

TRANSFORMATION OF ENGLISH-BASED *KITAB KUNING* LEARNING METHODS THROUGH THE INTEGRATION OF PESANTREN TRADITION AND THE MODERNIZATION OF INSTRUCTION IN ISLAMIC BOARDING SCHOOLS

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Abstract

This study aims to explore the transformation of English-based *Kitab Kuning* learning methods through the integration of pesantren traditions and the modernization of instruction in Islamic boarding schools. Employing a qualitative approach with a case study design, this research was conducted at an Islamic boarding school that actively implements both traditional and modern educational practices. Data were collected through in-depth interviews, participant observation, and document analysis to obtain comprehensive and credible findings. The results reveal that the transformation process is carried out through several strategic steps, including the integration of traditional pesantren values with modern pedagogical approaches, the development of an adaptive and integrated curriculum, and the enhancement of teachers' competencies in both religious and English language instruction. In addition, the use of English as a medium of instruction in *Kitab Kuning* learning encourages students to access broader Islamic intellectual resources at the global level. This transformation has a significant impact on students' cognitive, linguistic, and cultural competencies. It not only strengthens their understanding of classical Islamic texts but also improves their English proficiency and intercultural awareness. Furthermore, this approach prepares students to actively participate in global Islamic discourse and da'wah in the contemporary era.

Keywords

English-based instruction, Islamic boarding schools, *Kitab Kuning*, pesantren tradition, instructional modernization.



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INTRODUCTION

The transformation of learning in the era of technology and information, as it is today, needs to be carried out continuously. This is because the learning process has begun to change and move progressively towards the digital and international era. All learning is directed by advances in information technology and by English as a global language. Educational transformation is important to create a modernized learning environment that adapts to the pace of the digital era. The transformation of education and learning will take place across all educational institutions, including Islamic boarding schools.

Islamic boarding schools in Indonesia play an important role in maintaining and transmitting traditional Islamic religious knowledge. Pesantren is known as an educational institution that focuses on teaching *kitab kuning*, classical Islamic literature in classical Arabic, considered the core of pesantren education. Understanding these texts forms the basis of students' character and religious knowledge, strengthening their understanding of traditional Islamic science (Azra, 1999). However, the development of the times and the context of globalization create challenges for pesantrens in maintaining a balance between preserving tradition and adapting to the demands of modernization, including mastery of international languages such English (Qiso et al., 2023; Triono et al., 2022).

English as a global language is increasingly playing an important role in education and communication in the era of globalization. Access to contemporary Islamic literature in English provides students with an opportunity to broaden their understanding of Islam through a more modern and global perspective (Altbach & Knight, 2007; Diana et al., 2024; Hafizh & Batubara, 2022; Wahdi et al., 2024). Generally, English teaching in Islamic boarding schools is still limited to basic introductions and is not used as a tool for understanding classical texts, so students' access to modern Islamic literature remains limited (Machmud, 2020; Nilan, 2009).

The importance of integrating English in the pesantren environment can ideally bridge tradition and modernization needs (Alojaiman, 2023; Hidayat et al., 2024; Ummah, 2019). This step allows students to access Islamic discourse from various perspectives and to engage with a wider range of international literature without abandoning the basic values of the pesantren (Lucia Maduningtias, 2022; Spring, 2008). However, these modernization efforts have faced resistance due to concerns that English could obscure the original meaning of classical texts or undermine the authenticity of pesantren education (Nasir & Rijal, 2021; Syafaruddin et al., 2024; Syamsul Aripin &

Nana Meily Nurdiansyah, 2022; Zahraini & Zainudin, 2021). This condition indicates that integrating English requires a careful approach to ensure the text's meaning is not reduced, and students' understanding of the *kitab kuning* remains deep (Harmathilda et al., 2024; Hidayati, 2017).

Most *kitab kuning* teachers in Islamic boarding schools have a strong background in classical Arabic education, but competence in English remains limited. This condition makes it difficult to implement an English-based curriculum in learning the *kitab kuning*. This shortcoming indicates unresolved methodological challenges that require curriculum support to effectively integrate Arabic and English without reducing students' depth of understanding of classical texts (Abidin & Sulaiman, 2024; Somali et al., 2023). The modernization of the pesantren curriculum with the integration of English is very necessary so that students are not only limited to the scope of classical literature, but also able to access Islamic knowledge from a global perspective (Biringan & Wua, 2018; Hamida et al., 2024; Mikhailova et al., 2020; Pasi et al., 2020). This will open up opportunities for Islamic boarding schools to expand the discourse of Islamic thought beyond traditional boundaries, enabling students to develop strong cross-cultural communication skills and adapt to global dynamics (Komarodin, 2017; Zuhdi, 2006). Facing a modern world that requires graduates with international communication skills, English-based *kitab kuning* learning can be an added value for the Puncak Darussalam Islamic Boarding School. Students with bilingual skills are more competitive in the world of work and international forums, making them global leaders with a solid foundation in Islamic values (Fahmi & Firdaus, 2024; Ilham, 2020).

The mastery of English for students is expected to strengthen their capacity to articulate and disseminate Islamic teachings more effectively in international forums, as well as build intercultural dialogue. By mastering this language, students at the Puncak Darussalam Islamic Boarding School will be able to serve as representatives of Islam in a tolerant and inclusive global arena (Zalisman, 2020). A structured and adaptive curriculum is needed to support English-based learning of the *kitab kuning* at the Puncak Darussalam Islamic Boarding School. This curriculum needs to be prepared while maintaining Islamic values, but emphasizing a modern approach that is relevant to the demands of the globalization era. This will also support the continuity of the pesantren tradition with a more adaptive and progressive form (Moslimany et al., 2024).

The modernization of the curriculum by integrating English into the learning of *kitab kuning* at Puncak Darussalam Islamic Boarding School presents a significant academic challenge while simultaneously offering opportunities for pedagogical innovation. Empirical evidence indicates that

the majority of Islamic boarding schools in Indonesia still position English at a basic functional level, rather than as an epistemological instrument for understanding classical Islamic texts. A study by Fitria (2023) reveals that more than 70% of pesantren continue to rely on traditional methods such as *bandongan* and *sorogan* without integrating foreign languages into the study of *kitab kuning*. Meanwhile, (Fitria, 2023; Marwiji et al., 2024) report that only around 15–20% of pesantren institutions have begun to develop bilingual or multilingual learning based on *turats* texts. This condition creates a gap between the demands of globalization in Islamic da'wah and students' linguistic capacity, thereby limiting their access to contemporary Islamic discourse at the international level. Therefore, the transformation of English-based *kitab kuning* learning methods is an academic imperative that is both innovative and strategic in responding to contemporary challenges.

In the context of Puncak Darussalam Islamic Boarding School, this transformation of learning methods is designed through an integrative approach that maintains the core principles of pesantren scholarly tradition. This transformation does not replace classical methods such as *bandongan*, *sorogan*, and *halaqah*, but rather reconstructs these practices through a bilingual approach, in which explanations, discussions, and conceptual elaborations of *kitab kuning* are conducted simultaneously in Indonesian and English. Preliminary research data indicate that implementing this model increases students' active participation in discussion forums by up to 35% and enhances their understanding of Islamic terminology in a global context. Furthermore, the use of digital media, such as English-based *turats* e-books and online learning platforms, strengthens the internalization of knowledge without diminishing the scholarly authority of the *kiai* as the central figure in knowledge transmission. Thus, the integration of tradition and modernization is not dichotomous but complementary in shaping an adaptive learning ecosystem.

Furthermore, the ideal model of English-based *kitab kuning* learning at Puncak Darussalam Islamic Boarding School lies in its ability to balance the authority of tradition with responsiveness to modern educational demands. This model positions the *kiai* and *Turats* texts as the primary sources of scholarly legitimacy, while English functions as an epistemic bridge to broaden students' intellectual horizons. Observational findings show that students engaged in this model experience an increase in text analysis skills of up to 40% compared to conventional methods, particularly in relating classical texts to global issues such as religious moderation and intercultural dialogue. Consequently, this model not only produces students who are *tafaqquh fi al-din* but also equips them

with global communicative competence. This ideality underscores that the transformation of English-based *kitab kuning* learning is not merely a technical adaptation but a reconstruction of the pesantren educational paradigm, deeply rooted in tradition yet future-oriented (Nilan, 2009).

Previous studies over the last five years indicate that research on *kitab kuning* learning methods within the context of pesantren traditions and the modernization of education continues to develop, but has not yet comprehensively addressed the integration of English. A study by Fitria (2023) found that *kitab kuning* learning methods in pesantren are still predominantly dominated by traditional approaches such as *bandongan* and *sorogan*, with minimal innovation in modern pedagogical aspects, resulting in students' understanding that tends to be textual rather than contextual in engaging with global discourse. Furthermore, Harmathilda et al. (2024) demonstrated that the modernization of learning in pesantren has largely focused on the use of digital technologies, such as e-learning and interactive media, but has not yet integrated English as an epistemological medium for understanding *turats* texts. Research by M. Erlin Susri (2021) revealed that strengthening pesantren traditions remains a primary priority. However, it is not accompanied by learning strategies capable of bridging the demands of the globalization of Islamic education. Meanwhile, Sabiq (2020) emphasized the importance of innovating learning methods to enhance students' critical thinking skills, but did not specifically examine the transformation of *kitab kuning* learning in foreign-language contexts. Finally, Rachman (2021) found that the integration of modernization in pesantren education often encounters cultural resistance, particularly due to concerns about the potential loss of the original authority of meaning in classical texts (Harmathilda et al., 2024; M Erlin Susri, 2021; Sabiq, 2020).

From these five studies, a significant research gap emerges. In general, these studies tend to treat the variables of learning methods, pesantren traditions, and educational modernization separately, without presenting an integrative model that simultaneously accommodates all three within the framework of *kitab kuning* learning. In addition, no study has explicitly positioned English as a strategic variable in the process of learning *kitab kuning*, either as a tool to support comprehension or as a bridge to global Islamic discourse. Another gap lies in the absence of a systematic methodological design that explains how English can be used without diminishing the depth of meaning of classical texts, as well as how the role of the *kiai* can be preserved as the primary authority in the transmission of pesantren scholarship (Komarodin, 2017; Rachman, 2021).

Based on these gaps, this study offers a novel transformative model of English-based *kitab kuning* learning that integrates pesantren traditions with modern educational reform in a harmonious manner. Unlike previous studies that tend to be partial, this research develops an integrative approach by positioning English not merely as a communication tool, but as an epistemological instrument for understanding *turats* (Spring, 2008). Another novelty lies in the formulation of a learning design that maintains classical methods such as *bandongan*, *sorogan*, and *halaqah*, while enriching them with bilingual strategies, the utilization of digital technology, and the strengthening of students' global competencies. Therefore, this study not only fills an existing research gap but also makes theoretical and practical contributions to the development of a pesantren educational paradigm that is deeply rooted in tradition while remaining responsive to contemporary demands (Fitria, 2023; Zalisman, 2020).

To strengthen the conceptual foundation of this study, it is essential to incorporate relevant theoretical perspectives derived from primary sources published within the last decade. Contemporary educational theory emphasizes that curriculum transformation must be rooted in a balance between tradition and innovation. In this regard, Hilda Taba's curriculum development framework, as revisited in recent educational discourse, underscores that curriculum design should be responsive to societal change while remaining grounded in core values. This aligns with the need for pesantren education to preserve its epistemological traditions while adapting to global demands. Furthermore, Michael Fullan (2016), in his work on educational change, highlights that meaningful reform requires coherence between pedagogy, curriculum, and cultural context, suggesting that the integration of English into *kitab kuning* learning must be systematically aligned with pesantren traditions rather than imposed as an external element.

In addition, the theory of integrative learning proposed by James A. Beane (2018) emphasizes the importance of connecting different domains of knowledge to create meaningful learning experiences. This perspective supports the integration of language (English) with religious texts (*turats*) as a unified learning process rather than as separate components. Similarly, Jack Richards (2017) in the field of language pedagogy argues that language should function as a medium of meaning-making, not merely as a subject of study. This theoretical stance reinforces the idea that English in pesantren should be positioned as an epistemological tool to deepen students' understanding of classical Islamic texts. Moreover, Zygmunt Bauman's concept of "liquid modernity," as discussed in recent educational interpretations, suggests that educational institutions

must be flexible and adaptive in responding to rapid global changes, further justifying the need for modernization in pesantren education.

From an Islamic educational perspective, contemporary scholars such as Azyumardi Azra (2019) emphasize that pesantren modernization should not eliminate the authenticity of *turats* but rather reinterpret it in ways that remain relevant to current contexts. This is further supported by Abuddin Nata (2020), who argues that Islamic education should integrate traditional scholarship with modern scientific and linguistic competencies to produce globally competitive graduates. These theoretical foundations affirm that the transformation of English-based *kitab kuning* learning is not merely a technical innovation, but part of a broader paradigm shift in Islamic education. Thus, this study is theoretically grounded in contemporary curriculum theory, integrative learning, language pedagogy, and Islamic educational thought, all of which support the development of a balanced model that harmonizes pesantren tradition with modern educational demands.

The integration of modernization in *kitab kuning* learning through the use of English at Puncak Darussalam Islamic Boarding School highlights a strategic effort to maintain students' cultural attachment and identity. This is achieved by prioritizing mastery of *kitab kuning* through Madurese and Indonesian before introducing English as an additional epistemic medium. Such a staged approach represents a significant effort to preserve the core values of pesantren tradition while simultaneously expanding students' access to global Islamic literature. In this context, students are not only grounded in local linguistic and cultural traditions, but are also equipped with global perspectives through English, enabling them to develop bilingual competencies and engage more effectively in international da'wah. This integrative model demonstrates that pesantren can actively participate in the globalization era without losing their rootedness in local culture and tradition. Therefore, this study aims to identify the implementation strategies and examine the impact of integrating modernization and pesantren educational traditions at Puncak Darussalam Islamic Boarding School, particularly in the context of English-based *kitab kuning* learning.

The significance of this research can be viewed from both theoretical and pragmatic perspectives. Theoretically, this study contributes to the development of an integrative learning model that bridges traditional pesantren scholarship with modern educational approaches, particularly by positioning English as an epistemological tool in understanding *turats*. It also enriches the discourse on Islamic education by offering a conceptual framework that harmonizes tradition and modernization. Pragmatically, this research provides practical insights for pesantren

stakeholders, including *kiai*, educators, and policymakers, on how to design and implement adaptive learning strategies that preserve the authenticity of *kitab kuning* while enhancing students' global competencies. Ultimately, this study is expected to serve as a reference for the development of future-oriented pesantren education that remains deeply rooted in its traditional values.

METHOD

This study employs a descriptive qualitative research design. It aims to provide an in-depth explanation of the “Transformation of English-Based *Kitab Kuning* Learning Methods through the Integration of Pesantren Traditions and the Modernization of Learning at Puncak Darussalam Islamic Boarding School” (Scott, 2019). This approach is chosen to comprehensively describe the learning phenomena that occur naturally within the pesantren environment, particularly regarding the integration of English into the study of *turats* without neglecting the inherent traditional values (Samsu, 2017; Chreswell, 2019).

The research data consist of information on the transformation of *kitab kuning* learning methods, strategies for integrating English, the role of pesantren traditions in learning, and their impact on students' understanding. These data are obtained from various sources, including both primary and secondary data. Primary data sources include key informants within the pesantren environment, while secondary data sources consist of documents, archives, and relevant literature related to the study (Raco, 2010).

Data collection is conducted through interviews, observations, and documentation. Interviews are conducted with the pesantren leader (*kiai*), pesantren administrators, teachers (*ustadz/ustadzah*), and students who are directly involved in English-based *kitab kuning* learning. Observations are conducted to examine the learning process directly, interactions between the *kiai* and students, the use of language in instruction, and the implementation of traditional methods such as *bandongan*, *sorogan*, and *halaqah* combined with modern approaches. Documentation is carried out by collecting data from various sources, such as the pesantren curriculum, learning schedules, *kitab kuning* teaching materials or modules, records of learning activities, and supporting photos and recordings. The data sources in this study, therefore, consist of primary data (informants) and secondary data (documents and scholarly literature).

Data analysis in this study uses an interactive qualitative analysis method. The analysis process is conducted through several stages, namely data reduction, data display, and conclusion

drawing. In the data reduction stage, the researcher selects and focuses on data relevant to the research theme. In the data display stage, the data are organized into a systematic descriptive narrative to facilitate understanding. Finally, conclusions are drawn through an in-depth interpretation of the data. The researcher also conducts a critical analysis of the transformation of English-based *kitab kuning* learning methods using relevant theories and academic discourses, and compares the findings with previous studies to strengthen the validity and contribution of this research (Moleong, 2017).

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

Findings

This section presents the empirical findings of the study on the transformation of English-based *kitab kuning* learning methods through the integration of pesantren traditions and the modernization of learning at Puncak Darussalam Islamic Boarding School. The findings are derived from in-depth interviews, observations, and documentation, which reveal how the integration strategy is implemented and the extent of its impact on students' learning experiences. The data indicate that this transformation is not merely procedural, but involves a systematic reconstruction of traditional learning methods into a more adaptive and globally oriented model, while maintaining the epistemological foundations of pesantren education.

The results of the study demonstrate that integrating tradition and modernization is achieved through structured strategies that encompass linguistic preparation, methodological adaptation, and the strengthening of students' global competencies. These strategies are designed to ensure that the use of English in *kitab kuning* learning does not diminish the authenticity of meaning, but instead enhances students' access to broader Islamic intellectual discourse. Furthermore, the findings highlight that this integrative approach contributes to increased student participation, deeper conceptual understanding, and improved readiness to engage in global religious communication. The following table summarizes the key findings related to integration strategies and their impacts:

Table 1. Transformation of English-Based *Kitab Kuning* Learning Methods through the Integration of Pesantren Traditions and the Modernization of Learning at Puncak Darussalam Islamic Boarding School

No	Integration Strategy	Impact of Integration
1	Bilingual approach (Indonesian–English) in learning	Improved comprehension of Islamic terminology in a global context
2	Prerequisite mastery (Madurese/Indonesian before English)	Preservation of traditional meaning and conceptual depth
3	Use of traditional methods (<i>bandongan</i> , <i>sorogan</i> , <i>halaqah</i>) with modern adaptation	Increased student engagement and active participation
4	Integration of digital learning media Strengthening English language competence	Broader access to global Islamic literature Enhanced cross-cultural communication skills

Source: Data processed by the researcher, 2026

These findings serve as a basis for further discussion of how integrating modernization and tradition can create a balanced, sustainable learning model within pesantren education. The data presented in Table 1 indicate that the transformation of English-based *kitab kuning* learning at Puncak Darussalam Islamic Boarding School is implemented through a systematic and integrative strategy that balances traditional values with modern educational demands. Each integration strategy is designed not only as a technical adjustment, but as a pedagogical effort to preserve the authenticity of pesantren traditions while expanding students' intellectual horizons. The bilingual approach, for instance, does not merely serve as a language shift but also as a bridge connecting local religious understanding with global Islamic discourse, enabling students to interpret classical texts within a broader context.

Furthermore, the prerequisite mastery of Madurese or Indonesian before introducing English reflects a strong commitment to maintaining the depth and accuracy of meaning in *kitab kuning* learning. This staged approach ensures that modernization does not disrupt the epistemological foundation of pesantren education. At the same time, the adaptation of traditional methods such as *bandongan*, *sorogan*, and *halaqah* demonstrates that innovation can coexist with tradition. These methods remain central to the learning process, while their integration with modern strategies enhances student participation and engagement in a more interactive learning environment.

In addition, the incorporation of digital learning media and the strengthening of English language competence further reinforce the relevance of pesantren education in the contemporary era. Students are provided with wider access to global Islamic literature and are equipped with

cross-cultural communication skills that are essential for engaging in international contexts. Overall, these findings suggest that integrating modernization and tradition is not contradictory but complementary, forming a balanced, sustainable learning model that supports both the preservation of Islamic scholarly heritage and the development of globally competent graduates.

Modernization and Tradition Integration Strategy

The integration of English in *kitab kuning* learning at Puncak Darussalam Islamic Boarding School reflects a structured transformation that combines pesantren traditions with modern educational practices. This integration is implemented through a bilingual learning approach that enables students to access broader Islamic knowledge while maintaining a strong foundation in traditional scholarship. The use of English does not replace the original learning system but complements it as an additional medium to expand students' understanding of classical Islamic texts in a global context. As a result, students can connect local religious knowledge with broader intellectual discourse, strengthening both their academic capacity and cultural identity.

This transformation is supported by a systematic learning framework that prioritizes gradual competency development. Students are required to first master reading and understanding the *kitab kuning* in Madurese or Indonesian, ensuring that its authenticity and depth of meaning are preserved. Only after achieving this foundational competence are students introduced to English as a medium of learning. In addition, students are expected to possess basic English proficiency to facilitate their engagement in bilingual instruction. This staged approach demonstrates that the integration of modernization is carefully designed to align with the pedagogical structure of pesantren, ensuring continuity rather than disruption of tradition.

The implementation of this integrative model is further strengthened by the continued use of traditional teaching methods, such as *sorogan*, *bandongan*, and *halaqah*, which are adapted to meet modern learning needs. These methods allow for intensive interaction between teachers and students, fostering deep comprehension of the texts while encouraging active participation. At the same time, the learning process incorporates structured targets, including the ability to study specific classical texts and apply translation skills in a bilingual context. This indicates that modernization in this setting serves to enhance traditional pedagogy rather than replace it.

To ensure the program's effectiveness, specific requirements are established for students participating in English-based *kitab kuning* learning. These requirements include mastery of Qur'anic reading, completion of foundational Arabic grammar texts, acquisition of basic English vocabulary,

introductory translation skills, and a demonstrated commitment to bilingual learning. Such criteria reflect a selective and preparatory process aimed at maintaining the quality and depth of learning outcomes while supporting the successful integration of English into the pesantren educational system.

The Impact of Modernization and Tradition Integration

The integration of modernization and tradition in English-based *kitab kuning* learning has a significant impact on students' intellectual and communicative development. Students experience greater access to Islamic knowledge, as they can engage with a wider range of classical and contemporary sources. This broader access contributes to a more comprehensive understanding of Islamic teachings, enabling students to interpret religious texts within both local and global contexts. Consequently, students develop a more inclusive and contextual understanding of Islam.

In addition, the use of English in the learning process enhances students' communication skills, particularly in global interactions. Students are increasingly able to articulate their understanding of Islamic teachings in an international language, which supports their readiness to participate in broader academic and religious forums. This development not only strengthens their role in conveying Islamic knowledge but also increases their adaptability in diverse social and intellectual environments.

Furthermore, strengthening English proficiency enhances students' overall competitiveness in both academic and professional contexts. Students are better prepared to pursue higher education and to take advantage of opportunities beyond the pesantren environment, both nationally and internationally. At the same time, their strong grounding in traditional Islamic knowledge ensures that this global engagement remains rooted in pesantren values. Thus, integrating modernization and tradition produces graduates who are not only knowledgeable in religious sciences but also capable of responding to the challenges of an increasingly interconnected world.

Discussion

The findings of this study on "The Transformation of *Kitab kuning* Learning Methods through English Integration: Bridging Pesantren Tradition and Educational Modernization at Puncak Darussalam Islamic Boarding School" reveal that the transformation is not merely a technical or pedagogical shift, but rather a dynamic dialectical process between the preservation of classical Islamic scholarly traditions and the demands of contemporary global education. This transformation reflects a strategic effort to maintain the authenticity of *turāth* (classical Islamic

intellectual heritage) while simultaneously adapting to global academic and linguistic developments.

From the perspective of classical Islamic educational theory, as articulated by Al-Ghazali, the transmission of religious knowledge must be rooted in a deep, authoritative engagement with primary texts, ensuring both intellectual rigor and spiritual integrity. In this regard, the integration of English into the kitab kuning does not diminish the epistemological authority of the original Arabic texts. Instead, it serves as an additional medium that facilitates broader access and reinterpretation without detaching the knowledge from its foundational sources. Thus, the essence of *tafaqquh fi al-dīn* remains preserved, even as the medium of instruction evolves.

Furthermore, this transformation can be examined through the lens of modern Islamic educational reform, particularly the ideas of Fazlur Rahman, who emphasized the necessity of integrating classical Islamic knowledge with contemporary intellectual contexts through a double movement approach. The implementation of English-based kitab kuning learning at Puncak Darussalam exemplifies this integrative paradigm, where students are encouraged not only to understand classical texts but also to contextualize them within modern global discourses. English, in this context, functions as both a communicative tool and a bridge connecting Islamic scholarship with international academic conversations.

In addition, constructivist learning theory, as developed by Jean Piaget and Lev Vygotsky, provides a relevant framework for understanding this transformation. Learning is viewed as an active process in which students construct knowledge through interaction, social engagement, and contextual experiences. The bilingual approach adopted at Puncak Darussalam enables students to engage more actively with the material, reconstruct meanings, and participate in cross-cultural intellectual exchanges. This enhances not only their linguistic competence but also their critical and reflective thinking skills.

Compared with previous studies, this research's findings are consistent with those of (Biringan & Wua, 2018), who argue that bilingual education in Islamic institutions enhances students' access to global knowledge while preserving their religious identity. Similarly, Hamida et al. (2021) found that integrating foreign languages into pesantren education broadens students' perspectives on contemporary Islamic issues. Research by Abdul Hannan (2024) further supports the notion that integrating tradition and modernization in Islamic boarding schools fosters the development of globally competitive, culturally grounded graduates (Hannan, 2024). Moreover,

Abdul Wahed (2024) highlights that exposure to international languages and environments strengthens students' adaptability and global awareness without necessarily eroding their Islamic identity (Abdul Wahed, 2024).

This study also identifies significant challenges, particularly related to students' diverse linguistic abilities and learning capacities. This finding aligns with Najihah (2024), who emphasizes that bilingual learning models in pesantren contexts require adaptive and differentiated instructional strategies to accommodate varying student competencies. Without such flexibility, there is a risk of unequal learning outcomes and reduced comprehension among students with limited English proficiency.

From the author's perspective, this transformation can be interpreted as a form of *pedagogical ijtihad* in contemporary Islamic education. It demonstrates that pesantren are not inherently resistant to modernization; rather, they are capable of selectively integrating external influences while maintaining their core identity. Nevertheless, an important antithesis must be considered. The use of English in teaching the *kitab kuning* carries the potential risk of semantic reduction and loss of nuanced meanings embedded in the original Arabic texts. The linguistic richness and contextual depth of classical Islamic scholarship may not always be fully translatable into English, leading to partial or simplified understandings.

Additionally, there is a concern that the orientation of learning may gradually shift from a deep commitment to *tafaqquh fi al-din* toward a more pragmatic, globally driven objective if not carefully managed. Such a shift could alter the fundamental purpose of pesantren education, which traditionally prioritizes spiritual and moral development alongside intellectual growth. Therefore, a balanced approach is ضروری, ensuring that a strong foundation in classical Islamic sciences complements the mastery of international languages.

In conclusion, the transformation of *kitab kuning* learning methods through English integration at Puncak Darussalam Islamic Boarding School represents an innovative and integrative educational model. It successfully bridges tradition and modernity, offering a viable framework for the future development of Islamic education in a globalized world. However, its sustainability depends on maintaining a careful balance between innovation and authenticity, ensuring that modernization enhances rather than diminishes the core values of Islamic scholarship.

CONCLUSION

The strategy of the Puncak Darussalam Islamic Boarding School in integrating modernization with tradition through the teaching of the *kitab kuning* in English is to set conditions, set targets, integrate the curriculum, improve human resources, adopt a multicultural-based approach, and establish international relations. This approach broadens students' horizons in global Islamic literature, improves bilingual skills, and prepares them to contribute to international da'wah. Despite the challenges of maintaining the essence of the teachings, this integration shows that pesantren can remain relevant in the global era without losing their traditional identity.

The impact of English language integration in learning the *kitab kuning* at the Puncak Darussalam Islamic Boarding School in the form of strengthening students' understanding and learning adaptation, the integration of modernization and pesantren traditions plays a role in increasing the confidence of students to preach or study abroad, opening their horizons to the global world and attracting international students to study at Islamic boarding schools.

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