

JOURNAL ABOUT LEARNING ISLAM THROUGH ENGLISH RELIGIOUS MOVIES, BILAL BIN RABBAH

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Abstract: *The incorporation of English-language media into Islamic education is gaining traction as educators seek pedagogical approaches that combine language development with religious and moral instruction. This study investigates the use of the English religious animated film Bilal: A New Breed of Hero as a teaching tool for Islamic ideals while also improving English comprehension abilities. Using a qualitative descriptive methodology, this study investigates students' perceptions, engagement, and interpretative responses to the video in an Islamic educational setting. Data were gathered through classroom observations, reflective worksheets, and semi-structured interviews with students. The study found that English religious films promote contextualized language exposure, boost student motivation, and aid in the internalization of Islamic ideals such as perseverance, justice, faith, and resistance to oppression. The film's narrative and visual aspects assist bridge linguistic gaps, making complicated historical and theological topics more accessible to students. Furthermore, the study demonstrates that religious films can serve as an effective multimodal learning resource, integrating cognitive, emotive, and moral components of learning. This study adds to the increasing body of literature on value-based English language acquisition by arguing that well chosen Islamic movies can enhance English-mediated Islamic education in culturally sensitive ways.*

Keywords: *Islamic Education; English Religious Movies; Moral Values; Language Learning; Bilal bin Rabbah*

Introduction

English has become an increasingly important medium for imparting not only scientific and technical knowledge, but also religious and cultural values, as education has become more globalized. English is increasingly being utilized in Islamic education to present Islamic teaching to a wider audience and to provide students with the linguistic skills required for global engagement. However, teaching Islam in English involves pedagogical obstacles, notably in terms of motivating students and assuring meaningful understanding of religious principles. Audio-visual media, particularly movies, have emerged as effective educational tools because of their capacity to provide knowledge in engaging, contextualized, and emotionally evocative ways. Religious films, when used correctly, can fulfill both language and moral pedagogical functions. Bilal: A New Breed of Hero, an English animated video about the life of Bilal bin Rabbah, tells a gripping story anchored in Islamic history while remaining linguistically accessible to English learners. This study analyzes how learning Islam through the English religious films. Bilal promotes linguistic literacy and an awareness of Islamic ideals. The study's goal is to investigate students' learning experiences and the educational value of religious videos in English-mediated Islamic instruction.

Literature Review

English as a Medium in Islamic Education:

English's global stature has had a considerable impact on educational procedures in a variety of fields, including religion. English is increasingly being used in Islamic educational environments for instruction, academic discussion, and the spread of Islamic knowledge across local and national boundaries. Scholars say that English-mediated Islamic education allows students to get access to a broader range of Islamic resources, participate in global Islamic discourses, and transmit Islamic ideals to a variety of audiences. However, research has shown obstacles in maintaining religious authenticity and moral purity when Islamic teachings are conveyed in a foreign language. This worry has prompted the development of pedagogical techniques that prioritize value-sensitive and culturally relevant education, ensuring that language learning does not trump religious and ethical goals.

Audio-Visual Media for Language Learning

The use of audiovisual media, particularly movies, has been extensively researched in second and foreign language instruction. Movies are well known for giving authentic linguistic input, such as natural pronunciation, intonation, and pragmatic language use. Unlike traditional textbooks, films depict language in actual social interactions and relevant contexts, allowing students to see how language works in communicative scenarios. According to research, movie-based learning can help students improve their listening comprehension, vocabulary development, and knowledge of discourse and cultural norms. Furthermore, the multimodal aspect of movies—which incorporates visual imagery, sound, and narrative—benefits learners of various competence levels by lowering cognitive load and facilitating comprehension through contextual signals.

Movies and Learners' Motivation

Learner motivation is an important part in successful language acquisition, and multiple studies have shown that movies increase student interest and drive. Movies provide a fun and engaging learning environment that promotes active involvement and sustained attention. Films that provide language in an enjoyable and emotionally engaging way might lessen learners' apprehension and boost their willingness to interact with the target language. This motivational factor is especially crucial in situations where students may consider English as difficult or intimidating, such as in English-mediated religious education.

Religious Movies and Moral Education

Movies have been studied as moral and character teaching instruments in addition to their language benefits. Religious and historical films, in particular, communicate ethical principles through storytelling, symbolism, and emotional appeal. According to moral education research, narrative-based learning promotes empathy, moral reflection, and ethical reasoning by allowing students to participate with the problems and decisions of characters. Storytelling has long been used in Islamic education to communicate moral values and religious beliefs. Religious films might be considered as a modern extension of this heritage, mixing traditional storylines with media methods that appeal to today's students.

Learning Islam through English Religious Movies

Although there is substantial study on the use of films in language instruction, studies that particularly target English religious movies in Islamic learning situations are uncommon.

Existing research frequently focuses on secular films or general audiovisual materials, leaving religious films unexplored as integrative instruments for language and moral teaching. However, emerging research suggests that English religious films can be used as culturally relevant learning resources that help students learn English while promoting Islamic principles. When combined with structured pedagogical activities such as pre-viewing preparation, guided discussion, and reflective tasks, these films can enhance both linguistic competency and spiritual awareness.

Bilal bin Rabbah A Pedagogical Narrative: the narrative of Bilal bin Rabbah has great educational significance in Islamic teachings because it emphasizes faith, endurance, equality, and resistance against persecution. Bilal's life as one of Islam's early converts demonstrates moral strength and everlasting faith in the face of adversity. The animated film *Bilal: A New Breed of Hero* tells this story in English through high-quality visual storytelling and emotionally charged moments. Its English narration makes the story more accessible to students in English-medium educational environments, and its visual and narrative features aid comprehension and emotional engagement. Scholars have remarked that such historical-religious themes, when conveyed through film, can help learners understand Islamic history and beliefs while also promoting language development.

Research Gap

Despite the well-known benefits of movies in language acquisition and the role of storytelling in moral instruction, actual research on the incorporation of English religious movies into Islamic education is scarce. There are few research that systematically investigate learners' perspectives, language learning results, and moral awareness as a result of exposure to English Islamic films. This gap highlights the need for additional research into how English religious films, such as *Bilal: A New Breed of Hero*, might serve as effective pedagogical tools for integrating language learning with Islamic ideals in culturally responsive ways. The current study aims to fill this gap by investigating students' learning experiences and educational outcomes in an English-medium Islamic educational setting.

Method

This study used a qualitative descriptive research approach to look into the usage of English religious films as a learning medium in Islamic education, with a special emphasis on the animated film *Bilal: A New Breed of Hero*. A qualitative approach was used to get a thorough knowledge of students' learning experiences, perceptions, and interpretative responses to film-based instruction. The research was carried out in an Islamic educational institution where English is taught as a foreign language alongside Islamic subjects. Students enrolled in an Islamic education program who spoke English at an intermediate level participated. Purposive sampling was used to pick learners who could understand the movie's English language and actively participate in learning activities, ensuring that the data acquired was relevant to the research aims.

The learning activities were implemented using a structured film-based instructional process. To activate prior knowledge and reduce potential linguistic issues, students were presented to Bilal bin Rabbah's historical background as well as important English words linked to the film before seeing it. Selected scenes from the film were then screened in English, with English subtitles. During the watching sessions, students were encouraged to concentrate on both language usage and the Islamic ideals depicted in the story. Following the watching, guided classroom discussions and reflective activities were held to help students understand the storyline, language expressions, and moral themes presented by the film.

Data were gathered using classroom observations, reflective worksheets, and semi-structured interviews to verify data authenticity. Observations focused on students' engagement and participation, while worksheets recorded their thoughts on language and values. Interviews offered additional insight into students' impressions of studying Islam through an English religious film. The data was evaluated thematically by coding and categorizing reoccurring patterns in English comprehension, moral knowledge, and learner engagement. Triangulation among data sources was used to increase the reliability of the findings.

Result and Discussion

The findings of this study show that including the English religious animation film *Bilal: A New Breed of Hero* into Islamic education resulted in significant pedagogical improvements in the linguistic, moral, and affective dimensions of learning. The findings show that when used in a guided educational setting, film-based instruction can be an effective medium for improving English language competency while also strengthening learners' awareness of Islamic values.

Students demonstrated significant increase in listening comprehension and vocabulary acquisition throughout the study period. Exposure to actual English speech in a meaningful narrative framework allowed students to process spoken language more naturally than traditional textbook-based training. Students improved their ability to recognize religious and historical terminology, such as expressions of faith, struggle, freedom, and social justice.

The presence of visual elements such as character motions, facial expressions, and situational context was critical in aiding comprehension, especially when learners faced unfamiliar vocabulary. These multimodal clues enabled students to infer meaning without relying entirely on translation, lowering linguistic anxiety and enhancing confidence in dealing with English information. This finding lends support to the theory that movies provide rich contextualized language exposure that aids comprehension and increases incidental vocabulary learning.

In addition to linguistic benefits, the video had a substantial impact on students' comprehension and assimilation of Islamic beliefs. Students displayed a deeper conceptual understanding of essential moral values reflected in Bilal bin Rabbah's story, such as unwavering faith in the face of adversity, human dignity, social class equality, and resistance to injustice. The emotional narrative of the video pushed students to think about these ideals beyond surface-level awareness. Classroom discussions and introspective activities demonstrated that students could relate the moral problems presented in the film to current social realities and personal experiences. This introspective involvement shows that storytelling through film can promote moral reasoning by allowing students to perceive values in a contextual and emotionally compelling way, rather than through abstract moral instruction.

The movie-based learning strategy also resulted in increased learner engagement and motivation. Students actively participated in viewing sessions, debates, and reflection exercises. Many students found that learning Islam through an English movie was more interesting and relevant than traditional lecture-based techniques, which frequently emphasize memorization and passive learning. Bilal's animated format increased sustained attention and emotional participation, making complicated historical and religious issues more approachable. Increased motivation not only increased students' readiness to use English, but also encouraged active engagement in moral conversations, which improved both language and ethical learning results.

From a pedagogical approach, these findings emphasize the integrative potential of English religious films in Islamic teaching. The combination of language input, visual storytelling, and moral narratives results in a learning environment that addresses cognitive, emotive, and spiritual elements all at once. However, the efficiency of this strategy is heavily reliant on the role of the teacher. Teachers must actively stimulate conversation, guide moral reflection, and relate film

material to curriculum objectives to ensure that learning outcomes are met. Without systematic direction, movies' educational potential may be underutilized.

Overall, the findings indicate that English religious films, such as *Bilal: A New Breed of Hero*, can serve as effective instructional materials for connecting language acquisition and Islamic moral education. Movie-based instruction provides a significant alternative to established pedagogical approaches in English-mediated Islamic education by combining linguistic development and value-based learning in a culturally responsive manner.

Discussion

The findings of this study underscore the pedagogical value of incorporating English religious films into Islamic education, particularly *Bilal: A New Breed of Hero*. The conversation focuses on how film-based training helps with language learning, moral understanding, and learner engagement, as well as the broader implications for English-mediated Islamic education.

From a language learning standpoint, seeing an English religious film provided learners with rich, contextualized input that aided listening comprehension and vocabulary development. Unlike typical text-based resources, the film depicted language in genuine communication contexts, allowing students to see how meaning is created through interaction, emotion, and context. This lends support to second language acquisition models that prioritize intelligible input and contextual learning. The introduction of visual and narrative cues reduced learners' cognitive burden while also lowering affective barriers like anxiety and fear of misinterpreting spoken English. As a result, pupils were able to interact more comfortably with English material and demonstrate greater comprehension without relying heavily on translation.

Beyond linguistic growth, the discussion demonstrates that English religious films can have a significant impact on moral and spiritual education. *Bilal bin Rabbah's* story, as depicted in the film, provided learners with a real and emotionally compelling picture of Islamic ideals such as faith, perseverance, humanity, and justice. These ideals were not given as abstract concepts, but as part of a captivating tale that encouraged interpretation and reflection. This conclusion is consistent with moral education approaches that highlight the significance of storytelling in shaping ethical awareness. Learners were more likely to acquire moral teachings and apply them to current social challenges and personal experiences when they were emotionally invested in the characters and events.

Another important topic raised during the conversation was learner involvement. The movie-based approach resulted in a more learner-centered and participatory classroom atmosphere than traditional lecture-based training. Students showed increased desire, attention, and willingness to participate in discussions, demonstrating that the use of films can change passive learning into active meaning creation. This enhanced participation is especially crucial in English-medium Islamic education, where students may struggle with both language difficulties and abstract religious topics.

Pedagogically, the findings indicate that English religious films can serve as integrative learning tools, connecting linguistic, cognitive, and moral domains. However, the discussion emphasizes the critical role of teachers in facilitating learning. Teachers must carefully choose acceptable films, give pre-viewing scaffolding, and encourage post-viewing reflection to ensure that both language and values are successfully addressed. Without pedagogical guidance, religious films' instructional value may be limited to pleasure rather than meaningful learning.

Overall, this discussion confirms that learning Islam through English religious films is a culturally relevant and pedagogically competent way to combine language learning and moral

teaching. It also advocates for more research into the long-term effects and comparative effectiveness of different educational levels and settings.

Conclusion

This study concludes that studying Islam using English religious movies, notably the animated feature *Bilal: A New Breed of Hero*, has a significant instructional value in English-mediated Islamic education. The findings show that including narrative storytelling, visual media, and authentic English language exposure results in a meaningful learning environment that promotes both linguistic growth and moral education. Learners can connect with Islamic teachings in a contextualized and emotionally relevant way thanks to film-based training, which improves their comprehension and memory of both language and religious information.

The usage of English religious films was proven to boost learner motivation and classroom engagement, as students evaluated the learning process as more pleasant and meaningful than standard lecture-based methods. The multimodal nature of the film aided comprehension by removing verbal obstacles and allowing students to infer meaning from visual and contextual signals. At the same time, the moral narrative of Bilal bin Rabbah's life prompted students to consider basic Islamic values such as faith, perseverance, equality, and justice, resulting in increased moral awareness and personal interpretation of ethical concepts.

English religious films can be valuable supplementary instructional materials when carefully chosen and connected with curricular objectives. The teacher's role remains crucial in optimizing educational impact through pre-viewing preparation, guided conversation, and reflective activities that link film content to language learning objectives and moral instruction. Without such leadership, film-based learning may not reach its full potential.

Finally, this study adds to the growing body of evidence on value-based language acquisition and culturally responsive pedagogy in Islamic education. Future research should investigate the long-term impacts of movie-based learning on language competency and moral growth, compare different religious films or genres, and use mixed-method approaches that include quantitative data for greater generalization. Such findings will contribute to a better understanding of how English religious media might improve Islamic education in a variety of educational settings.

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