



Design of integration model of Islamic religious education teaching with Kaili language through Content-Based Instruction (CBI) at elementary schools in Tawaeli District, Indonesia

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Abstract

This study aims to analyze the design of an integration model for Islamic religious education learning into the Kaili language through Content-Based Instruction (CBI) at elementary schools in Tawaeli District, Indonesia. The research employs a qualitative, narrative design. Data were collected through field observation, in-depth interviews with the school's principal, vice principals, teachers, and students. Data were also gathered through written material analysis, such as teaching materials and teaching plans. The validity of the data was ensured through source and method triangulation techniques. The findings indicate that elements integrated in the Kaili CBI-Language Model in Islamic learning. The CBI-Bahasa Kaili integration model combines the basic values of Islamic religious education, which include faith, morals, worship, and history, with a learning approach that places regional languages as the main medium. The learning model consisted of objectives and characteristics that emphasized the integration of Islamic values and local culture, the main components (input-process-output), and supporting tools in the form of teaching modules, student guides, and teacher guides. The main objective was to improve students' understanding of Islamic teachings while fostering an appreciation for the Kaili language and culture. The learning syntax was designed in six stages: Preparation (opening and apperception), Presentation (delivery of material), Language Focus (emphasizing vocabulary and Kaili language structure), Practice (joint practice), Production (students producing language and lesson content independently), and Reflection (self-evaluation and feedback).

Keywords: Islamic education, Content-based learning, Kaili language, Material integration

1. Introduction

Regional languages are an inherent part of a society's cultural identity. They function not only as a means of communication but also as a symbol of identity, a social glue, and a medium for transmitting cultural values (Rustina et al., 2026) ^[17]. In the context of education, regional languages play a crucial role in instilling a sense of togetherness and strengthening students' identities. Kaili is one of the regional languages used by the people of Central Sulawesi, particularly in Palu City and its surrounding areas, including Tawaeli District. This language is not only a means of daily communication but also contains values of local wisdom passed down from generation to generation. Through Kaili, people can express their outlook on life, norms, and customs that characterize the students' culture. However, current trends show that the use of Kaili is declining, especially among younger generations. Many children prefer to use Indonesian as their primary language for daily communication, both at school and at home. This phenomenon is exacerbated by the dominance of mass media and digital technology, which predominantly use Indonesian or foreign languages (Nurdin, 2022) ^[7]. As a result, the younger generation is increasingly distant from their mother tongue, ultimately threatening the sustainability of the Kaili language.

In the learning context, especially in elementary schools, this condition becomes a challenge in itself. Students who do not know their local language will have difficulty understanding the local values it contains. When learning, including Islamic Religious Education, is linked to regional languages, students will more easily understand religious values because they are closer to the socio-cultural realities they experience (Arif, Nurdin, & Elya, 2023) ^[11]. One subject with great potential for integrating the Kaili language is Islamic Religious Education. Elementary school Islamic religious learning still tends to be textual and less connected to local wisdom. Pre-study data show that 75% of religious teachers in Tawaeli District still use conventional learning approaches, without integrating regional language values.

Islamic Religious Education in elementary schools plays a crucial role in shaping students' character and spirituality (Palinge, Nurdin, & Rusdin, 2022) ^[12]. However, in practice, Islamic religious learning still faces several challenges that hinder the optimal achievement of its objectives. These challenges are not only related to learning methods and media but also to students' socio-cultural context, which is often overlooked in the teaching and learning process. This is supported by Presidential Regulation Number 87 of 2017 concerning Strengthening Character Education, which

emphasizes the importance of religious values and nationalism, which can be optimized by integrating religious and linguistic aspects into the learning process. 8 The dominant use of Indonesian in the learning process makes PAI material feel rigid and lacking context for students. In areas such as Tawaeli District, many students are still familiar with Kaili as their everyday language, but it is rarely used in Islamic education. This creates a gap between the language teachers use and the emotional language students understand. As a result, students' understanding of the teaching material, especially Islamic values, is limited.

Islamic Religious Education learning often focuses solely on cognitive aspects or memorization (Saada & Magadlah, 2021) [18]. Teachers place more emphasis on material acquisition, such as memorizing verses, prayers, or hadiths, but place less emphasis on contextual understanding that connects Islamic teachings to students' daily lives. This learning model leaves students with limited knowledge of religious theory, unable to internalize it in real-life situations. The primary goal of Islamic religious education is to develop noble morals, not simply to increase religious knowledge. Another problem is the lack of a learning model that specifically integrates local values with Islamic teachings. Local wisdom, such as that found in the Kaili language and culture, can be an effective means of enriching students' understanding of Islamic values. Without this integration, Islamic religious education learning tends to be general and less relevant to students' real-life environments. The learning material, especially Islamic values, is limited.

This research aims to integrate the Kaili language into Islamic religious education. This supports the achievement of core competencies and basic competencies of Islamic education as stipulated in the Minister of Education and Language Regulation Number 37 of 2018. 11 For example, basic competencies such as demonstrating harmony and mutual assistance, as referred to in the Al-Maidah and Al-Imran verses, can be linked to the humanitarian values in the Kaili language. The tradition of "*nositulungi*," meaning mutual assistance, and the need to address various challenges in Islamic religious education in elementary schools require a more innovative, contextual, and relevant learning model that aligns with students' lives. One solution is to implement a Content-Based Instruction (CBI) approach. The CBI integrates language learning with specific content materials so that students not only learn the language but also understand the content taught through that language. The CBI can be utilized in the context of this research by using the Kaili language as a medium for delivering Islamic religious materials. In this way, students will gain two benefits simultaneously: first, they will understand Islamic values more contextually because they are presented in language close to their lives; second, they will contribute to the preservation of regional languages that are eroding under globalization. This integration is expected to strengthen both students' Islamic and cultural identities.

2. Literature review

2.1 The concept of integration

Integration theory (Quinlan, 2003; Schimmelfennig, 2010) [14, 19] refers to an approach that combines various disciplines or

components in a learning or research process. In the context of education, this theory emphasizes the importance of integrating various aspects of knowledge and skills to provide a more holistic understanding to students. A number of scholars (e.g. Crawford-Lange & Lange, 1987; Dlaska, 2000) [3, 4] argue that language and culture are highly integrated because language reflects the worldview and culture of its speakers. The way people think and understand the world is also influenced by the language they use, and that language and culture are inseparable. The Integration theory of language and culture suggests that language functions not only as a means of communication but also as a shaper of one's perspective on the world (Imai, Kanero, & Masuda, 2016) [5]. According to this theory, the language used by a community reflects and shapes how students understand reality and their culture. The structure and vocabulary of a language can influence the way its speakers think, act, and see the world.

One of the core principles of language and culture theory is that language differences between social groups lead to differences in how learners think and interpret the world. For example, a language with specific words for natural phenomena or cultural concepts can prompt its speakers to be more sensitive to or attentive to these aspects of their lives. The process of integrating or combining language elements into a unified whole within a learning context. A learning approach that combines language teaching with the teaching of specific content or subject matter, such as science, history, or culture. CBI focuses on language learning through contexts that are relevant and meaningful to learners, with the goal that learners not only master the language but also acquire knowledge or skills related to the topic being taught. 25 CBI is a learning approach that integrates language learning with other subject matter, such as mathematics, science, history, and so on. 26 This approach is very effective for teaching language to learners who already have basic knowledge, because learners can learn the language in a more contextual and applicable way.

2.2 Content-Based Instruction (CBI)

Content-Based Instruction (CBI) is a learning approach that emphasizes the use of content or subject matter as a tool for teaching language (Stoller, 2004) [20]. Content-based instruction is an approach to English learning that focuses on teaching a second language through content or subject matter, rather than emphasizing linguistic structures or specific types of syllabus (Leaver & Stryker, 1989) [6]. Content-Based Instruction (CBI) is a language-learning approach that uses material from various disciplines as the basis for language instruction. In this approach, learners learn language through engagement with relevant and useful materials, such as science, mathematics, history, and others. CBI is a learning approach that uses subject matter to teach language. In this approach, language is learned through relevant and engaging content, such as science, history, mathematics, or other topics that interest learners. This differs from traditional language learning approaches that focus more on teaching grammar or linguistic skills separately.

The CBI approach allows learners to learn language in a more natural, context-based way, thereby increasing motivation and engagement (Cenoz, 2015) ^[2]. By integrating content from various disciplines, learners not only learn language as a communication tool but also learn to use it to explore information and engage with academic topics. The main principle of CBI is that language is most effective when used as a tool for understanding and communicating meaningful content. Content-based instruction (CBI) is an approach to language teaching that emphasizes communication and has been gaining traction in both governmental and academic foreign language programs. This means that learners not only learn about language but also use language to learn. CBI emphasizes the integration of language and content learning, enabling learners to acquire language skills while deepening their academic knowledge across fields such as science, history, and mathematics. Another key principle of CBI is the use of authentic and contextualized language. In CBI, language is used in real and relevant situations, such as speaking, writing, or listening to material directly related to the content being taught. This helps learners understand how language is used in everyday communication and academic contexts. CBI emphasizes learner-centered learning, where learners actively participate in the learning process through discussions, projects, and activities that strengthen their understanding of content and language.

2.3 The use of kaili language

The Kaili language is a regional language originating on the island of Sulawesi, specifically in Central Sulawesi (Rustina et al., 2026) ^[17]. This language is spoken by the Kaili people, one of the largest ethnic groups in the province. The history of the Kaili language is inseparable from the long history of the Kaili people's culture and civilization, who have inhabited this region for thousands of years. The Kaili people are known for a close connection to their natural environment, and their language reflects this through a rich vocabulary of terms for flora, fauna, and natural phenomena. The Kaili language can be traced to its origins within the Austronesian language family. This family includes languages spread across Southeast Asia, the Pacific, and parts of Madagascar. The Kaili language belongs to the Central Sulawesi branch of the Austronesian language family. As part of this family, the Kaili language shares structural and lexical similarities with other regional languages in Sulawesi, such as Bugis and Makassar, while maintaining unique characteristics that set it apart.

Interactions with outside cultures also influenced the history of the Kaili language. During the inter-island trade era, Central Sulawesi served as an important route for traders from across the archipelago, including Java, Bugis, and Makassar, as well as from outside the archipelago, such as Arabia and China. This interaction not only enriched the culture of the Kaili people but also added new vocabulary to their language. During the colonial era, the Kaili language faced new challenges with the introduction of Dutch and then Indonesian as official languages. Nevertheless, the Kaili language persisted as the cultural identity of the Kaili people. Efforts to preserve this

language continue to be carried out by the local community, including through oral traditions, art, and informal education. The use of the Kaili language refers to efforts to maintain, preserve, and develop it as part of the Kaili people's cultural heritage in Central Sulawesi, particularly in Tawaeli District and its surroundings. Kaili is a regional language with high cultural value, used in daily life and across various aspects of tradition, folklore, and traditional ceremonies. The use of the Kaili language not only includes efforts to maintain its use in daily communication but also to ensure that it remains relevant and appreciated by the younger generation.

2.4 Integration of CBI Islamic religious learning

A conscious and planned effort to prepare students to recognize, understand, internalize, and believe in the teachings of Islam, accompanied by demands to respect adherents of other religions as a whole, along with harmony between religious communities, to achieve national unity and integrity (Pallathadka et al., 2023) ^[13]. Islamic Religious Education learning is an educational process aimed at introducing, understanding, internalizing, and practicing Islamic teachings (Suhayib & Ansyari, 2023; Wahyono, Budiningsih, Suyantiningsih, & Rahmadonna, 2022) ^[22, 23]. The integration of CBI-based language into Islamic learning is an important approach to enhancing students' understanding of Islamic values. Through language mastery, students can more easily comprehend religious texts, discuss, and critique Islamic teachings. This integration helps students develop effective communication skills.

CBI-based integration into Islamic religious learning is a learning approach that uses language with Islamic education content. The application of CBI can help students acquire two skills simultaneously: language skills and a deeper understanding of religion. CBI also enables students to learn a language in a context that is meaningful and relevant to their daily lives. For example, topics taught in Islamic religious education can be used as material for learning regional languages. In CBI-based learning, students learn vocabulary and language structures directly related to these topics, such as terms in Islamic jurisprudence (fiqh) or Islamic creed (aqidah). The application of CBI in Islamic religious education learning also focuses on developing students' critical and analytical thinking skills. In studying religious texts, students are encouraged to think deeply, analyze the meanings of the Qur'an's verses and hadiths, and evaluate their relevance to their lives.

3. Methodology

This study uses qualitative methods. In qualitative research, theory serves only as a guide for data gathering and analysis (Nurdin & Pettalongi, 2022; Nurdin, Stockdale, & Scheepers, 2016) ^[8, 11]. The data was collected through direct observation, in-depth interviews, and written document analysis at the research site (Rusli, Hasyim, & Nurdin, 2021; Rusli & Nurdin, 2022) ^[15, 16]. The research was conducted within four elementary schools in the Tawaeli district of Indonesia. The researcher chose the schools based on the assumption that they

use the Kaili language in daily teaching and learning. The results of this study can later serve as a reference and a guideline for integrating local language into teaching the Islamic religion and for making schools a model for other educational institutions.

Data were collected through direct observation, focus group discussion, in-depth interviews, and written document analysis. The interviews involved the school principal, five teachers, and ten students. The interviews were recorded and transcribed. The transcripts were consulted with participants to obtain their consent (Nurdin, Scheepers, & Stockdale, 2022; Nurdin, Stockdale, & Scheepers, 2014) ^[9, 10]. The data analysis used a deductive approach, which can be interpreted as a research procedure that produces deductive data from interviews and field notes. Data analysis was conducted using thematic analysis from Strauss and Corbin (1998) ^[21]. The analysis started with open, axial, and selective coding. The final result of the data analysis is the set of themes identified from the data.

4. Results and Discussion

4.1 Social and cultural of the kaili ethnic

The Tawaeli community still upholds Kaili cultural values, but active use of the Kaili language in everyday communication has been very low, especially in the last 20-25 years. This presents a strategic opportunity for integrating Kaili language-based learning. The people of Tawaeli District are known for their strong attachment to Kaili cultural values. The culture of mutual cooperation, courtesy towards elders, and Kaili wisdom passed down through generations is still preserved to this day. Traditions such as *Molibu* (customary deliberation), *Mokumoni Mosinggani* (traditional communal meal), and respect for traditional and religious figures are important parts of the community's social life. According to him, the decline in Kaili language usage is not only a linguistic issue, but also a threat to cultural survival:

"Language is the home of culture. When children no longer speak Kaili, local wisdom values are slowly eroded. The traditions of *Molibu*, *Mompakoni*, or politeness towards elders are all usually passed down through the mother tongue. If language is lost, cultural memory is also lost."

Over the past two decades, the use of Kaili as a mother tongue has declined sharply, especially among children and adolescents. Globalization, population migration, and the dominance of Indonesian in formal education are the main factors influencing the decline in Kaili use. School-age children tend to be more fluent in Indonesian, while Kaili is used only by the older generation and in informal contexts at home or in ethnically homogeneous communities. According to the traditional leader of Tawaeli District, he emphasized:

"The Kaili language is like the soul of the Tawaeli people. In the past, children played, joked, and even learned to recite the Koran using Kaili. But now it's rarely heard. If this continues, Kaili could become just a story."

This decline in Kaili usage not only indicates a linguistic shift but also indicates a threat to the survival of Kaili culture. Language is the primary vehicle for transmitting values, norms, and cultural identity. When a language begins to be abandoned,

the cultural values contained within it are also threatened with fading. A young figure from Tawaeli, who is also a member of the Palu City parliament, stated that one important strategy for maintaining the sustainability of regional languages is through education. An informant said, "Children now absorb more Indonesian through schools, television, and social media. Therefore, if we want to revive the Kaili language, then schools are a strategic space."

The use of the Kaili language in learning contexts has great potential to connect students with the teaching materials, particularly Islamic religious education, which is rich in moral and spiritual values. Given this reality, integrating CBI-based learning models with the use of the Kaili language presents a strategic opportunity to simultaneously address two challenges: increasing the effectiveness of Islamic religious education learning and revitalizing the Kaili language.

4.2 The implementation of content-based instruction in Islamic religious teaching

The contextual principle in CBI emphasizes that learning is inseparable from the social, cultural, and linguistic realities students encounter. In the context of Islamic religious education learning, the use of Kaili as a local language can provide a learning experience that is close to students' daily lives. For example, when a teacher explains the values of Islamic brotherhood or cooperation (*gotong royong*), the teacher can relate it to local Kaili cultural practices that emphasize solidarity through the tradition of *posampesuvu mosantinu* (brotherhood and unity). Thus, this contextual principle allows Islamic Religious Education learning to be more lively, relevant, and easily understood by students. One teacher said the following:

"When teaching about morals, such as good manners, I often relate it to how children speak to their parents and neighbors in Kaili. This resonates more quickly with the students. For example, if children are taught not to interrupt their parents, "*nemo mbasambu togurana mojarita*," I exemplify this with Kaili expressions that students commonly hear at home."

The informant's statement indicates that teachers agree that learning linked to the local cultural context makes the material easier to understand. It's not just about memorization; students can also provide real-life examples from their experiences. At elementary school 3 Lambara, during an observation of Islamic Religious Education learning on the theme of cooperation, the teacher was seen using local cultural examples to clarify the material. The teacher explained that in Islam, cooperation is a form of good deed that benefits many people. He then connected it to the tradition of *posampesuvu* (brotherhood) in the Kaili community, where residents work together to help with family events. Students appeared more enthusiastic when the teacher mentioned the term, and some even immediately related it to their experiences helping their parents in cooperation activities in the village. This observation shows that when the teacher links Islamic Religious Education (PAI) material to local culture, students are more focused and respond more actively. On a different occasion, an interview with a student at elementary 2 Panau added:

"When teachers talk about charity, they usually describe it as giving food to a neighbor. So, it's easy for me to imagine. I remember when my father caught a lot of fish and shared them with the neighbors. The teacher said that was also part of Islamic teachings. So, I better understand that religious lessons are part of our daily lives."-

The results of the module document review at Nurul Islam Tawaeli Elementary School also demonstrate the application of contextual principles. The core activities section includes integrating local content into Islamic Religious Education learning, for example, in the theme of almsgiving. Teachers use the term *Vunja* (the tradition of cooperation), widely known among the Kaili community, to explain the meaning of almsgiving. The contextual approach in the CBI-based integration model allows students to see the connection between religious material and concrete experiences in their environment. When teachers explain Islamic Religious Education material on brotherhood in diversity, the use of Kaili language and examples from the Tawaeli community helps students understand that Islamic teachings are not merely abstract but also present in their cultural traditions. The application of contextual principles in CBI in Islamic Religious Education learning in Tawaeli District is strongly evident in all four schools. Teachers and students both utilize the Kaili language and culture as a bridge of understanding. Interviews with teachers confirmed that students grasp religious material more quickly when presented through examples they encounter daily.

The integrative principle in CBI emphasizes the integration between language proficiency and understanding of subject matter. In this study, integration is clearly evident when Kaili is used as a medium to strengthen students' understanding of Islamic Religious Education content. The application of the integrative principle in CBI across four elementary schools in Tawaeli District shows that using Kaili as a supporting medium makes Islamic Religious Education learning more comprehensive. Teachers use an integration strategy by connecting Arabic texts as a source, Indonesian as a formal medium, and the Kaili language as a bridge of understanding. Interviews with teachers and students show that this integration improves students' understanding and language skills. The content-based principle in CBI places Islamic Religious Education subject matter at the center, while language serves as a tool for mastering the material. In this integration model, Islamic Religious Education content, such as faith in the last day, almsgiving, charity, or the story of the Prophet Muhammad SAW building the city of Medina, is delivered through the Kaili language to make it easier for students to understand. A religious education teacher at Baiya 1 Elementary School explained:

"When I teach about faith in the end of the world, children often find it difficult to visualize. So, I use examples in Kaili, such as 'dunia hei' (this world) and 'ahera' (the afterlife). This way, students can see the difference between temporary and eternal life. The focus remains on religious studies, but the Kaili language allows students to understand more quickly."

This content-based principle ensures that Islamic education remains oriented toward achieving core curriculum competencies while also supporting the preservation of the Kaili language. For example, when discussing charity, teachers use Kaili proverbs and expressions embodying the value of sharing.

4.3 Strategy of Islamic religious teaching through CBI

a. Content-language integration

The first strategy in the CBI model is to integrate learning content with the language used as the medium of instruction. In the context of this research, the content in question is Islamic Religious Education, while the language used is Indonesian combined with Kaili. For example, when the teacher explains material on faith in the end of the world, the teacher uses Indonesian as the primary language but enriches the explanation with Kaili expressions familiar to the students. This language integration has a significant impact on learning. Kaili serves as a bridge, helping students connect abstract concepts in PAI with real-life experiences in local culture. This approach aligns with the CBI principle of placing content at the center, while language serves to strengthen understanding.

b. Authenticity of materials

CBI emphasizes the importance of presenting authentic materials relevant to students' lives. In the context of Tawaeli District, Islamic Religious Education values are not taught abstractly but are linked to the social and cultural practices of the Kaili community. For example, when discussing the concept of brotherhood in Islam, teachers can relate it to the *Vunja* tradition, which emphasizes unity and cooperation. By presenting concrete examples, students feel the learning is more lively, applicable, and in line with reality. The use of authentic materials also fosters students' appreciation of Islamic values, which are already aligned with local wisdom. An Islamic Religious Education (PAI) teacher at Baiya 1 Elementary School in Tawaeli once said, "Children understand more easily if I exemplify them with everyday habits. When I talk about helping each other, students immediately remember the tradition of cooperation." This narrative demonstrates that the material's authenticity prevents learning from being dry and makes it a meaningful experience for students.

c. Scaffolding strategy

The next strategy is scaffolding, which provides gradual support to help students understand the material more easily. Teachers begin by using simple Indonesian, then add explanations in Kaili to reinforce understanding. For example, when discussing the concept of charity, teachers explain that charity is giving a portion of one's sustenance to others, then add examples in Kaili, such as "Nomoni and Massolo" (Kaili traditions to welcome Ramadan, namely playing drums and gongs (Nomoni) and working together to clean the environment (Massolo)). The scaffolding provided by teachers is not only linguistic, but also takes the form of guiding questions, illustrations, or simple activities. Teachers can ask students to relate personal experiences to Islamic Religious

Education values, for example: "Who among you has ever helped your parents share food?" Questions like these serve as a buffer, making it easier for students to connect Islamic Religious Education teachings to real life. Over time, teachers can reduce this support so that students become more independent in understanding and internalizing Islamic values.

5. Conclusion

Elements integrated in the Kaili CBI-Language Model in Islamic learning. The CBI-Bahasa Kaili integration model combines the basic values of Islamic Religious Education, which include faith, morals, worship, and history, with a learning approach that places regional languages as the main medium. The value of *aqidah* is reflected through discussions of faith in the last day; moral values through moral material about trust in Allah; the value of worship through discussions of donations, alms, and gifts; as well as historical value through the story of the Prophet Muhammad SAW building the city of Medina. This element is designed so that students not only understand Islamic teachings textually, but also contextually in everyday life. The Islamic education material taught covers six topics: understanding QS Al-Hujurat verse 13, which emphasizes human brotherhood; understanding the Hadith about diversity as a form of tolerance; understanding faith in the last day; the design of the CBI Integration Model with the Kaili Language in Islamic learning. The model development was conducted following Research and Development procedures, which included a preliminary study and needs analysis in schools in Tawaeli District, preparation of an initial model design, validation by Islamic Education and local culture learning experts, and revisions based on received input. This process ensured that the resulting model was relevant, feasible to implement, and suited to students' characteristics and the elementary school environment. The learning model consisted of objectives and characteristics that emphasized the integration of Islamic values and local culture, the main components (input-process-output), and supporting tools in the form of teaching modules, student guides, and teacher guides. The main objective was to improve students' understanding of Islamic teachings while fostering an appreciation for the Kaili language and culture. The learning syntax was designed in six stages: Preparation (opening and apperception), Presentation (delivery of material), Language Focus (emphasizing vocabulary and Kaili language structure), Practice (joint practice), Production (students producing language and lesson content independently), and Reflection (self-evaluation and feedback). These stages enabled learning to take place systematically, interactively, and meaningfully. The Kaili language integration strategy was implemented through the use of local languages in instructions, narratives, and assignments, as well as through everyday communication in class.

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