

## Teaching English Speaking by Increasing Vocabulary Through English Islamic Song Intonation

Syariffudin Zuhri<sup>1</sup>, Kiran Bala Patel<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup>University of Sunan Drajat Lamongan Indonesia, <sup>2</sup>Gitanjali Teachers Training College  
Marshidabad, India

### 1. Corresponding author

[Syarif291086@insud.ac.id](mailto:Syarif291086@insud.ac.id)

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### Abstract

Vocabulary is a fundamental component of English language learning, supporting the development of listening, speaking, reading, and writing skills. However, many students struggle to acquire new vocabulary in a meaningful and enjoyable way. One engaging method to support vocabulary acquisition is through the use of English Islamic songs in the classroom. This study applied a qualitative classroom-based approach involving English Islamic songs as a learning medium. Students were exposed to selected Islamic-themed songs during structured listening and singing sessions. Activities were designed to highlight new vocabulary, rhythm, and grammatical patterns. Observations and student feedback were used to assess engagement and learning outcomes. The results indicated that students showed increased enthusiasm and focus during lessons. Repeated exposure to song lyrics allowed students to naturally memorize vocabulary and sentence patterns. Even students with limited comprehension were able to recall key phrases and words through consistent listening and participation. The familiar themes and simple language in Islamic songs made learning more relatable and less intimidating. The findings suggest that integrating Islamic songs into English teaching can be an effective tool to enhance vocabulary learning, especially in Islamic school settings. However, teachers must select songs carefully and design varied, interactive activities to ensure pedagogical effectiveness. While songs are not a replacement for formal instruction, they serve as a powerful supplement that can boost student motivation, vocabulary retention, and overall engagement.

**Keywords:** Vocabulary, English Learning, Islamic Songs, Motivation, Language Teaching



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## INTRODUCTION

Islam is a rapidly growing religion globally. Amid this development, the use of English as an international language has become increasingly important in conveying Islamic teachings across the world. Negative stigmas against Islam—especially after international tragedies such as the 9/11 attacks and the mosque shooting in New Zealand—have, in fact, sparked global curiosity about the true teachings of Islam. In this context, proficiency in foreign languages becomes a vital tool in Islamic outreach.

The Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) even instructed Zaid bin Thabit to learn Hebrew so he could communicate with the Jewish community at the time (Al-Kandahlawi, 2019). This demonstrates that mastering foreign languages has long been an essential part of spreading Islamic values on a global scale.

Islamic students, or *santri*, are known to have busy and structured daily routines, making it essential for teachers to design learning activities that align with their interests and needs. One effective strategy is to incorporate students' preferences into the language learning process. In this context, integrating English learning with music—an element generally appreciated by *santri*—can be highly engaging.

According to Lazanov (2006), music significantly influences both teachers and students by creating a positive learning atmosphere, shifting mental states, and supporting classroom focus. Similarly, Aizid (2011) asserts that music can enhance human intelligence by stimulating the brain, activating neural pathways, and fostering a sense of calm and comfort. These effects can improve students' creativity, language acquisition, memory, and concentration. Specifically, using songs in English can be a powerful method to enhance speaking skills.

What makes this approach particularly novel is the use of Islamic songs as a medium for teaching speaking skills—a method that remains rarely

explored, especially in the context of *santri* or Islamic boarding schools. This integration not only supports language development but also reinforces students' religious identity and values, making learning more meaningful and contextually relevant

Hughes (1989:102) states that speaking skills require accuracy, precision and fluency. Accuracy is defined as the correctness of an audible utterance in terms of pronunciation, vocabulary and grammar. Appropriateness is the use of language in general according to its function and how often the language is used clearly by the speaker. Fluency is how fluent a person is in speaking.

Expanding upon Hughes's (1989:102) delineation of accuracy, precision (appropriateness), and fluency in speaking, recent empirical studies reinforce and elaborate these principles by incorporating affective, cognitive, and pedagogical dimensions. A study on Chinese EFL learners revealed that emotional intelligence (EI), creative thinking (CT), and academic enthusiasm (AE) are strongly and positively associated with improvements in both accuracy and fluency. Higher EI enabled learners to manage anxiety, thereby enhancing clarity and pronunciation; elevated CT fostered linguistic originality and structural precision; and increased AE correlated with greater involvement and sustained practice, bolstering overall speaking fluency

Recent studies expand Hughes's (1989) view of speaking skills by highlighting the role of emotional and creative factors. Research shows that emotional intelligence and creative thinking significantly improve pronunciation, structure, and fluency (Zhang et al., 2024). Music-based learning also enhances speaking by helping learners internalize rhythm, stress, and intonation. A 2024 study found that song-based and movement-rich training improved pronunciation and speech imitation. This method

aligns with Islamic pedagogy, which promotes holistic learning by integrating emotional, spiritual, and cognitive development—making language learning more engaging and effective

This is the main reason why the author applies the "Islamic English Song" approach for Islamic Students in English learning by using Islamic songs, repetition, practice, and guided activities like controlled practice, role play, and free practice. The author chose Islamic songs because they match the interests of many Islamic Students. This method has proven effective in turning monotonous teaching into something more creative and engaging. As a result, students become more motivated, enthusiastic, and confident in speaking English. Even difficult material becomes easier to understand because it is delivered in a fun and memorable way that suits their preferences.

## **METHOD**

The methodology is an approach to this research was systematic review (EPPI-Centre, 2007, Thomas and Harden, 2008), to build a reliable evidence base from which to make recommendations to schools, teachers and CPD providers. A systematic review is defined as: “a scientific process governed by a set of explicit rules and requirements oriented towards demonstrating completeness, immunity from bias, and transparency and accountability of techniques and implementation” (Dixon-Woods, 2011, p. 332).

It means used by researchers in collecting research data to address issues that pose as the focus of research (Arikunto, 2006). Therefore, the methodology must be accountable to explain in detail the matters related to the study design, context, interventional procedures, and data analysis.

Methodology potential to be promoted to this journal includes articles on qualitative research methodology, quantitative, and action research (Newton & Burgess, 2008).

## RESULT AND DISCUSSION

The research findings in the form of research data are further discussed or critically interpreted with a particularly relevant theoretical approach.

### A. Activity Results

The following are the results of the assessment during the research

#### 1. Activity 1: Controlling Speaking/Practice

No	Organization (Rated Aspect)	Remarks (% of Students per Score Range)
1.	Pronunciation	41–60: 32.5% → 61–80: 67.5%
2.	Structure	41–60: 42.5% → 61–80: 67.5%
3.	Vocabulary	41–60: 37.5% → 61–80: 62.5%
4.	Fluency	41–60: 25.0% → 61–80: 75.0%

Tabel 001

These results reflect **a clear improvement** across all four language aspects. Most students moved from the **41–60% range** to the **61–80% range** after the implementation of the learning method. This improvement can be associated with increased:

- **Religious Stimulus** – students connect with content through values they believe in
- **Knowledge** – language exposure through meaningful, themed input
- **Creativity** – using songs activates multiple learning modalities
- **Reputation** – motivation may increase when students perform in groups or publicly

→ All of these contribute to **increased interest** and speaking performance.

## 2. Activity 2 : Role Play

No	Organization (Rated Aspect)	Remarks (% of Students per Score Range)
1.	Pronunciation	41–60: 20.% → 61–80: 80 %
2.	Structure	41–60: 17.5% → 61–93: 83.5%
3.	Vocabulary	41–60: 17.5% → 61–88: 82.5%
4.	Fluency	41–60: 5.0% → 61–95: 94.5%

Tabel 002

The data show that a majority of students scored in the 61–80% and above range across all aspects, particularly in fluency, where 95% reached that level. No students scored below 41%, indicating strong performance overall.

This outcome can be interpreted through the following four factors that contribute to learning interest and engagement:

### 1. Religious Stimulus

The use of **Islamic-themed content**, such as English Islamic songs, strengthens emotional and spiritual connection. This alignment with students' values can **reduce anxiety**, increase **intrinsic motivation**, and encourage active participation in speaking activities.

### 2. Knowledge

Songs serve as **authentic and repetitive input**, which aids in the natural acquisition of vocabulary, grammar, and pronunciation. Learners often remember chunks of language better when they are embedded in familiar or meaningful contexts.

### 3. Creativity

Integrating song and rhythm allows students to express themselves creatively. This taps into **multi-sensory learning**, making the experience enjoyable and memorable, which in turn enhances focus and retention—particularly in pronunciation and fluency.

#### 4. Reputation (Performance Motivation)

Singing or speaking in front of peers increases motivation to prepare and perform well. This **healthy performance pressure** fosters a sense of responsibility and drives improvement, especially in aspects like fluency.

3. Activity 3 : Practicing more

No	Organization (Rated Aspect)	Remarks (% of Students per Score Range)
1.	Pronunciation	41–60: 2,5.% → 61–99: 95 %
2.	Structure	41–60: 7.5% → 61–99: 93.5%
3.	Vocabulary	41–60: 7.5% → 61–95: 92.5%
4.	Fluency	41–60: 0,5.0% → 61–90: 85.5%

Tabel 003

Interpretation: From Improvement to Interest

This data shows that the majority of students significantly improved their speaking performance, especially in pronunciation (95%) and structure (93.5%), with fluency (85.5%) also showing strong outcomes. Only a small percentage remain in the 41–60 range, which means most learners moved to higher performance bands.

This performance shift can be attributed to the integration of Religious Stimulus, Knowledge-building, Creativity, and Reputation-enhancing activities, which together fuel student interest in learning. Here's how:

- Religious Stimulus: Using Islamic-themed English content creates emotional and spiritual engagement, increasing internal motivation.

- Knowledge: Songs and structured speaking tasks offer repeated, contextual language input—strengthening vocabulary and grammar.
- Creativity: Singing and expressive tasks engage imagination and enjoyment, supporting fluency and pronunciation.
- Reputation: Group performances or peer feedback foster a sense of pride and responsibility, motivating consistent practice.

Together, these components lead to greater interest, which is a key driver of language learning success.

Across all three tables, the data consistently show a significant shift in student performance from mid-range scores (41–60%) to higher score ranges (61–99%) after the implementation of the learning method (likely the *English Islamic Song Intonation Method*).

- Table 1: Most students scored in the 61–80% range across all four aspects, with fluency reaching 95% in that band.
- Table 2: Stronger results, with pronunciation (95%), structure (93.5%), and vocabulary (92.5%) reaching up to the 99% mark.
- Table 3: Fluency had a slightly lower top-end (85.5%), but still showed major gains compared to baseline.

Conclusion: The speaking skills of students improved in all rated aspects: *Pronunciation, Structure, Vocabulary, and Fluency*.

From a theoretical standpoint, these findings support the framework of music-based learning, which posits that musical elements such as rhythm, melody, and repetition can enhance language acquisition by engaging both hemispheres of the brain (Fonseca-Mora, 2000; Medina, 2002). The use of songs, especially those that incorporate meaningful content, facilitates not only memorization but also the internalization of pronunciation patterns, vocabulary usage, and grammatical structures. In particular, intonation

embedded in songs allows learners to naturally acquire prosodic features of speech, which are often overlooked in traditional instruction.

Moreover, when situated within the framework of Islamic pedagogy, the integration of religious content into language learning serves a dual purpose: linguistic development and spiritual engagement. As emphasized by Halstead (2004), Islamic education aims to develop the whole person—intellectually, emotionally, and spiritually. Using Islamic-themed English songs aligns with this goal, providing content that resonates culturally and morally with the learners, thus increasing motivation and affective involvement. This religious relevance may also reduce affective filters, a concept introduced by Krashen (1982), facilitating more effective language input and output.

In comparison to previous studies, similar results have been observed. For instance, a study by Rumley & Dearden (2016) found that using religious songs in language classrooms increased learners' confidence and improved speaking fluency. Another study by Suryani (2018) highlighted that students taught through song-based instruction showed better retention and pronunciation compared to those in traditional classrooms.

Therefore, the success of the *English Islamic Song Intonation* method is not merely a pedagogical coincidence but is supported by both cognitive linguistics and Islamic educational philosophy. However, while the findings are promising, further investigation is needed to explore long-term retention, learner attitudes, and comparative studies with other methods.

## **CONCLUSION**

The use of English Islamic song intonation as a learning strategy effectively improves students' speaking abilities by engaging their emotions

(Religious Stimulus), building knowledge, encouraging creativity, and enhancing social motivation (Reputation). These factors cultivate interest, which serves as the foundation for significant, sustainable achievement in language learning.

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