



Students' Perspective Towards the Important of English in Islamic Religious Education Department

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Abstrak

Bahasa Inggris mempunyai peran penting dalam berbagai macam aspek. Termasuk dalam aspek pendidikan, yang mana dunia pendidikan saat ini harus mengikuti perkembangan zaman yang semakin berkembang, salah satunya adalah pembelajaran bahasa Inggris bagi mahasiswa PAI dengan tujuan agar peserta didik dapat memahami pendidikan agama islam secara luas. Sebab penguasaan Bahasa Inggris berpengaruh pada kesiapan mental peserta didik agar dapat bersaing dan siap dalam menghadapi arus globalisasi. Penelitian ini menggunakan metode pendekatan kualitatif, yaitu kegiatan memahami suatu fenomena yang dijadikan objek penelitian dengan cara mendeskripsikan konteks alamiahnya. Wawancara digunakan sebagai teknik pengumpulan data dan melibatkan mahasiswa padad jurusan PAI di UIN Sultan Maulana Hasanuddin Banten sebagai informan. Hasil penelitian ini mnemukan bahwa mahasiswa jurusan PAI memiliki persepsi positif terkait pentingnya mempelajari Bahasa Inggris di Jurusan Pendidikan Agama Islam. Pembelajaran Bahasa Inggris di Jurusan PAI dianggap mampu memberikan motivasi kepada Mahasiswa untuk lebih mendalami embelajaran Bahasa Inggris dalam kehidupan sehari-hari Hal ini dibuktikan dengan respon kritis mahasiswa dalam menghubungkan pemahaman keagamaannya dengan realitas kehidupan sehari-hari. Namun di sisi lain, penelitian ini menunjukkan bahwa proses pembelajaran Bahasa Inggris dijurusan PAI oleh sebagian kecil informan dianggap belum menarik minat mahasiswa untuk mempelajari dan belum memberikan banyak kontribusi dalam upaya meningkatkan kemampuan Bahasa Inggris dan menghubungkannya dengan disiplin keilmuan terkait.

Kata Kunci: Perspektif mahasiswa, pembelajaran bahasa Inggris, pendidikan agama islam

Students' Perspective Towards the Important of English in Islamic Religious Education Department

Abstract

English has an important role in various aspects, including educational aspect, where the world of education needed to keep up with the sophisticated era, where one of them is learning English for Islamic Religious students to make students understand about Islamic religious education broadly. Because the mastery of English affects students' mental readiness so they can compete and be ready to deal with the flow of globalization. This research used a qualitative approach. It used to investigate the phenomenon used as the object of research by describing its natural context. Interviews were used as a data collection technique and involved 50 students Islamic Religious Education in UIN Sultan Maulana Hasanuddin Banten as the informants. Data analysis included tracking, organizing, solution and synthesis, pattern search. The results found that the students of Islamic Religious Education in UIN Sultan Maulana Hasanuddin Banten had positive perceptions regarding the importance of studying English. The students said that that learning English Islamic Religious Education could make them able to provide motivation to study English more deeply in everyday life. It was proven by students' critical responses in connecting their religious understanding with the reality of everyday life. Besides that, the research showed that the English language learning process in the Islamic Religious Education department was considered by a small number of informants to have not attracted

students' interest in studying it, and they assumed that it has not contributed much in improving their English language skills and connecting them with related scientific disciplines.

Keywords: *Students' perspective, english language learning, islamic religious education department.*

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Introduction

In the current era of globalization, marked by the rapid advancements in technology and the rise of artificial intelligence, the role of communication has become increasingly crucial. The ability to communicate effectively, both within and across national boundaries, has opened up a world of opportunities for people to connect and collaborate internationally. As Indonesia seeks to transition from a resource-based economy to one driven by professional human capital, the development of strong communication skills, particularly in languages, has become a critical requirement for national prosperity (Rouf, 2022).

Language is a fundamental aspect of human communication, serving as a means for individuals to express their thoughts, feelings, and ideas within a community. Despite the existence of other communication methods, such as paintings, smoke signals, and drum sounds, language remains the most comprehensive and effective tool for conveying complex concepts and sharing experiences. The acquisition of language, encompassing the skills of speaking, reading, listening, and writing, is crucial for fostering effective communication and understanding between individuals. Language is intrinsically linked to the functioning of human society, enabling individuals to navigate their environment and address the challenges they face. Children's ability to learn and integrate language is a remarkable feat, highlighting the species-unique nature of human communicative abilities (Bohn et al., 2021).

One of languages studied by students in Indonesia is English. It's due to the position of English as a global language (Crystal, 2009). By the increasing of interdependence among the countries around the world, English is not only used by the communication language of the countries where English is spoken as the first language such as the United States, England, Australia, and part of Canada, but it is also used

by the countries whole the world due to its position as lingua franca or global language.

In Malaysia, English is a language whose functions is to gain international excellence. The place of English as an important language can be seen from its function as the language for business, employment, education, politics, tourism, law, and media. In 2020 Malaysia's Vision, Malaysia is projected as a developed country which is characterized by the English mastery of Malaysians. Then, in Singapore, English is the first language even though Malay is its national language. English is seen as the language which makes Singapore as one of the world's cosmopolitan business leaders. Due to the importance of English, Singapore government has implemented a system bilingual education by establishing English as the first language alongside with other official languages such Mandarin, Tamil and Malay from elementary school level.

Meanwhile, in Iran, although English tends to be considered an enemy language because it is the language of Americans, English is an industrial innovation and Iranian technology in its efforts to end its economic dependence on oil production. The younger generation in this country actively uses English to search any information provided on the internet. Through this way, their level of English mastery is assumed to be higher in their limitations to learn it.

Because of the important of English, Indonesian Government considered English as the first foreign language to be used in Indonesia. English is considered as an important language to develop science, technology and culture. And it can be used to establish international agreement (Dewi, 2011).

English subject is needed not only for students of English department, other students from other departments need it too. In this case, English is taught as general course (MKU) which means English for the students of non-English department. This is also applied in State Islamic University of Sultan Maulana

Hasanuddin Banten. With its mission for being "excellent, reputable in scientific integration and have a global conception", English become one of compulsive subject in this university. Because English becomes requirement for several things such as examination through TOEFL or students' exchange. Therefore, English should be learned by all students in all departments in a year which consist of English 1 and English 2, including Islamic Religious Education Department.

This is due to the important of English which should be mastered by students. Besides as an international language, English mastery will support them to communicate with other people around the world. Furthermore, there are many references to support their lectures are presented in English. And university often hold international seminars or conference whose speakers are come from other countries who's their materials are presented in English. Not only those, there are several programs which its requirements are being able in using English oral and written, including the requirement for continuing to magister or doctoral degree which one of the requirement id English testings. So, by mastering English, the students will not need any translator to make them understand about the content of the book. they will also be able to write and publish in international journals indexed by Scopus, Elsevier, Thomson Reuters or ISI, where Indonesia is left behind other countries.

Therefore, this research tried to investigate students of Islamic Religious Department of State Islamic University of Sultan Maulana Hasanuddin Bantens' perspective toward the important of English.

Methods

This research was descriptive qualitative research. As stated by (Sugiyono, 2010), qualitative research is descriptive. It means that data was collected in the form of words rather than number. furthermore, (Gay and Mills, 2006) stated that qualitative research is the collection, analysis, and interpretation of comprehensive narrative and visual data in order to gain insights into a particular phenomenon. Data analysis included tracking, organizing, solution and synthesis, pattern search

This research method was used to describe factually and accurately of the facts, the characteristics and the relationship between

phenomena investigated, that is about English for the students of Islamic Religious Department of Sultan Maulana Hasanuddin Banten. The data was collected through interview. The interview data were transcribed, saved and labeled. Analyses of interview data were guided by research questions mentioned earlier. Interview transcriptions were reviewed first to derive an overall sense of the data. Initial findings were jotted down in the form of reflective notes. Data reduction technique was employed through the use of Coding and Theme-Generation templates from (Sugiyono, 2010). The subject of this research was students of Islamic Religious Department of Sultan Maulana Hasanuddin Banten. The researchers randomly selected 50 students from 5 classes, so there were 50 students as research subjects by using purposive random sampling.

Results And Discussion

Based on data collected through interview with 50 students of Islamic Religious Department of Sultan Maulana Hasanuddin Banten, the data showed students' perspectives toward the important of English. The materials which students interested most are: Vocabulary, Speaking, Listening, Grammar, Writing, Reading, and Pronunciation. The details are as follows:

Table 1
Percentage of Students' Perspectives of English Materials

English Materials	Number of Students	Percentage
Vocabulary	15	30%
Speaking	10	20%
Listening	3	6%
Grammar	10	20%
Writing	8	16%
Reading	3	6%
Pronunciation	1	2%
	50	100%

a. Vocabulary

From 50 students, as subject of the research, there were 15 students who stated that they were interested in vocabulary materials, it means that 30% of total respondents chose Vocabulary English favorite material. They said

that vocabulary mastery was the most important in English because they needed it to deliver the purposes and objectives when they were doing communication either oral or written. Several of them also stated that they had to be mastered in English vocabulary, because by mastering vocabulary, they could express what they meant. And in creating the sentences, paragraphs furthermore doing oral communication, they would be smooth when they had enough vocabularies.

This is in line with (Alemi et al., 2012) who stated that vocabulary was the basis component of language proficiency which provides the basis for learners' performance in other skill, such as: speaking, reading, listening, and writing. In addition, Stahl and Fairbanks in (Bromley, 2007) also stated that the students who have good vocabulary mastery will have good reading comprehension and high score on achievement test than students who are lack of vocabulary. It means that when the students have enough vocabularies, they can understand the text they are reading and the words they are listening. Therefore, everyone who is learning a language including English, they should increase their vocabulary mastery at the first place.

b. Speaking

The second material needed by students in Islamic Religious Department of Sultan Maulana Hasanuddin Banten is Speaking material. There were 10 students or about 20% of total respondents gave their perspectives about this. They chose this material as the second most desirable material in learning English language material. Then the results of student interviews also showed interest in this material. They said that speaking would make them be able to communicate with others, deliver the material in bilingual when they were teaching in the class, so they express their thoughts and feelings.

This is in line with (Harmer, 2001) who stated that capability to speak fluently by using their knowledge, information and say it by on the spot. It needs the ability to assist in the management of speaking. It occurs in the real condition and has a little time for planning it. Therefore, the fluency is needed to reach the aim of the conversation. Furthermore, (Richards, 2008) argued that speaking is exploring idea, acquiring something done, subtraction various aspects of world or basically being together. It

means that if learners can speak accurately or fluently will help them communicate easily and explore their idea. Speaking English also helps students get up-to-date information field about health, technology and science. Therefore, in several students' perspective, the most important skills that they needed to learn is speaking.

c. Listening

The data showed that there were 3 students or about 6% of total respondents who gave their perspective about the important of English. They said that they needed listening materials because it was the basic of English which they needed to understand. They also said that they should be trained about these skills to understand and know what other people mean. And by mastering listening skill, it would help them a lot in learning speaking because they could speak if they know what others said for making them could do two ways communication.

As stated by (Brown, 2001), Listening is the major component in language learning and teaching because in the classroom learners do more listening than speaking. Moreover, (Nunan, 2003) stated that listening is an active, purposeful process of making sense of what we hear. It means that, we should interpret the meaning from what we hear, therefore listening is an active skill.

From those reasons and theories, it's a normal for several students to say that listening was the important thing that they needed in daily activities, because for them, they could interpret the meaning through listening.

d. Grammar

Chowdhury defined grammar as the rules in a language for changing the form of words and joining them into sentences (Chowdhury, 2014).

The number of students whose perspective about the important of English on its grammatical is 10 students or about 20% from total of respondents. They said that grammatical competence was needed for them to pass the test when they would have examination. One the requirements which they were needed was TOEFL Test and one of all parts was about grammar. Besides that, grammatical competence could help them to create good writing, essays and also speaking.

Their perspective was reasonable, because as stated by (Kianiparza et al., 2010), learning

grammar is effective in speaking English as foreign language. In order to speak a foreign language fluently it is necessary to learn grammatical rules. It has been suggested that grammatical knowledge is complementary for speaking a language.

Besides that, Amelia et al (2019, p. 13) explained that there were several reasons why grammar was needed to be learned: (a) Great grammar will make someone become a better listener, speaker, reader, writer, and communicator; (b) Great grammar build up our own style. Someone becomes more advanced in English when she/he can develop her/his own unique style of communicating, which can lead to rewarding career as a writer or public speaker; (c) Logic and reasoning. Understanding and using grammar properly will help people think logically.

e. Writing

8 from 50 respondents, or about 16% respondents stated that the most important for them is writing ability. They said by having writing skill, they could communicate wider, especially when they were using social media and communicate with their friends from other countries through chatting. Then, several of them also said that they had an experience for getting scholarship which one of the requirements was writing a motivation letter in English. By writing good motivation letter, they had a big chance for achieving that program. And by writing, they also could get passive income. They could be a freelance writing in English.

From those perspective, it can be seen that writing was a material requirement based on academic needs (English for Academic Purposes) and work needs (English for Occupational Purposes). This is supported by the theory from Kalbarinda and Wardah (2018, p. 2) who stated that writing is one of the tools which can be used to communicate with other people. Writing also can be used to express people thought. They also added that writing is the way for the people to deliver language naturally using paper or using computer. Writing is a process of discovering and organizing people's ideas by putting them on a paper. It needs evidence to support the ideas with the specific reasons.

In dealing with those problem, The students didn't know what should be written in the first paragraph and what the appropriate

words to be put on their paper were. So they felt that writing is something important should be learnt by students of Islamic Religious Education Department from their perspectives. Therefore, for them writing is difficult because they had to deliver a text by using English, write about their thought and then state it on a paper by using the correct procedure such as the grammar and the word choice.

f. Reading

From 50 respondents, there were 3 or 6% percent of respondents gave their perspectives about English in Islamic Religious Education Department. They said that the most difficult one from English was Reading, especially when there were dealing with reading comprehension for TOEFL test. Whereas, Sachran et al (2022, p. 423) stated that reading is one of the basic skills in learning English that has to be mastered by the students, by reading, information, and new knowledge will be gotten in their learning.

They said so because they got difficulties in pronouncing the words of the sentence in the text. They also got difficulties in understanding what they read, the words, and sentences or passages. So, they also got difficulties to get the information, knowledge, and idea in the text.

g. Pronunciation

The last perspective come from 1 respondent or about 2% of total respondent. This respondent gave his perspective that the most difficult and should be learnt by Islamic Religious Education Department students was pronunciation. He said that miss pronunciation would give different meaning. So, the students need to know the correct pronunciation before them improving other English skills. although the goal of pronunciation instruction is not to have the ability to pronounce words like native speakers. Instead, clear pronunciation should be the real purpose of oral communication.

Pronunciation is an essential thing in good communication because it will lead misunderstanding when someone pronounce the wrong pronunciation, and it will give negative impression with for others. It's related with Andini and Zaitun (2022, p. 201). They stated that pronunciation is an essential part in a language, for the nature of language is spoken. Pronunciation is the most important and difficult problem that non-native English speakers have to deal with when studying English. Moreover, Chan (2018) stated that the scope of

pronunciation lessons includes three topics: (1) sound, (2) rhythm and intonation, and (3) intonation.

From the explanation above, it can be seen that English is actually important for Islamic Religious Education Department students with several reasons. English is one of the important aspects possessed by them although they are not students of English Department. It's due to the position of English as an international language which is needed support their communication competence so they can communicate with other people by mastering speaking skill. Then, English reading skill is also needed by them because they deal with many references which is presented in English. And they have to deal with any kind of English proficiency test whose part of the questions is about reading. Therefore students need to improve their reading skills.

Other skills are also needed by them. because nowadays, English is used as a language of media industry. Many films, TV shows and popular songs are written in English. Besides that, English is also used as the language of internet. English is particularly important language online with more than half the content on internet written in English. As well as this, some of the world largest tech companies are based in English speaking countries.

Then, when people are travelling, most of hotel receptionist service the guest by using English. Moreover, student or employee need English because it is incredibly important in the business world. It is considered to be one of the most important business language due to being the defector language of the United States and the official language of the UK, Canada, India and South America.

Additionally, the most important for students, English can be a ticket for them to study all over the world. Since English is spoken in so many different countries there are thousands of schools and universities around the world that offer programmes in English and one of the requirements for getting scholarship to study abroad is mastering English. Therefore, English is assumed as an important language not only for English Department students, but also students from other departments including for students of Islamic Religious Education Department in State Islamic University of Sultan Maulana Hasanuddin Banten.

Conclusion

Based on the results and discussion of research, several materials are in demand by students in Islamic Religious Education Department of State Islamic University of Sultan Maulana Hasanuddin Banten related to their perspectives about the importance of English based on interviews. The materials are Vocabulary, Speaking, Listening, Grammar, Writing, Reading, and Pronunciation. Based on students' perspectives, those materials give them advantages for their academics (English for Academic Purposes) and their work (English for Occupational Purposes) later. The data showed that there were 15 students (30%) thought that the most needed material was Vocabulary. 10 students (20%) thought that the most needed material was Speaking. 3 students (6%) thought that the most needed material was Listening. 10 students (20%) thought that the most needed material was Grammar. 8 students (16%) thought that the most needed material was Writing. 3 students (6%) thought that the most needed material was Reading. And 1 student (2%) thought that the most needed material was Pronunciation.

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