the materials content in the unit. Core activity of each unit contains language skills which consist of speaking, reading, writing, and listening. Considering about the urgency for internalization of religious moderation through the learning materials, the developed learning materials are texts that include the themes related to students of Islamic Education Study Program needs and integrated to religious moderation. The teachings of language competences, such as grammar and pronunciation, are provided after the contextual learning method is described. To measure students’ skills and understandings, the researchers completed the developed learning materials by some work activities on each aspect.

**Identification** At this stage, the researchers identified any problems faced by the lecturers and students during learning English in Islamic Education Study Program. Based on

the students' and lecturer's needs towards the learning materials, some issues were found as follows:

1. Learning materials should include contextual learning for students of Islamic Education Study Program. Reading texts are adjusted to students' needs.
2. The themes of learning materials related to Islamic Education Study Program integrated to religious moderation.

**Exploration** The researchers explored the functions of learning English skills for the students of Islamic Education Study Program. The aims of the religious education are to enhance students' competences which include skills and values.

**Realization** At this stage, the researchers actualized ideas, contexts, and texts which were combined with the exercises and activities appropriate to Islamic Education Study Program curriculum. Systematically, students can obtain cognitive aspect from learning materials correlated to the contextual learning of Islamic Education Study Program and affective aspect from internalization of religious moderation. Having arranged the module design planning and identified students and lecturer needs, the researchers determined the themes of the developed materials. Table 3 shows the selected themes for the module.

Table 3: Module Themes

Unit	Theme
1	<i>Tolerance</i>
2	<i>Respecting Other</i>
3	<i>False Information (Hoax)</i>
4	<i>Helping Each Other</i>
5	<i>Multiculturalism</i>
6	<i>Bullying</i>

The consideration of deciding these themes refers to the values of religious moderation published by the Ministry of Religious Affair. The selection of these themes was intended to specify the topic to adjust to the relevance of students' reading interests and needs. Students have been familiar with these themes, since they already have the background knowledge related to the themes. The developed learning materials are integrated to religious moderation and emphasized on tolerance. Thus, the materials themes include multicultural and religious lives, peace, fighting against hate speeches and hoaxes and helping each other. In line with Suprpto (2020), the integration of religious moderation in the curriculum of Islamic Education Study Program can be carried out by strengthening tolerance among students, creating the atmosphere of peace, having dialogue between religions, open minded, as well as preventing hate speech within and outside the educational environment.

The concept of tolerance is supposed to be a foundation to prevent a friction among students of Islamic Education Study Program. As stated by Masturin (2023), the concept of religious tolerance becomes the principles of freedom of religion, respecting for other religions, and kinship. Further, he explains that intolerance and friction in the name of religion are reality of religious life that appears from suspicious attitudes, distrust each other, and living in disharmony. In line with this, Afwadzi and Miski (2021) state that tolerance is offering space and respecting other's to believe, express, and present their arguments, though they have different beliefs.

The developed learning materials based on religious moderation for Islamic Education Study Program teaches students freedom right that should be balanced in all aspects of life. In this context, through the theme of *multiculture*, students are taught to accept any cultural differences. For example, it is described by the students' willingness for accepting religious practices related to local cultures and traditions. Indonesia is a country with various cultures and traditions and use religious values as its approach. As stated by Afwadzi and Miski (2021), by having moderate attitude, someone will be wiser by viewing a religion not as the antithesis but as a mutual advantage to the local culture.

The development of learning materials based on religious moderation also aims at shaping students' characters to keep good relations toward others without seeing the background of their religions. Absolutely, it should be implemented continuously through classroom activities, extracurricular programs, and others positive programs that support students' attitudes. Therefore, the developed learning materials are expected to be able to prevent students from bullying. It is in line with Masturin (2023) who states that Islamic Education learning is a process of mutual relationship between lecturers, students, and the environment. Therefore, the process and outcome of teaching-learning can be actualized by inserting Islamic values that include *aqidah*, worship, *mua'amalah*, moral, and cultural history.

#### ***Production***

The product of this research and development is a module of English learning materials for students of Islamic Education study program of Raden Mas Said State Islamic University that has been validated by experts. At this stage, the researchers adjusted the content of developed learning materials with the layout, fonts, visuals, and thickness. Giving the appropriate and related visuals to the texts will make students interested in learning the subjects.

#### **Revision of Material Development**

In the revision of material development stage, the researchers discussed the contents of developed module with two experts from English language and ESP fields of competence. The former has specific expertise in English teaching and linguistics and already has English teaching material products. Meanwhile, the latter is an English lecturer who possess Islamic religious education knowledge. The revisions were based on the experts' notes that consisted of criticisms and suggestions. Overall, the results showed that the developed materials are appropriate to students of Islamic Education Study Program. The developed English teaching materials were then improved to meet the concepts of students needs that have been made before.


#### **Learning Product**

The product of this research is a module of English materials for students of Islamic Education Study Program. It is proposed to become one of the learning media to guide the lecturers and students in the teaching-learning process. Since the materials have been validated and revised by involving the experts in ESP, the module which is integrated with religious moderation is expected to meet the needs of Islamic Education Study Program. Rohimajaya et al. (2021) state that a good module is a module that triggers students' to reach their specific goals. To gain the success, the teaching and learning process need to be correlated with contextual learning materials. As stated by Arianto (2011) the more the learners enable to correlate their academic lessons, the more meanings they will gain from the lessons. Therefore, the module does not only provide materials about language competences, but also containing materials related to their daily lives. Religious moderation is also provided in the learning materials to fill the urgency in internalizing the aspects of moderation.



Figure 1 is an excerpt of developed learning material taken from Unit 1 that discusses tolerance and fanaticism.

**E. READING**  
**Religious Tolerance and Fanaticism**



Religion evokes strong reactions in people. In the name of religion, people have invaded countries and fought in wars. History has many intense examples of religious persecution, but also some striking examples of tolerance. Surprisingly, a Mogul emperor from the 16th century was one of the most tolerant man of all time.

Akbar the Great ruled almost all of northern India from 1556 to 1605, and he has been called the greatest ruler in Indian history. Akbar was a colorful character who loved to hunt with sleek, train cheetahs and ride on elephants and bedecked with jewels and silk. In between these

b. How did Akbar show his tolerance among many religions in India?  
c. Do you agree with Akbar's ways of showing his tolerance? Why?

**F. GRAMMAR FOCUS Past tense**  
The past tense in English is used to talk about the **past**

There are four past tense forms in English:

Past simple	I walk
Past continuous	I was walking
Past perfect	I had walked
Past perfect continuous	I had been walking

Akbar the Great ruled almost all of northern India from 1556 to 1605.  
He has been called the greatest ruler in Indian history.  
Akbar was a colorful character.

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Figure 1: An Excerpt of the Material

The topic is considered relevant for students of Islamic Education Study Program both theoretically and practically. Each unit is completed with a grammar focus to support the mastery of the four language skills.

### Effectiveness

The effectiveness of developed learning materials can be seen from students learning motivation. The aspect of student motivation has already been a sufficient category. It has fulfilled all the indicators of motivation, willingness to study, enthusiasm, and persistence. Therefore, the developed learning materials can be said to be effective. It has been integrated with religious moderation values for students of Islamic Education Study Program and is not only purposed to improve students' language skills, but also for increasing students' motivation. It is developed based on contextual learning based on students' needs in relation with their everyday lives and integrated to Islamic moderation.

Based on the interviews, the English lecturers of Islamic Education Study Program argued that the developed learning materials could increase students' active participation and motivation during the teaching-learning process. Further, they claimed that students became more active and critical both in the discussions and giving opinions on texts. Students also looked enthusiastic to participate in the activities provided in each unit.

### CONCLUSION

The development of English learning materials for students of Islamic Education Study Program of UIN Raden Mas Said Surakarta was conducted based on students' needs. English learning materials that only focus on the method for mastering language skills can make the students to fail in the process of learning because the learning atmosphere do not support them. One aspect of the environment that supports language learning is the availability of teaching materials appropriate to the field of study the students are in.

The needs of English language materials are different from one study program to others. Therefore, research on developing English learning materials for Islamic Education Study Program has to do and it has been done through some steps, namely: need analysis, planning, development, revision, and product. The evaluation from the experts based on contents and presentation can be said to be effective and appropriate for ESP. The module also contains the urgent aspect of religious moderation which was designed by the Ministry of Religious Affairs. One suggestion coming from this research is that the future researchers are encouraged to conduct and develop more specific English learning materials to internalize Islamic moderation to prevent students of Islamic Education from radicalism.

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**ARTICLE CITATION IN *THE CHICAGO MANUAL OF STYLE 16***

**In-text Citation**

Budiasih and Dewi (2023, 170) .....

..... (Budiasih and Dewi 2023, 170)

**Reference List Entry**

Budiasih and Fitri Ana Ika Dewi. 2023. "Strengthening Students' Religious Moderation through English Learning Materials". *Leksema: Jurnal Bahasa dan Sastra* 8 (2): 165-175. <https://doi.org/10.22515/ljbs.v8i2.7482>

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