
NEEDS ANALYSIS FOR ENGLISH SYLLABUS DESIGN BASED ON NATURAL APPROACH AT ISLAMIC BOARDING SCHOOL

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ABSTRACT

A needs analysis is essential for teachers to develop and identify the appropriate materials for students, as well as to determine the methods and strategies to use in each class. This study aims to find information regarding the student's needs for English courses at Islamic Boarding School Muhammad Al-Haqqi Batam. The researchers carried out qualitative research. The participants in the study consisted of 14 students. The data collection instruments were in a questionnaire sheet and the form of a short interview. The needs analysis included distributing questionnaires to students to gather information related to the requirements of the English course. The study's findings show that students understand the value of studying English for their future, which motivates them to enhance their English abilities. Syllabuses for English lessons should be modified to coincide with their needs, which allows them to practice English and use their abilities for future success.

KEYWORDS

needs analysis, English teaching, Islamic boarding schools, teaching methods, qualitative research, students, learning motivation, English curriculum.



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INTRODUCTION

English, as a global language, has become the most vital language in the modern era. Learning English is essential today as it allows us to connect and communicate with a broader global audience (Sari, 2021). In Indonesia, English is taught as a foreign language and has become a mandatory school subject. As a result, there is a growing emphasis on English teaching and learning across all levels of education, from schools to universities. Consequently, English is incorporated into the curriculum of public schools throughout Indonesia.

When learning English, four essential skills must be mastered: listening, speaking,

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reading, and writing. These skills are introduced at all levels of English education, from beginner to advanced. Notably, English is not only taught to students in public schools but is also studied by students in Islamic boarding schools across Indonesia.

An Islamic Boarding School or “*pesantren*” is a traditional Islamic educational institution focused on studying religious knowledge (*tafaqquh fi al-dīn*) with a strong emphasis on students' moral development. *Pesantren* students, commonly referred to as ‘*Santri*,’ study under the guidance of a *kiai*, applying religious teachings in their daily lives. The *kitab kuning* serves as the primary source of study, while the mosque functions as the center of activity (Umar, 2022). Over time, *pesantren* have evolved to incorporate secular subjects, including English, as part of their ongoing development.

Given English’s status as a global language, it has become increasingly important for *Santri* to learn it. Mastering English enables them to use it for positive purposes, such as preaching and spreading Islam globally. Additionally, access to valuable knowledge—much of which is available in English—broadens their intellectual horizons (Fitria, 2023). In the context of *pesantren*, learning English also allows students to engage with Islamic literature and knowledge available in English (Ahmada et al., 2023). Moreover, English proficiency benefits Muslim students aspiring to study abroad, helping them communicate effectively and integrate into English-speaking environments (Zulkarnindra, 2021).

By fostering English proficiency in *pesantren*, students are better equipped to contribute to the global Muslim community and expand their educational and professional opportunities. The integration of English into *pesantren* curricula not only enriches students' knowledge but also strengthens their ability to engage with the world in meaningful ways.

In Indonesia, where English is a foreign language, teaching it can be challenging, particularly in *pesantren* where English has a limited role. Students tend to focus more on Islamic studies than general subjects like English. While they learn English, the acquisition is less effective than in public schools. In relation to this, a special approach is needed to enhance the effectiveness of language acquisition for *Santri*. One of the approaches is the Natural Approach.

The natural approach was developed by Tracy Terrell in 1981 and is based on Krashen's theory of second language acquisition. According to Krashen's comprehensible input hypothesis, students can only learn a language when the material is presented in a way they can easily understand. The Natural Approach is built on the idea that students learn a language when they understand it rather than just studying its grammar. To support this, learning environments should offer opportunities for students to engage in real conversations (Sam, 2016). As stated by Amiruddin & Jannah (2021), the Natural Approach helps students stay motivated and reduces their anxiety about learning a new language. Their study highlights how this method provides a solution to common language learning challenges, contributing to more effective teaching. By minimizing stress and worry, the Natural Approach enables students to acquire English in a more natural and comfortable way.

Despite the benefits of this approach, English has not been a primary focus at *Pesantren Muhammad Al-Haqqi*. Traditionally treated as an optional subject, it receives less emphasis compared to Islamic studies. While public schools in Indonesia include English in their curriculum, students at *Al-Haqqi* often struggle to develop proficiency since the language is not integrated into their core education. Consequently, many students have limited communication skills and lack confidence in using English.

To address this gap, the English Department Student Association (EDSA) from Universitas Riau Kepulauan has introduced structured lessons and interactive activities aimed at improving students' English proficiency. Through engaging speaking sessions, discussions on relevant topics, and practice-based learning, EDSA has provided valuable support. However, several challenges remain, including the need to balance religious studies with English lessons, limited resources, and varying levels of English proficiency among students. Given these challenges, this research aims to examine the specific needs of Santri at Pesantren Muhammad Al-Haqqi. Understanding these needs will be essential in designing an effective English syllabus that aligns with their educational context and enhances their language learning experience.

According to Kaharuddin et al. (2014), students generally have a low level of communicative competence in English. One of the factors contributing to this issue is the problem with the curriculum and syllabus. Kaharuddin also revealed that a key factor contributing to the students' low competence levels is the lack of a needs analysis in the teaching-learning process (Kaharuddin et al., 2014). Needs analysis focuses primarily on the goals and content of a course, assessing what learners already know and what they still need to learn. It ensures that the course includes relevant and practical material for the students (Yassi, 2015). Identifying students' needs helps curriculum designers define goals and objectives, which will then guide the creation of the syllabus, teaching materials, activities, and evaluation methods. The course syllabus and teaching materials were created by considering the needs analysis. Teachers must assess learners' needs before developing the syllabus, selecting suitable learning materials, and determining effective teaching strategies (Yana, 2016). It is a crucial factor since it serves as the main learning tool in a course, shaping instructional goals, material selection, learning activities, processes, and teaching methods (Cahyadin et al., 2022).

A needs analysis is essential for researchers and lecturers to develop and identify the appropriate materials for students, as well as to determine the methods and strategies to use in each class. This is because every class has students with different characteristics (Rachmawati et al., 2021). According to Warda & Dalimunte (2022), an imbalance between students' preferences and needs and what was delivered in classroom learning. This occurred because the teaching materials, English language skills, and learning process remained repetitive and unsatisfactory. In line with that, as stated by Ria & Malik (2020) in their research, students' wants and needs in mastering English language skills serve as key guides for lecturers in motivating them to achieve their learning objectives. Additionally, teaching methods must align with students' needs to encourage their language skill development.

However, there is still a gap between the English teaching environment and the need for students to develop English skills that can be integrated into syllabus design. Recognizing this situation strongly motivates the researcher to analyze the students' needs. By identifying their language learning needs, schools can more effectively design syllabuses based on students' needs and prepare students to acquire English effectively based on their background as "*Santri*" of the Islamic boarding school.

In light of these considerations, this research will attempt to answer the following questions:

1. What are the English learning needed for students at Pesantren Muhammad Al-Haqqi?
2. What are the English targets needed for students at Pesantren Muhammad Al-Haqqi?

The research purposes based on the provided questions are as follows:

1. To find information regarding the students' needs for English course at Pesantren Muhammad Al-Haqqi.
2. To identify the student's goals during learning English at Pesantren Muhammad Al-Haqqi.

This syllabus is specifically intended for *Santri* who are expected to use a foreign language in their daily activities within an Islamic boarding environment. This is also relevant to Setiawan's research, which stated that designing an English course for Islamic boarding school is specialized and varies from a general English language course, as it includes religious themes in the material (Setiawan, 2020).

Moving forward, the school could benefit from including English more in the main curriculum and providing ongoing training for teachers. Once *Santri*'s needs and difficulties are known, the teacher can design an English syllabus according to their needs. EDSA could also play a bigger role by developing a formal syllabus and providing more learning materials to support steady language growth, in line with the *pesantren*'s educational goals. This follow-up is connected to current research aimed at improving the syllabus and addressing the specific needs of *Santri*.

RESEARCH METHOD

The researchers conducted a mixed-methods study, incorporating both qualitative and quantitative approaches. The study's participants consisted of 14 students at Pesantren Muhammad Al-Haqqi. The sampling technique used was saturated sampling (sampling jenuh), a method in which all members of a relatively small population (fewer than 30 individuals) are included as samples (Sugiyono, 2016). Consequently, the sample for this study comprised all 14 students.

Data collection involved both a questionnaire and a short interview. The needs analysis process began with distributing questionnaires to students to gather information regarding their requirements for the English course. At this stage, the researchers developed a questionnaire containing 55 questions adapted from Yana & Rozimela (2024). These questions were structured around seven key indicators: necessities, lacks, wants, goals, content & sequence, format & presentation, and monitoring & assessment. The questionnaire was validated by two experienced researchers and educators before being administered to all students. Students were asked to respond using a four-point Likert scale: strongly agree, agree, disagree, or strongly disagree. A total of 14 students completed the questionnaire.

Following the questionnaire data collection, a written interview was conducted with a lecturer at Pesantren Muhammad Al-Haqqi to gain deeper insights. The semi-open interview questions focused on the lecturer's background and teaching experience, as well as on key indicators of students' needs, including necessities, lacks, wants, goals, content & sequence, format & presentation, and monitoring & assessment. The researchers carefully documented the interview responses to ensure comprehensive data analysis and capture essential insights.

For data analysis, a statistical-descriptive approach was applied to the questionnaire data. The results were presented in tables with specific labels. The highest score, labeled "H," represented the strongest agreement or interest in a given statement, while the lowest score, labeled "L," indicated the least agreement or interest. The mean ("M") provided an overview of the general trend in students' responses, and the standard

deviation (“S”) measured the variability in their answers. A low standard deviation suggested consistency in responses, while a higher standard deviation indicated a wider range of opinions.

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

The results of students’ needs

To understand the students’ needs, a questionnaire was shared with them, and the insights were deepened through a written interview with a lecturer who teaches the English course at Pesantren Muhammad Al-Haqqi. From the questionnaire responses, researchers identified key data on students’ perceived needs, covering areas such as necessities, lacks, wants, goals, content and sequence, format and presentation, and monitoring and assessment. The findings are presented in Table 1 to Table 7.

Table 1. Data Summary of Students’ Necessities.

No	Statements	H	L	M	S
1	English skills are very important to me	4	3	3.43	.514
2	Listening skill plays an important role in supporting my success as a <i>santri</i>	4	3	3.36	.497
3	Speaking skill plays an important role in supporting my success as a <i>santri</i>	4	3	3.36	.497
4	Writing skill plays an important role in supporting my success as a <i>santri</i>	4	2	3.36	.633
5	Reading skill plays an important role in supporting my success as a <i>santri</i>	4	3	3.50	.519

Likert Scale: strongly agree (4), agree (3), disagree (2), strongly disagree (1)

Abbreviations: H (highest score), L (lowest score), M (mean), S (standard of deviation)

From Table 1, it can be described that students place high importance on various English language skills in supporting their success as Santri. The overall mean (M) scores suggest that reading is the most essential skill, with a score of 3.50, indicating that students highly value reading as a tool for their personal and academic development. Following closely are speaking, listening, and writing, all with an average score of 3.36. This suggests that while students recognize the importance of all English skills, they prioritize reading slightly above the others. Additionally, English skills overall are deemed very important, with an average score of 3.43, reflecting students’ strong motivation to master the language to succeed in their roles and future life. The standard deviations (S) are relatively low across all items, indicating consistent responses among students regarding their language skill priorities.

Table 2. Data Summary of Students' Lacks

No	Statements	H	L	M	S
1	I am still not very good at using English	4	1	2.93	.917
2	I am still not very good at English listening skill	4	1	2.21	1.122
3	I am still not very good at English speaking skill	4	1	2.79	.975
4	I am still not very good at English writing skill	4	1	2.79	.802
5	I am still not very good at English reading skill	4	1	3.00	.961
6	I often use English in daily life	4	2	3.29	.726
7	I often listen to English in daily life	4	3	3.43	.514
8	I often speak English in daily life	4	2	3.14	.770
9	I often write English in daily life	4	2	3.14	.535
10	I often read English in daily life	4	1	2.79	.893
11	I am still not very good at English pronunciation	4	1	2.79	1.051
12	I am still not very good at English vocabulary	4	1	2.57	1.089
13	I am still not very good at English grammar	4	1	2.64	1.151
14	I am still not very good at responding to expressions in English	4	1	2.57	.938
15	I am still not very good at understanding the meaning and usage of every word in English	4	1	2.86	1.027
16	I am still not very good at understanding the meaning and usage of every sentence in English	4	2	3.00	.784
17	I am still not very good at understanding the meaning and usage of every expressions in English	4	1	2.86	.864

Likert Scale: strongly agree (4), agree (3), disagree (2), strongly disagree (1)

Abbreviations: H (highest score), L (lowest score), M (mean), S (standard of deviation)

From Table 2, the data shows that students feel they have several areas in English where they need improvement. Reading is where they feel most comfortable (with a score of 3.00), but they still see room to grow. However, listening stands out as the biggest challenge, with the lowest score of 2.21, indicating that many students struggle with it. Pronunciation, vocabulary, and grammar also pose difficulties, as students report feeling unsure in these areas. In terms of understanding English, students express challenges in interpreting the meanings of specific words, sentences, and expressions, with scores between 2.57 and 3.00. This suggests that while some students are more confident, there is still a general need for support in these areas. Overall, students are seeking more guidance to strengthen their listening, vocabulary, grammar, and comprehension skills to become more comfortable with English.

Table 3. Data Summary of Students' Wants

No	Statements	H	L	M	S
1	I want the opportunity to enhance my English skills	4	3	3.93	.267
2	I want to learn English that is relevant to daily life as a santri	4	3	3.79	.426
3	I want to communicate in English to assist me in my future life	4	4	4.00	.000
4	I want to be able to write in English better	4	3	3.86	.363
5	I want to improve my listening skills	4	1	3.50	.855
6	I want to read English texts with correct pronunciation	4	4	4.00	.000
7	I want to be able to read English texts and understand the content well	4	2	3.71	.611
8	I want to be able to find the meanings of new vocabulary in English texts	4	1	3.57	.852
9	I want to be able to organize sentences in English into paragraphs	4	2	3.71	.611
10	I want to be able to write English texts correctly	4	1	3.79	.802

Likert Scale: strongly agree (4), agree (3), disagree (2), strongly disagree (1) Abbreviations: H (highest score), L (lowest score), M (mean), S (standard of deviation)

The data results from Table 3 show that students are really enthusiastic about improving their English skills. Their biggest goal is to communicate effectively in English in the future, which scored a perfect 4.00. This highlights how important they feel it is to use English well as they move forward in life. They also want to enhance their overall English skills, with a score of 3.93, showing they're excited about opportunities for growth. Learning English that's relevant to their daily lives as Santri is important to them too, scoring 3.79, which indicates they're looking for practical ways to use the language in their everyday activities. When it comes to specific skills, writing stands out as a priority, with a score of 3.86, as they want to become better writers. They also recognize the need to improve their listening skills, reflected in a score of 3.50, suggesting they want to understand spoken English more easily. Additionally, students expressed a desire to read English texts with proper pronunciation (4.00) and to grasp their content well (3.71). They're keen to learn how to find meanings of new vocabulary (3.57) and to organize their thoughts into clear paragraphs (3.71). They also want to write English texts correctly (3.79). Overall, it's clear that these students are motivated and passionate about enhancing their English skills, aiming to equip themselves for real-life situations as Santri.

Table 4. Data Summary of Students' Learning Goals

No	Statements	H	L	M	S
1	I want to practice pronouncing simple words and sentences with correct pronunciation related to daily life as a <i>santri</i>	4	2	3.64	.633
2	I want to learn English so I can communicate easily as a santri	4	3	3.86	.363
3	I want to learn English grammar so that I can write in English as a santri	4	1	3.50	.855

Likert Scale: strongly agree (4), agree (3), disagree (2), strongly disagree (1) Abbreviations: H (highest score), L (lowest score), M (mean), S (standard of deviation)

The findings from Table 4 reveal that students have clear learning goals centered around improving their English skills. Their desire to practice pronouncing simple words and sentences correctly, particularly those relevant to their daily lives as Santri, scored 3.64. This suggests they understand the importance of pronunciation in effective communication. Additionally, students expressed a strong interest in learning English to communicate easily in their roles as Santri, with a score of 3.86. This indicates that they see effective communication as essential for their daily interactions and activities. Finally, their goal of mastering English grammar to enhance their writing skills received a score of 3.50. This shows that while students value grammar, they recognize it as a foundational skill necessary for expressing themselves accurately in writing.

Table 5. Data Summary of Content & Sequence

No	Statements	H	L	M	S
1	Learning English is more fun when there are examples to start with	4	2	3.50	.650
2	Learning English becomes more beneficial when there are independent practice exercises	4	2	3.29	.611
3	Learning English becomes more engaging when there are materials related to a <i>Santri's</i> life or Islamic values	4	3	3.93	.267

Likert Scale: strongly agree (4), agree (3), disagree (2), strongly disagree (1) Abbreviations: H (highest score), L (lowest score), M (mean), S (standard of deviation)

From Table 5, the data highlights how students feel about their learning experiences in English. They find learning English more enjoyable when examples are provided to help them get started, with a mean score of 3.50. This suggests that practical illustrations can make the learning process feel more approachable and relatable. Students also believe that independent practice exercises enhance their learning, although this aspect received a slightly lower score of 3.29. This indicates that while they see value in practicing on their own, it might not be as engaging as other methods. However, what truly resonates with them is the incorporation of materials related to their lives as Santri and Islamic values, which received a high score of 3.93. This reflects their desire for learning experiences that connect directly to their daily lives and beliefs, making the content more meaningful and engaging.

Table 6. Data Summary of Format & Presentation

No	Statements	H	L	M	S
1	Learning English is more interesting when done individually	4	1	2.14	1.027
2	Learning English is more interesting when done with a friend	4	3	3.79	.426
3	Learning English is more interesting when done together in groups	4	2	3.50	.650
4	Learning English is more enjoyable with the help of a teacher or friends	4	4	4.00	.000

5	Learning English is more exciting when done in the classroom	4	3	3.43	.514
6	Learning English is more exciting when done outside the classroom	4	2	3.43	.756
7	I want to practice English by myself	4	1	2.93	1.141
8	I want to practice English with my friend	4	3	3.64	.497
9	I want to practice English together with my group friends	4	3	3.71	.469

Likert Scale: strongly agree (4), agree (3), disagree (2), strongly disagree (1)

Abbreviations: H (highest score), L (lowest score), M (mean), S (standard of deviation)

The data in Table 6 reveals students' preferences for how they engage with learning English. Interestingly, they find learning more appealing when done with others rather than alone. For example, learning with a friend received a high score of 3.79, indicating that they value companionship in their studies. Similarly, practicing together in groups also garnered a solid score of 3.71, suggesting that collaboration enhances their learning experience. While the idea of learning individually received a low score of 2.14, indicating that many students do not find it particularly engaging, they still expressed a desire to practice on their own, scoring 2.93. This suggests that while they appreciate independent practice, they prefer to learn in social settings. The strongest preference is for learning with the help of a teacher or friends, which scored a perfect 4.00. This highlights the importance of support and guidance in their learning process. Additionally, students find learning more exciting in the classroom (3.43) or outside of it (also 3.43).

Table 7. Data Summary of Monitoring & Assessment

No	Statements	H	L	M	S
1	I want to be assessed with a quiz to measure my learning progress	4	3	3.50	.519
2	I want to write a brief note after learning about what I studied and what I still need to understand	4	2	3.36	.633
3	I want to be given an assignment to present what I have learned	4	3	3.64	.497
4	I would like to be given exercises to help me write better	4	1	3.43	.852
5	I want to practice short dialogues or monologues in English to help me improve my speaking skills	4	3	3.43	.514
6	I want to practice my English listening skills with texts that include images	4	3	3.50	.519
7	I prefer learning to read with storybooks that have pictures	4	1	2.93	.829
8	I prefer role-playing when learning to speak English	4	1	3.29	.914

Likert Scale: strongly agree (4), agree (3), disagree (2), strongly disagree (1) Abbreviations: H (highest score), L (lowest score), M (mean), S (standard of deviation)

The data from Table 7 reveals students' preferences for assessing their learning in English. Many expressed a desire for quizzes to track their progress, with a 3.50 score indicating they value measurable feedback. They also want to write brief reflections on their learning (3.36), helping them identify areas for improvement. Additionally,

students appreciate assignments that allow them to present their knowledge (3.64) and want exercises to enhance their writing skills (3.43). They are also keen to practice speaking through short dialogues or monologues (3.43) and improve their listening skills with texts that include images (3.50). While reading storybooks with pictures scored lower at 2.93, students still find it enjoyable and like role-playing for speaking practice (3.29).

The results of need analysis from interviews with a lecturer

Several key aspects of her teaching approach were discussed in an interview with an English teacher. The teacher emphasizes the necessity of mastering English, viewing it as an essential skill in today's globalized world. While English is not the Muslim community's primary language, she believes proficiency in it is crucial for student success in modern contexts. However, students face a significant lack of specific skills, particularly in speaking and writing. Pronunciation poses a major challenge, as the students' native language has different phonetic patterns, making English sounds unfamiliar.

To address student wants, the teacher finds that conversational practice is the most effective way to engage and motivate students, as it allows for interactive and practical use of the language. Her primary goal is for students to develop public speaking skills, enabling them to utilize English for religious preaching and other formal speaking opportunities. The content and sequence at the pesantren include a unique bilingual approach, with students alternating between Arabic and English each week. This sequence integrates English into daily life, fostering motivation and regular practice.

In terms of format and presentation, she employs group study as her preferred teaching method. She finds that students are more enthusiastic and motivated when learning alongside their peers rather than studying individually. Finally, monitoring and assessment of student progress presents some challenges. As her expertise is primarily in Arabic, the teacher notes that her evaluation of English-speaking skills may lack the depth that a specialized English teacher could provide. She suggests that additional teaching resources and specialized staff could enhance the quality of English instruction and the accuracy of student assessments.

Discussion

In general, this research aims to investigate the English learning needed for students at Pesantren Muhammad Al-Haqqi. Specifically, students' needs can be identified by finding out what "learning needs" and "target needs." Learning needs are what a learner should do to effectively understand the course, while target needs are what the learner needs to do in the particular setting (Nation & Macalister, 2010). In this research, learning needs were identified by understanding students' necessities (Table 1), students' lack (Table 2), and students' wants (Table 3). Moreover, target needs were identified by understanding goals (Table 4), content and sequencing (Table 5), format and presentation (Table 6), and monitoring and assessment (Table 7).

Necessities are what the learner needs to comprehend to act effectively (Nation & Macalister, 2010). In terms of students' necessities (Table 1), it shows that students see reading as an essential way to improve both personally and academically. Besides that, the following indicator is lack. Lack is what the learner already knows and what they do not know (Nation & Macalister, 2010). Regarding students' lack (Table 2), they are looking for additional support to improve their listening, vocabulary, grammar, and

comprehension skills to feel more confident in English. Wants is what the learners think is necessary (Nation & Macalister, 2010). Regarding students' wants (Table 3), they are motivated to improve their English skills to better handle real-life situations as Santri.

Necessities, lack, and wants may be based on comparing or referring to a list of items that set the course's learning goals. Goals are crucial to determine the purpose of the course and what the learners need to gain from it (Nation & Macalister, 2010). Regarding goals (Table 4), students are focused on practical aspects of language learning that will directly support their experiences and responsibilities as Santri. They expressed a strong interest in learning English to communicate efficiently in their roles as Santri. To enhance communication/speaking skills, teachers can encourage students to practice and incorporate materials that reflect Islamic values, such as delivering speeches or engaging in daily conversations in pesantren. By creating more opportunities for students to practice English in ways that align with their background as Santri, their speaking skills can improve, and their motivation to learn English may increase.

The course content includes the language components, concepts, skills, and strategies that fulfill the learning goals. (Nation & Macalister, 2010). In terms of content & sequence (Table 5), students' preference for learning experiences is directly linked to their daily lives and beliefs, making the content more impactful and engaging. In line with that, learning material should be presented to learners in a way that supports effective learning (Nation & Macalister, 2010). Regarding format and presentation (Table 6), students perform better in group settings where they can share ideas and get help, making their English learning more fun and effective.

The purpose of curriculum design is to develop a course with meaningful objectives and ensure it successfully meets learning goals. An essential part of the design process is continually assessing how well these goals are being achieved (Nation & Macalister, 2010). In terms of monitoring and assessment (Table 7), students prefer a mix of assessments, reflective practices, and interactive exercises to create a more engaging English learning experience.

The findings (from Table 1 to Table 7) reveal students' needs in learning English. To support this, lessons should focus on building communicative skills, as students aim to use English in their future lives and in delivering religious speeches. In addition, English learning in pesantren must be accompanied by Islamic themes, in this way, students will be more interested in learning English. This is relevant with (Fitria, 2023; Latif, 2019) stated that Islamic religious topics make an excellent theme for learning English in Islamic boarding schools. This is also relevant with (Tomlinson & Masuhara, 2018) stated that teaching materials that align with their background will make the English learning process more relevant and increase their motivation.

Furthermore, using themes from Islamic religious studies as a basis for English learning materials in pesantren can be highly effective. Regarding this matter, teachers can use Islamic themes. For instance, when covering fiqh topics, teachers might incorporate texts on subjects like muamalah law, such as buying and selling or principles of Islamic economics, as well as discussions on religious laws related to prayer, fasting, and other practices. By learning English through these familiar themes, students gain language skills that align with their existing knowledge, making the learning experience more relevant and engaging.

CONCLUSION

Conducting a needs analysis is essential for improving teaching and learning, particularly in Islamic boarding schools. The findings from this research indicate that English teachers at Pesantren Muhammad Al-Haqqi can better understand their students' needs and preferences, allowing them to develop a more engaging and relevant English syllabus. By integrating Islamic themes into lessons, teachers can create a meaningful learning experience that not only enhances language proficiency but also aligns with students' religious studies and future aspirations as Santri.

To achieve this, several key recommendations for curriculum design should be considered. First, English learning materials should incorporate religious and cultural contexts relevant to Santri, such as Islamic teachings, fiqh discussions, and religious storytelling, to make lessons more engaging and applicable to their daily lives. Additionally, given students' struggles with pronunciation and communication, there should be a stronger emphasis on speaking and listening skills through conversational practice, role-playing, and listening exercises. Learning in groups and with peer support has also been identified as an effective approach; therefore, the curriculum should include collaborative activities such as pair work and group discussions to foster engagement and motivation. Furthermore, incorporating task-based and practical learning approaches, such as public speaking, English sermons, and presentations that integrate both language and religious teachings, will help students apply their knowledge in real-world situations. Lastly, ongoing assessment and feedback mechanisms, including quizzes, self-reflection journals, and oral presentations, should be implemented to track student progress and provide constructive feedback for improvement.

Beyond Pesantren Muhammad Al-Haqqi, these findings have broader implications for other Islamic boarding schools and similar educational institutions. By aligning English curriculum design with students' religious and cultural contexts, these institutions can enhance language acquisition while preserving the unique identity of their learners. Additionally, a needs-based curriculum ensures that English education remains relevant, engaging, and effective in fostering students' academic and professional growth. Moving forward, continued research and development should focus on refining instructional methods, expanding teacher training programs, and exploring digital resources to further support English learning in pesantren. By addressing these needs and implementing the recommended strategies, educators can create a more inclusive and effective learning environment, equipping Santri with essential language skills for global engagement.

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