

# Integrating Qur'anic Stories into English Language Teaching: Voices From Indonesia

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**Submission date:** 11-May-2022 01:19PM (UTC+0700)

**Submission ID:** 1833628374

**File name:** Integrating\_Quranic\_Stories\_into\_ELТ\_GJAT\_Dedi\_Irwansyah.docx (730.32K)

**Word count:** 6740

**Character count:** 38443

## INTEGRATING QUR'ANIC STORIES INTO ENGLISH LANGUAGE TEACHING: VOICES FROM INDONESIA

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### Abstract

Qur'an, which includes Qur'anic stories, has been a primary reading text for Muslim learners. Within the growing concern of contextual learning materials, discussion on how Qur'anic stories may have contributed to the English language teaching (ELT) area is still under research. This interdisciplinary study investigates the voices of English practitioners and experts in Islamic education and Qur'anic studies about the usability of Qur'anic stories in ELT. Their voices were used as the basis for designing a learning material prototype. Seventeen English practitioners from three cities in Indonesia, one expert in the field of Islamic education, and two experts in the field of Qur'anic studies were involved in this developmental research. The findings of the research show that Qur'anic stories deserve a place in ELT when they are equipped with reflective thinking activities, appropriate language level, proper assessment system, self-generated illustration, and proper transliteration of Islamic terms. It is recommended that Qur'anic stories be taught within the approach of teaching literature as a resource stressing the morality aspect of the stories.

**Keywords:** English language teaching, Islamic education, learning materials, morality, Qur'anic stories

### INTRODUCTION

Qur'anic stories are practically not popular in the area of English language teaching (ELT), yet are theoretically strongly suggested because of two reasons. *First*, from the perspective of Islamic education, al-Qur'an is full of lesson and reminder that should be the basis of universe, let alone education (Anas, Zubir, & Atek, 2018); and a source of knowledge that should not be merely treated as philosophical, legal, and historical material (Abdul-rahim, 2017; Arif, 2019). As Moslem scholars are suggested to assimilate modern sciences into the foundation of Islamic guidance and source of knowledge (Zarkasyi, 2019), the use of Qur'anic stories in ELT deserves Moslem English teachers' attention. *Second*, current discussion on ELT foregrounds how locality and particularity are accommodated on the English instructional process. Scholars urge that ELT should take into account pleasurable reading and thematic interpretation (Schraw, 1997); circumstances of the institution (Indrianti, 2012); various contexts (Walker, 2012); epistemic break in English (Kumaravadivelu, 2012: 9); social forces (Littlejohn, 2012); social and cultural mediation (Widodo, 2019); and local teaching situation (Love & Love, 2019). Kumaravadivelu (2012) argues, "...globalism presents challenges as well as opportunities for individuals to exercise their agency in order to construct their identities." This paper argues that Qur'anic stories are best implemented in a reading class to

accommodate the particularity of Islamic educational institutions and to construct Muslim learners' identities.

The existing studies on English reading have highlighted four essential notions. First, the teaching of reading in the 21<sup>st</sup> century should be interdisciplinary to help students figure out a proper solution to a problem (Kissau & Hiller, 2013). Second, solid reading materials should adopt a wide variety of texts which fit students' various reading skills (Asl et al., 2014). Third, a reading course should aim to increase the students' linguistic skills and enhance critical thinking (Khonamri et al., 2016). Fourth, the use of short stories in Indonesian Islamic higher institutions is of paramount importance (Irwansyah et al., 2017). The existing studies, however, have not yet specifically discussed the usability of Qur'anic stories for an English reading class and the possibility of designing learning materials of reading, which is based on Qur'anic stories.

This study attempts to fill in the above-mentioned gap by answering three research questions, namely: (1) What are the English practitioners' voices related to the usability of the Qur'anic stories in TEFL? (2) What are the voices of the experts of Qur'anic studies and Islamic education about the Qur'anic stories in TEFL? (3) What is the Qur'anic story-based learning materials like?

This study, then, has three goals. The first is to investigate the English practitioners' voices. It is assumed that the practitioners would accept the Qur'anic stories due to the values of character education within. This assumption is consistent with Zuchdi (2013), who reported that stories derived from scriptures are excellent resources for supporting the character education in Indonesia. The second goal is to investigate the voices of interdisciplinary experts. It is predicted that the experts would affirm the use of Qur'anic stories due to the need to instill Islamic values into non-religious sciences. This assumption is in tune with the notion of integration and interconnection of religious sciences and general sciences in Indonesian Islamic higher education (Siswanto, 2015). The third goal is to present a prototype of the Qur'anic story-based learning materials. It is assumed that the materials would fit a particular need of ELT in the Islamic educational context.

## **LITERATURE REVIEW**

### **Stories in Language Education**

Stories, or broadly termed as literature, play a substantial role in upholding students' interests in English language learning. When the texts are enjoyable and meaningful, they touch the students' affective domain and remain unforgettable in the students' memory (Hoque, 2007). The incorporation of stories in language classes is nowadays reviving. Professional organizations and special interest groups promote the use of literary texts in language teaching (Tatsuki, 2015). It is worth noting that stories as a part of the literary texts can be used as a springboard to teach English and to inculcate specifically intended values.

The use of literature, including stories, in a foreign language classroom, is not free from drawbacks. The language complexity of an authentic literary text might be too difficult for students to grasp. The text might be impractical in that it has no direct connection with students' occupational and academic needs. Besides, the students' existing values and the cultural values inherent in the text written in a foreign language might be contradictory (Tevdovska, 2016). The recognition of the disadvantages of using literature in a foreign language classroom should lead teachers to conduct needs analysis related to the texts and strategies that best fit their teaching contexts.

### **Qur'anic Stories**

Qur'anic stories refer to the stories found in or derived from the Holy Qur'an. In his translator's note on Ibn Katheer's *Stories of the Quran*, Al-Halawani maintains that the stories in the Qur'an contain advice for human beings and serve as a reminder that verifies and restores the right course of inappropriate beliefs and concepts. They should be significant for Muslims throughout history, many Muslim scholars have tried to compile and comment on them (Katheer, 2001). It is evident that Qur'anic stories possess aesthetic and divine aspects that differentiate them from those purely emerging from human creativity.

The use of the Qur'anic stories in English language teaching should bring multiple benefits for Islam-affiliated schools. The stories contain not only linguistic and historical input but also religious input in the form of messages and values. More about the last point mentioned Halim (2016) exemplified that the story of Prophet Yusuf provides the readers with such values as obedient, patient, strong belief and confidence to Allah, strong faith to Allah, grateful and thankfulness, Allah's plan upon human's plan, and justice and truth. It becomes evident that some of the values, such as patience and thankfulness, might be universal, and some are specific for Muslims, such as strong faith in Allah and Allah's arrangement upon human's plan. Thus, by utilizing the English-written Qur'anic stories, teachers might expose the students to the English language itself and the enjoyment of reading stories. Moreover, teachers would help students to fulfill Islamic duty when they have the students recite the verses of the Qur'an containing the given stories.

### **Teachers' Voice**

Teachers' voice represents the educators' reflections on the multiple variables influencing classroom practices and aims to contribute to enhancing the teaching and learning process (Castillo & Cortés, 2012). The voice is central to the elicitation of factors that make a program useful and sustainable. Moreover, it should be viewed as teachers' participation in designing, implementing, and obtaining the best practice of the program itself (Martínez, 2016). Nart (2019) also urges that the investigation of the teachers' voice helps stakeholders discover and examine the problems faced by the teachers working at a certain level or condition of education.

It is evident that the teachers' voice is one of the most critical aspects of instructional development. Although the voice might not represent the whole feedback, understanding, and reflection of the teachers, the voice is needed to figure out the imagined instructional best practice. Xu (2018) emphasizes that teachers' voice is the feedback provided by the teachers to enhance both their professional development and their instructional practice. Thus, to make concrete instructional development, the teachers' voices should be heard. For the study, the voices of English teachers and Islamic study teachers are treated as feedback related to the usability of Qur'anic stories in EFL.

## **METHODS**

### **Participants**

This article is a part of developmental research that aims to develop and validate an educational product to enhance education quality in the researcher's teaching context (Soenarto, 2013). The researchers seek to develop a prototype of Qur'anic story-based learning materials for a reading class at an English education department of State Islamic Institute of Metro, Lampung, Indonesia. The setting of research allows the use of the Qur'anic stories for two reasons. First, all students and teachers in such settings are Moslems who believe that reading the holy Qur'an as a noble deed. Second, as the setting belongs to the Indonesian Islamic higher education, it

must suggest the integration of Islamic texts into ELT. The participants of this research included three experts of Islamic studies majoring Qur'anic studies and Islamic education in state Islamic Institute of Metro; and seventeen Moslem English teachers from three cities in Indonesia, namely Metro, Jakarta, and Mataram who voluntarily involved in this research.

#### **Materials and Procedure**

As the research procedure, a questionnaire related to the needs analysis of the use of the Qur'anic stories in a reading class was distributed to seventeen Moslem English teachers. The questions of the questionnaire embraced the necessity of utilizing Qur'anic stories in TEFL, relevant visuals, text presentation, alternative stories, and teacher' expectations. Additionally, an interview was conducted with two first experts of Islamic studies related to the integration of the Qur'anic stories into English learning materials.

The data were then analyzed qualitatively through five steps: preparing, coding, displaying, interpreting, and validating. In interpreting the data, the researchers come up with their reflections and literature comparing toward the reflections. Of the many validating strategies, member checking was used in this research (Creswell, 2012). Next to these five steps was developing a prototype of English learning materials based on the needs analysis and the qualitative results. The developed prototype was then validated by another expert of Qur'anic studies.

## **RESULTS**

### **English Practitioners' Voices**

Seventeen English practitioners from three cities in Indonesia gave voices to the urgency of using the Qur'anic stories in TEFL, the insertion of Qur'anic verses into English reading materials, the insertions of Islamic visuals into the learning materials, the presentation forms of the Qur'anic stories, and the preferable Qur'anic stories to be integrated into the learning materials.

Tabel 1

*Qur'anic stories and learning materials development*

<b>Aspects</b>	<b>Urgency</b>		
	Very Necessary	Necessary	Not Necessary
The insertion of Islamic visuals	47,1%	52,9%	
The insertion of Qur'anic verses	64,7%	35,3%	
The urgency of using the Qur'anic stories	76,5%	23,5%	

Table 1. shows that all respondents agreed on inserting the Qur'anic stories into the English reading materials. The majority of the respondents, moreover, urged that such inclusion is very necessary. It also reveals that the insertion of relevant Qur'anic verses, as a complementary aspect to strengthen the use of the English-written Qur'anic stories, is considered very important by more than 60% of the respondents. While it is not always easy to find out an English reading materials accompanied by Qur'anic verses in the English language education department in Indonesia, the notion of inserting relevant Qur'anic verses is plausible. Such insertion is advantageous in terms of conditioning the students spiritually through the recitation of the Qur'anic verses at the beginning part of the instruction. As such, the instructional process itself would be both intellectual and spiritual experiences. It is consistent with the goals of Indonesian national education, which seek to facilitate the students' spiritual, emotional, intellectual, and kinesthetic intelligence (Madya, 2008).

Table 1. also presents that visual aspects of the Qur’anic stories should be essential. The term visual might broadly refer to pictures, graphs, and coloring, while this research could specifically designate calligraphies, Islamic symbols, and Islamic arts. Islamic visuals are needed to attract students’ attention, help the process of association in reading, build proper schemata, and increase the text modality. Although less than 50% of the respondents state that Islamic visuals are vital, none of them claim if such visuals are unnecessary. Concerning text modality, Kišicek & Lauc, (2015) urge that a text with a rich modality helps users perceive information in a way they prefer.

While utilizing Qur’anic stories in TEFL deserves the practitioners’ attention, the form of the stories to be presented is another essential aspect to be discussed. The stories could be presented as an intertextual, a paraphrase, or a literal translation. Figure 1. is related to the preferable presentation forms of the Qur’anic stories.

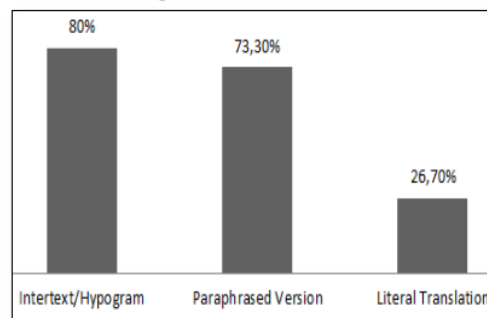


Figure 1. The presentation forms of the Qur’anic stories

Figure 1. shows that intertext or hypogram is the preferable form of the Qur’anic stories presentation. Intertext or intertextuality refers to a given text’s relationship with other texts (Baldick, 2001: 128). In this sense, the Qur’anic serves as a hypogram that becomes the basis for developing other texts. Texts of this kind might not contain the stories implicitly found within the holy Qur’an. Additionally, more than 70% of respondents prefer to utilize the paraphrased form of the Qur’anic stories. It is particularly reasonable because beginner readers might find it challenging to read a literal English translation of the stories, which is sometimes written in Old English. Thus, paraphrasing the stories for the sake of graded readers would increase the readers’ opportunity to access and enjoy the stories (Limited, 2014). Nevertheless, the use of literal English translation of the stories is acceptable for more than 25% of the respondents. The use of Old English itself would likely widen the readers’ horizon about the variety of English language.

Furthermore, it is worth noting the many stories in the Holy Qur’an, the stories related to *Ashabul Kahfi* (also known as People of the Cave, the Seven Sleepers) and the Prophet Ibrahim *‘alaihissalam* attract more respondents’ attention. Figure 2. indicates the Qur’anic stories that English practitioners prefer to utilize in their classes.

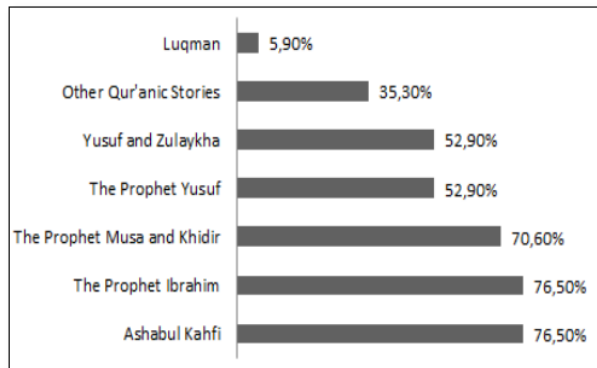


Figure 2. The preferable Qur'anic stories

Figure 2. Shows that all stories in the Qur'an are useable for teaching English, including Habil and Qabil, Zulkarnain, Harut and Marut, Yusuf and Zulaikha, Queen Bilqis, Luqman, Yakjuj and Makjuj (Gog and Magog). While the story of Prophet Ibrahim *'alaihissalam* is famous among the respondents, it is likely because Ibrahim is the father of prophets. The story of Ibrahim and Namrud, the king of Canaan, is well-known in that it serves as a promising springboard for English teachers in activating the students' schemata. The same is true with the story of *Ashabul Kahfi* in which is directly related to a chapter (*surah*) of the Qur'an, al-Kahfi. The chapter is underpinned by a prophetic tradition stating: "Whoever reads *surah* al-Kahfi on the day of Jumu'ah (Friday), will have a light that will shine from him from one Friday to the next." It is reported from the study of living Qur'an that the recitation of *surah* al-Kahfi, besides *surah* Ya-Sin, has become a tradition in Indonesia (Muniroh, 2019). Thus, the stories related to *surah* al-Kahfi could another stepping stone in introducing Qur'anic stories to English language learners in Indonesia.

Further, the respondents argue that the moral or value of the Qur'anic story is on the top priority. Nevertheless, Qur'anic stories should be followed up by tasks that encourage the students' reflective thinking. A proper assessment is, thus, needed in addition to the supporting pre-reading and post-reading activities. Besides, students' language level and text connectivity should also be plausible. By text connectivity, it specifically refers to the interconnectedness between the values of the Qur'anic stories and students' local culture.

### Voices of the Experts

An interview with a senior lecturer of Qur'anic studies (*Ulumul Qur'an*) suggested that the appropriation of Qur'anic stories are not only relevant for English language teaching but also for exploring global current issues like environmental issues.

Qur'anic stories are not historical archives that contain detailed information about the setting of time and place. Using the stories in English classrooms and asking their settings is then irrelevant. One essential point of the stories, which needs to be emphasized in English teaching, is the lessons (*'ibrah*) gained after a thorough reading and contemplation. The stories would be much more contextual for nowadays condition when they are explored in their connection with global issues like environmental issues (Zumroh, male, senior lecturer of *Ulumul Qur'an*, State Islamic Institute of Metro).



As can be seen clearly in the above interview transcription, Qur'anic stories should not be treated as a historical document. This notion is essential in connection with an idea commonly accepted within the reading of literature "No work of literature is literally timeless. They are all products of specific historical conditions" (Eagleton, 2013). Consequently, English teachers should remind the students that Qur'anic stories are different from human-made literary works in the sense that their values are divine and timeless.

Another interview with an expert in Islamic education revealed that Qur'anic stories play an important role in Islamic pedagogy. They are mainly utilized to nurture the so-termed *akhlaq al-karimah* or good manners.

The Qur'anic stories are central to the treasures of Islamic education. They serve as the basis of a teaching method called *metode kisah* (storytelling method). (Astuti, female, senior lecturer majoring Islamic education).

Both experts above seemed to emphasize that the most important points of the Qur'anic stories are their values (within this writing is synonymous with wisdom, virtue, advice, moral, message, and lesson) and their usage to enhance students' noble characters. About these points, Alwasilah (2014) urged that students be equipped with such skills of efferent reading and aesthetic reading so that the activity of reading will embrace information perception as well as feeling exploration. As such, literary works, in general, and Qur'anic stories, in particular, deserve a place in TEFL within Indonesian Islamic university.

As this research deals with learning material development, the results of data analysis and interpretation are then transformed into learning materials. Toward the developed materials, another expert of Qur'anic studies who possess international reputation urges that:

The authors need to explain what Barrett's taxonomy is and how this concept can be useful in this project... All Arabic words/sentences need to have their English translations... There many vocabularies that need more explanations. Vocabularies section might be useful for readers to understand the texts/narrations/stories. Many sentences are rather complicated and hard to understand... you need to be aware of vocabulary levels for students to understand the text properly ... it is common that those who develop a handbook of English teaching or languages have the capability in making necessary illustrations, pictures, etc. (Nurtawab, male, an internationally-recognized expert in the field of Qur'anic studies).

As can be seen clearly, the developed prototype should be equipped with a precise evaluation or assessment system, more self-generated illustration, proper transliteration of Islamic terms, the appropriate language level of the stories, and text ownership.

### **Qur'anic Story-Based Learning Materials**

Precisely, the developed prototype of the Qur'anic story-based learning materials consists of five components, namely: relevant Qur'anic verse, learning outcomes, intertextual or paraphrased Qur'anic stories, Islamic term study, and reading skills. Each component is exemplified below.

#### **1. Relevant Qur'anic Verse**

As the forthcoming Qur'anic story is related to keeping one's secret, Qur'anic verse (Qur'an, 49: 12), is presented on the first page of a given unit. *In The Name of Allah, The Most Beneficent, The Most Merciful. O you who have believed, avoid much [negative] assumption. Indeed, some*



*assumption is sin. And do not spy or backbite each other. Would one of you like to eat the flesh of his brother when dead? You would detest it. And fear Allah; indeed, Allah is accepting of repentance and Merciful.*

## 2. Learning Outcomes

At the end of the instruction, students will master a sublevel of Barret's Taxonomy called *Reorganization*. The students will be able to organize, analyze, and synthesize information that has been explicitly stated in the given Qur'anic story.

## 3. Intertextual or Paraphrased Qur'anic Stories

At this phase, students are asked to read an intertextual Qur'anic stories titled *I Will Tell No One*. This story belongs to the classification of other related stories that might be rarely exposed to Muslim English learners. The story reads as follows:

One night, Umar bin Khatab patrolled with Abdullah bin Mas'ud. In a remote place, they saw a flick of light. From the same direction, they heard the voices of the singers. They followed the light and got into a house. Silently Umar sneaked in. He noticed that an older man was sitting relaxed. In front of him, a drink cup and a woman was singing.

Umar appeared and shouted, "I've never seen the bad sight I saw tonight. An old man who waits for his death! O enemy of Allah, do you suppose Allah will shut your shame when you do evil?" The old man replied, "Do not hurry, *Amiral mu'minin*, I only do one sinful one. You fight Allah three times. Allah said: "... *And do not spy on one another...*" (Qur'an, 49: 12).

You have peeked. Allah says: "*So approach homes from their doors*" (Qur'an, 2: 189).

You sneaked in. And you have entered here without permission, but Allah said: "*O you who believe! Do not enter homes other than your own, until you have asked permission and greeted their occupants ....*" (Qur'an, 24: 27).

Umar said, "You are right!" He went out, biting his clothes and crying, "Woe to you, Umar, if Allah does not forgive you. Someone will be hiding from his family. Now he will say: Umar knows me. Then my family will stalk me."

For some time, the old man never attended the council of Umar. One day, he came and sat in the back row, as if to hide from Umar's view. But Umar saw him and called him. The old man stood in fear that the *Khalifah* would embarrass him because of what he had done. Umar told him to approach, "Let me tell you."

He whispered to him, "For the One who has sent Muhammad as a messenger! I will tell no one what I have seen on you. Ibn Mas'ud won't either."

"Yes, *Amiral Mukminin*, let me tell you too," said the old man. He turned and whispered, "I won't tell others about what you have done. For the One Who sent Muhammad as a messenger, I never returned to that act until I came to this assembly. "Hearing that, Umar uttered a loud voice saying '*Allahu Akbar*'. The people in attendance did not know why Umar uttered so.

*Allahu Akbar*. Both Umar and the old man were grateful for having successfully hidden one another's mistakes. Searching for mistakes or disgrace of Muslims is called *tajassus*.

About *tajassus*, the Messenger of Allah said, "O people who claim Islam with their tongues, but faith has not yet entered into their hearts. Do not hurt the Muslims. Do not disgrace them. Do not peek at their disbelief. Whoever disassociates his Muslim brother, Allah will dismantle his disgrace. Whosoever is disgraced by Allah, Allah will embarrass him, even among his family. "The Prophet delivered his voice aloud as if he wanted the people who lived in tents to hear it. At that time, the Prophet had just finished the dawn prayer.

Allah will only dismantle the disbelievers who seek to disgrace others. One part of *rahmaniyah* is to close the shame of the sinners. Therefore, hiding the disgrace of Muslims is a noble character. It was narrated that the angels in *Lauh Mahfuzh* read the human record book. They read human virtues. When they come to the page concerned with human immortality, the curtain falls off. The angel said, "*Subhana man azrahal jamil wa sataral qahih*. The glorious One who reveals the beautiful and hides the bad".

Notice how much harm you have done, and Allah hides them from the eyes and ears of others. If all the evil you made is revealed to people, you will not survive in the midst of society. "*And be charitable, as Allah has been charitable to you ...*" (Qur'an, 28: 77). Hide the disgrace of others as Allah has concealed your disgrace.

A man came to Umar bin Khathab. He told a girl who had sinned, then repented. When the girl was proposed, his uncle doubted whether he should reveal her wicked past. Umar said, "Do you want to uncover what Allah hides? *Wallahi*, if you want to disassociate her in the crowd, I will punish you as a lesson to all the inhabitants of the city. Marry her as a holy woman."

(Translated from Rakhmat's *The Quranic Wisdom*, Mizan Publisher: Bandung, pp.93-97, 2012.)

#### 4. Islamic Term Study

The above Qur'anic Story, *I Will Tell No One*, contains specific Islamic terms. Match the terms in the first column with their definition in the second column. Access the internet when necessary.

Tabel 2

*The task of Islamic term study*

First Column	Second Column
1. ___ <i>Amiral Mukminin</i>	a. Book of Decrees where all matters have already been inscribed
2. ___ <i>Tajassus</i>	b. an expression used by Moslems to state, "I swear to Allah".
3. ___ <i>Rahmaniyah</i>	c. the nature of love saying
4. ___ <i>Lauh Mahfuz</i>	d. a leader or commander of the faithful Moslems
5. ___ <i>Wallahi</i>	e. looking for other's mistakes

#### 5. Reading Skills

The term reading skills here refer to the sublevel of Barret's Taxonomy (Richards, 2015). One of the sublevels is *reorganization*, which consists of classifying, outlining, summarizing, and synthesizing.

#### 6. Classifying

The students should answer the question of which of the following mistakes belong to Umar bin Khatab and which ones belong to The Old Man?

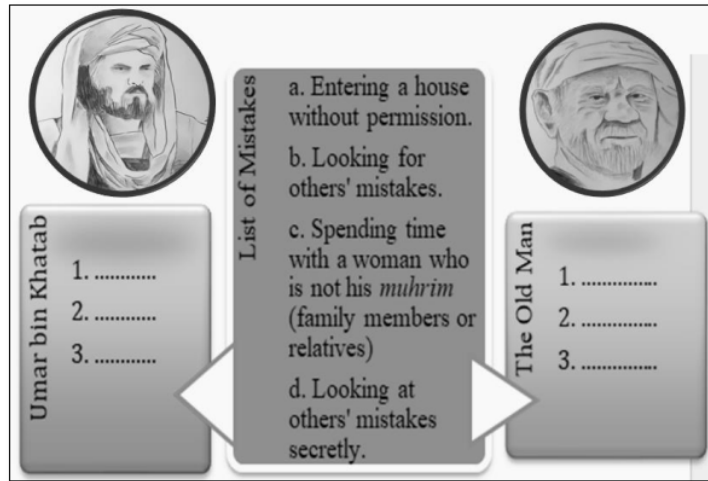


Figure 3. Task of classifying

### 7. Outlining

The students are assigned to work in pairs and to divide the story of *I Will Tell No One* into three parts (Beginning [B]; Middle [M], and End [E]). Decide whether the following statements belong to B, M, or E.

- Sayyidina* Umar and Abdullah bin Mas'ud went around one night. [B/ M / E]
- Umar found an old man spending his time with a woman who was not the man's family member. [B / M / E]
- Umar and the old man were grateful because they could cover one another's mistakes. [B / M / E]

### 8. Summarizing

In this phase, the students are presented with the definition of 'white lie'. The students are then asked to state the best part of the given Qur'anic story that best represents the phenomenon of white lie.

### 9. Synthesizing

Below is the list of the most common problems in the human relationship (*hablun min annaas*). Tick one of the problems that might be solved through the morals/messages/values found in the story of *I Will Tell No One*.

Tabel 3

#### Task of synthesizing

List of Problems	Tick here
1. People are unhappy because they wish they had something that other people have.	
2. People feel tired because they have lost interest in what they used to like.	
3. People become traumatic because of the harmful effects that lasted for a long time.	

While the developed prototype is begun with *bismillahirrohmanirrohim*, it is ended with *alhamdulillah for everything*. Such beginning and ending are meant to integrate Islamic educational tradition into the developed learning materials.

## **DISCUSSION**

This study had three goals. The first was to investigate the voices of English practitioners in Indonesia related to the usability of the Qur'anic stories in TEFL. Results indicated that all respondents agreed with the integration of stories derived from Qur'an, Qur'anic verse, and Islamic visuals into the English reading program. These findings were consistent with some previous studies stating that language materials should be designed by considering wider circumstances of the production of the materials (Littlejohn, 2012); that ELT textbooks should play a role in spreading religion literacy and reducing negative attitudes towards religion diversity (Ait Bouzid, 2016); that it is important to integrate cultural knowledge, cultural awareness and cultural competence into language teaching and learning ((Nguyen, 2017); that within the globalization era, learners' home culture, in addition to target culture, should be addressed in the field of TEFL (Boroomand & Yazdani, 2017); and that policymakers should support educational materials which are sensitive to learners' identity so that to reduce the political and cultural hegemonies of English (Varzande & Varzande, 2015). Thus, the voices of Indonesian English teachers related to the integration of Qur'anic stories in TEFL are in tune with the global discussion on the needs of preserving learners' identity and culture through religion literacy to minimize western political and cultural hegemonies.

The second goal was to investigate the voices of Qur'anic studies and Islamic education experts about the Qur'anic stories in TEFL. Tazik & Khany (2019) strongly suggested a multidisciplinary approach to ELT in that the experts of non-English pedagogy are involved. The results of this multidisciplinary research showed that the exposure of Qur'anic stories in TEFL within the Indonesian context should emphasize the moral and value inculcation to enhance students' noble characters. These findings closely corresponded with a number of previous studies foregrounding that morality is an important aspect of teaching English as an international language that can be inculcated through folklore, sayings, quotations (Le Ha, 2008); that learners' local needs should be accommodated into internationally published ELT textbooks which so far had been centering on western attitudes, values, and beliefs (Chao, 2011); that students' backgrounds are central to EFL learning in that reading texts and images should be appropriately selected to support students' particular cultural backgrounds (Mahmoud, 2015); and that character education for Indonesian context is of great significance for creating a humanistic society and developing nations and countries (Abdullah et al., 2019). Therefore, it is worth noting that the voices of the Indonesian Qur'anic studies and Islamic education experts are consistent with international discussion on the importance of integrating values into ELT through textbooks, sayings, reading texts, and images.

The third goal was to design a prototype of the Qur'anic story-based learning materials. The developed prototype contributes to the discussion of materials development for different users in that learning materials are greatly influenced by the environment which covers the type and resource of the educational institution, and the students' background, needs, and wants (Tomlinson & Masuhara, 2018). While the Islamic higher institution is a particular type of institution within the Indonesian context that seeks to integrate the holy Qur'an into any discipline, the results of this research should shed light on the learning materials development for Indonesian Moslem learners.

The prototype also contributes to the notion of teaching English as a non-imperial language (Castro et al., 2018), which suggests that English teachers deconstruct the mainstream practices of ELT. The prototype could be seen as a pedagogical alternative built upon the voices of English practitioners and the voices of relevant interdisciplinary experts. Learning materials developed from such voices will reduce the negative impacts of English linguistic

imperialism. It positively responds to the view that modernity, science, and education reduce religious orientation and lead to secularization (Nayebi & Azadarmaki, 2018). Moreover, the use of Qur'anic stories in ELT could be reasonably connected to the role of language learning as 'a tool for social change and cultural understanding' (Raigón-rodríguez, 2018). Internally, for teachers and students of Islamic universities, the Qur'anic stories serve as linguistic input and spiritual repository that enable them to develop themselves linguistically and spiritually before their duty to change their social condition. Externally, for users in non-Islamic universities, this research, including the developed prototype, should be seen as a tool of intercultural understanding.

## CONCLUSION

This paper proposes that English practitioners accept the integration of Qur'anic stories into ELT due to the values of character education embedded with the stories. When equipped with reflective and contextual tasks and activities, the stories could be utilized in the classrooms through the mainstream approach known as literature as a resource (Maley, 2012). This paper also proposes that experts of Qur'anic studies and Islamic education affirm the use of Qur'anic stories in TEFL to instill Islamic values. It is worth noting that Qur'anic stories are distinctive in the sense that they possess divine dimension. Thus, their presentation in an English classroom within the Islamic institution follows the Islamic education tradition, such as starting the lesson with *basmalah* and ending it *alhamdulillah*. Although the developed the Qur'anic story-based learning materials has been based on needs analysis and been validated by experts, further research involving a field testing of the developed material is needed.

## ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

The authors gratefully acknowledge the Ministry of Religious Affairs of the Republic of Indonesia for funding this research via IAIN Metro in 2019.

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