

## UTILIZING RAMADAN TRADITIONS TO ENHANCE ENGLISH SPEAKING SKILLS IN AN ENGLISH COURSE

Hikmatun Nadia<sup>1</sup>, Taranindya Zulhi Amalia<sup>2</sup>

State Islamic Institute of Kudus, Kudus, Central Java<sup>1,2</sup>

Email : [hikmatunnadia17@gmail.com](mailto:hikmatunnadia17@gmail.com)<sup>1</sup>, [ms.starzu@iainkudus.ac.id](mailto:ms.starzu@iainkudus.ac.id)<sup>2</sup>

### ABSTRAK

Keterampilan berbicara merupakan salah satu kompetensi penting dalam penguasaan bahasa Inggris, namun masih banyak siswa yang mengalami kesulitan dalam mengungkapkan ide secara lisan, terutama dalam konteks kehidupan sehari-hari yang relevan, seperti tradisi Ramadan. Kurangnya motivasi dan keterlibatan siswa dalam proses pembelajaran turut memperburuk kemampuan berbicara mereka. Penelitian ini bertujuan untuk mengetahui bagaimana tradisi Ramadan dapat digunakan sebagai pendekatan kontekstual untuk meningkatkan keterampilan berbicara bahasa Inggris di Rumah Kita English Course. Fokus penelitian diarahkan pada integrasi kegiatan-kegiatan yang berkaitan dengan tradisi Ramadan ke dalam proses pembelajaran bahasa. Penelitian ini menggunakan pendekatan kualitatif dengan teknik pengumpulan data berupa observasi, wawancara, dan dokumentasi kegiatan Ramadan seperti diskusi menu sahur dan buka puasa, serta berbagi pengalaman puasa dalam bahasa Inggris. Hasil penelitian menunjukkan bahwa penerapan kegiatan berbasis tradisi Ramadan mampu meningkatkan kepercayaan diri siswa, memperkaya kosakata, serta mendorong interaksi verbal yang lebih aktif dalam bahasa Inggris. Selain itu, siswa menunjukkan minat dan keterlibatan yang lebih tinggi selama proses pembelajaran berlangsung. Simpulan dari penelitian ini adalah bahwa integrasi nilai-nilai budaya lokal, khususnya tradisi Ramadan, dalam pembelajaran bahasa asing dapat menciptakan suasana belajar yang lebih relevan, menyenangkan, dan bermakna. Pendekatan ini tidak hanya memperkuat keterampilan berbicara siswa, tetapi juga menumbuhkan apresiasi terhadap budaya dalam proses pembelajaran bahasa.

**Kata Kunci:** *keterampilan berbicara, tradisi Ramadan, pembelajaran kontekstual*

### ABSTRACT

Speaking skills are one of the important competencies in mastering English, but many students still have difficulty expressing ideas orally, especially in the context of relevant daily life, such as Ramadan traditions. Lack of motivation and student involvement in the learning process also worsens their speaking skills. This study aims to determine how Ramadan traditions can be used as a contextual approach to improve English speaking skills at Rumah Kita English Course. The focus of the study was directed at integrating activities related to Ramadan traditions into the language learning process. This study used a qualitative approach with data collection techniques in the form of observation, interviews, and documentation of Ramadan activities such as discussions on sahur and breaking fast menus, as well as sharing fasting experiences in English. The results showed that the implementation of Ramadan tradition-based activities was able to increase students' self-confidence, enrich vocabulary, and encourage more active verbal interaction in English. In addition, students showed higher interest and involvement during the learning process. The conclusion of this study is that the integration of local cultural values, especially Ramadan traditions, in foreign language learning can create a more relevant, enjoyable, and meaningful learning atmosphere. This approach not only strengthens students' speaking skills but also fosters an appreciation of culture in the language learning process.

**Keywords:** *speaking skills, Ramadan traditions, contextual learning*

## **PENDAHULUAN**

Indonesia has a diverse culture. Culture is an idea, tradition, or fundamental way of thinking. The word "culture" which tends to refer to human thought, is the origin of its grammatical meaning (Ikhsan et al., 2023). Culture encompasses all habits, attitudes, behavioral patterns, and knowledge that are inherited and possessed by an individual. Therefore, to prevent the extinction of a region's culture, preservation efforts are necessary (Salsabila et al., 2023). One such cultural tradition is the observance of Ramadan. Ramadan is a sacred month that holds great significance for Muslims worldwide (Mulyadi et al., 2021). During Ramadan, Muslims fast, recite the Quran, and engage in other religious activities. In Indonesia, Ramadan also serves as an opportunity for people to strengthen social and familial relationships. During this tradition, students can use their free time for learning, particularly in honing their communication or language skills. Language is closely related to culture (Aziz & Devi, 2024). As a cultural product, language is learned alongside its native culture. Naturally, there is a connection between sounds, words, and sentence structures and how speakers of that language live and behave (Sihite et al., 2021).

In this context, knowing English as a foreign language does not necessarily ensure smooth communication. (Sukatno, 2022) Many aspects affect a learner's ability to communicate effectively with native speakers of English. One of these aspects is culture. A lack of understanding of native speakers' cultures can sometimes lead to miscommunication (Andriani & Khawa, 2023). To avoid such communication issues, learners must not only study English but also be introduced to the cultural contexts in which it is spoken (Hasyatun, 2022). When teaching a language, cultural and socio-historical aspects should also be discussed with learners to broaden their communicative competence in a second language (Sari, 2022).

Learning a second language involves challenges beyond just symbols, rules, structure, and different sounds; it also includes cultural mismatches (Narvaes)(Raniadi & Firdaus Umar, 2023). The same applies to English and the culture in which it is a native language. English learners will benefit greatly from understanding British or Western culture. The use of symbols, sounds, and linguistic rules can be more aligned with native speaker (Adawiyah et al., 2023) . Since English has spread and is used by many societies from diverse cultural backgrounds, achieving common ground in communication requires both cultural understanding and consistency in using linguistic structures and symbols. To understand culture, we must understand the language, and conversely, to understand the language, we must understand the culture (Dewi, 2023). Language functions as a bridge for socialization, essential for building positive relationships with others (Geubrina et al., 2022).

Communication skills are crucial for individuals, as they help develop cognitive abilities and character, especially in today's era of globalization. Enhancing communication skills benefits (Edo et al., 2023) various aspects of life, from professional careers to social interactions. These social skills can be developed through speaking. One of the languages used for communication is the native language, Indonesian, as well as the international language, English. English is an international language spoken in many countries (Islahuddin & Nandavita, 2021).

This is one reason why learning a language is essential. English is considered the most influential language in the contemporary world. This is because English is used in communication globally (Mulyadi et al., 2021). It is taught as a means to facilitate cross-cultural communication. By learning English, individuals can overcome biases, extremism, intolerance,

and narrow-mindedness, contributing to global understanding. English serves as a bridge not only in England but also internationally (Hasan et al., 2022).

Speaking English has become a vital skill for students in Indonesia, as it enables them to express their thoughts clearly, convey ideas fluently, and engage in meaningful conversations (Hayati & Amalia, 2023). This skill goes beyond pronunciation and grammar; it requires the ability to structure and communicate ideas persuasively. Various methods can be used to enhance speaking proficiency, including integrating cultural and religious traditions into language learning (Shafira Firdaus Sarjono, 2022). By incorporating real-life cultural contexts, students gain confidence in expressing their thoughts in English while deepening their understanding of the language and its traditions (Nuha, 2025).

One current issue is that many students struggle to articulate their thoughts verbally in educational settings (Endang Kusripinah et al., 2023). Many individuals face challenges in expressing their ideas to peers, speaking in public, or engaging in daily interactions (Novi & Atik, 2022). Speaking English appears to be an essential skill for students (Kusuma, 2020) because speaking is the foundation of language learning. Speaking is a critical skill that students must learn and master. The goal of speaking is to enable students to use English effectively (Baqi et al., 2023). Thus, speaking serves as a means to deliver well-organized and refined thoughts that meet the specific needs of the audience. Speakers must make an effort to present their ideas effectively to ensure that their messages are well received and understood by their audience (Rita, 2022). The reality shows that students face difficulties in mastering spoken English, particularly in relation to culturally integrated curricula (Agus Winarko, Setia Rini, 2023).

The problem statement focuses on several issues, including the fact that many students are still unable to communicate in English while incorporating cultural contexts (M. Taslim, 2023). In English communication, students and tutors often overlook the integration and delivery of cultural information related to the target language. This statement is supported by Marhamah, Daud, and (Mardhiah et al., 2024), who argue that mastering a language effectively requires not only understanding its structure and vocabulary but also an awareness of the culture in which it is used. To teach English culture to students, tutors must recognize the importance of cross-cultural competence in foreign language instruction (Hasanah et al., 2021). Therefore, tutors need to understand how to integrate cultural elements into language teaching. They can then apply this understanding in their teaching to help students develop cross-cultural competence (Muhibbah & Amalia, 2025). In this regard, the Ramadan tradition can provide an opportunity for students to enrich their knowledge and skills. One crucial skill for students is the ability to speak English. However, many students still struggle with speaking English, particularly in implementing it within the Ramadan tradition.

Previous research has highlighted the positive impact of culture-based curricula on language acquisition. For example, Licenciada Andrea Alexandra Aguirre Alonso finds that a high level of cultural awareness significantly enhances students' English-speaking abilities. Similarly, research by Al-Amin et al. emphasize the importance of cultural context in improving English-speaking skills among Indonesian speakers. Studies by (Riswanto, 2022) and (Supriadi, 2019) also find that integrating local culture into learning processes can enhance students' academic achievement. These findings collectively underscore the importance of incorporating cultural elements into language education to facilitate better communication and engagement among students. Previous research has explored the relationship between communication in English and culture-based curricula.

However, a significant gap remains regarding the specific impact of Ramadan traditions on English-speaking skills among younger learners. Most studies have focused on older

students and have not clearly defined the cultural context used. This research aims to fill this gap by explicitly examining how integrating Ramadan traditions into the curriculum can enhance speaking skills among students aged 10 to 12 at Rumah Kita English Course, providing new insights into language education. The current research landscape shows increasing recognition of the role of culture in language learning. However, studies focusing on specific cultural practices, such as Ramadan, are still limited. This research offers a fresh perspective by investigating how Ramadan-based activities, such as discussions about suhoor and iftar meals, can serve as effective tools for improving students' speaking skills. By engaging students in Ramadan-related activities, this study aims to provide a comprehensive understanding of how cultural contexts can facilitate language learning. This research aims to provide valuable insights for educators and curriculum developers, contributing to ongoing discussions on integrating cultural elements into language education and their implications for improving speaking proficiency among young learners. Furthermore, the objectives of this study are to investigate how cultural awareness gained through a Ramadan-based curriculum contributes to enhancing English-speaking proficiency among students at Rumah Kita English Course, identify challenges faced by students when learning English through a Ramadan-based curriculum and explore the most effective teaching strategies for enhancing students' speaking skills through a Ramadan-based curriculum at Rumah Kita English Course.

#### **METODE PENELITIAN**

This research was designed using a qualitative approach with a case study design. This approach was chosen to gain an in-depth and holistic understanding of a specific phenomenon, namely the influence of Ramadan traditions on the development of students' English speaking skills. The research took place at an English language course institution, Rumah Kita English Course, with the target population being students aged 10 to 12. From this population, a sample of 7 to 8 students from the \*Kids Speaking Program\* level B program was selected. This small and focused sample size aligns with the characteristics of a case study, which aims to conduct intensive analysis on a single unit, allowing the researcher to capture the complexity of students' learning experiences in greater detail.

To obtain rich and comprehensive data, this study employed three primary data collection techniques. First, participant observation was conducted, in which the researcher directly participated in classroom activities integrated with Ramadan themes. During the observations, the researcher systematically recorded student behavior patterns, interactions, and their use of English in the context of relevant tasks. Second, in-depth interviews were conducted with the students to obtain primary data regarding their perspectives and personal experiences during the learning process. This technique allows researchers to explore information not directly observed. Third, supporting documents, such as daily learning activity notes and student feedback forms, were collected to complement and validate the findings from the observations and interviews.

Data analysis in this study employed thematic analysis, an approach in qualitative research that focuses on identifying, analyzing, and reporting patterns or themes within the data. The analysis procedure began with transcribing all data obtained from interviews and observation notes. Next, researchers carefully read and coded the data to identify recurring patterns. These codes were then grouped into broader categories to form key themes. These themes were then interpreted in depth to explain how the integration of Ramadan traditions impacts students' speaking skills. The results of this analysis served as the basis for drawing research conclusions and formulating practical recommendations for future teaching practices.

## RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

A thematic approach is used to group research results. The results of interviews and observations conducted with resource persons at Rumah Kita English Course show that the use of Ramadan traditions as a context for learning speaking is very relevant and motivating for students.

1. Cultural Awareness Gained Through A Ramadan-Based Curriculum Contributes To Enhancing English-Speaking Proficiency Among Students At Rumah Kita English Course
  - a. The Relevance of Ramadan Topics in Speaking Learning,

Interviews with Rumah Kita English Course tutors confirmed that the Ramadan material was "very related to their habits every year," so that students were more active and enthusiastic (eg. *"kids are getting more active... excited for this"*). Observations also noted that the topic of Ramadan was considered "very close to them" and therefore attracted students' interest. This is in line with the principles of the communicative approach (CLT) which emphasizes the use of authentic contexts and students' personal experiences in language learning. By discussing the traditions of sahur, breaking the fast, and Ramadan activities, students can express their cultural experiences (stated by the tutor: *"tells about the culture of each student during Ramadan"*) According to theory, relating material to students' real experiences can trigger and reduce interest *filter* affective, so that the language acquisition process takes place more effectively. Thus, the relevance of Ramadan topics provides a meaningful context that increases students' intrinsic motivation and participation in speaking. Integration of Local Culture in Speaking Learning.

This research confirms that the use of the Ramadan cultural context in English speaking learning increases student motivation and participation. This finding is in line with the study by (Miqawati et al., 2024) which shows that the integration of local culture in English teaching materials strengthens cultural awareness and enhances the authenticity of learning materials. Students feel more connected to materials that reflect their own cultural experiences, which in turn increases their involvement in the learning process (Aris & Mulyono, 2023).

- b. Teaching Methods Used by Tutors (TPR, Storytelling, Matching Games)Tutors employ various interactive methods to encourage speaking skills.

The drilling technique combined with the TPR (Total Physical Response) method and storytelling is recognized as effective. The tutor mentions: *"TPR for matching games and storytelling methods"*. During class, tutors use card games (matching games) so that students are competitive and *"more excited"*. Storytelling is also rewarded if students are fluent without reading, which increases enthusiasm for learning. Students support this method, for example one student admitted *"I like storytelling the most, because I win. My story is the best and I don't read it at all."*, and likes matching games because he doesn't want to lose. According to language learning literature, the TPR and storytelling methods are consistent with Krashen's input hypothesis which emphasizes the importance of easy-to-understand input through movements and contextual stories. The use of these methods is also in accordance with the communicative approach which prioritizes the use of authentic language and real context in classroom activities. In other words, combining TPR, stories and games as teaching media involves visual and kinesthetic aspects, thereby enriching *multimodal input* for students (according to Krashenian teaching recommendations. These methods are proven to reduce anxiety and increase active interaction, thereby supporting vocabulary mastery and speaking fluency.

Use of Interactive Methods: TPR, Storytelling, and Games. The use of the Total Physical Response (TPR) method, storytelling, and matching games in teaching speaking has proven to be effective in enhancing students' speaking skills (Mardhiah et al., 2024) find that the use of digital storytelling based on local folklore can enhance the speaking skills of EFL students in Indonesia. This method allows students to express themselves more freely and creatively, and enhances their confidence in speaking English (Prayogo & Agustin, 2025).

2. Challenges faced by students when learning English through a Ramadan-based curriculum  
a. Emotional Response and Engagement of Students During Ramadan

Students show positive emotional responses and high involvement when learning in the context of Ramadan. Almost all students stated that learning was "exciting" and "fun". For example, a student said: *"It's exciting, because the tutor... gets free takjil. I like it."* They feel more confident: *"This time I'm more confident because the material is funny."*, and many are "addicted for more" (according to the tutor). This positive emotional state is in line with Krashen's affective filter hypothesis which states that interest and a low-anxiety environment improves language acquisition abilities. When the material is relevant and fun, students are pushed out of their communication comfort zone, lowering emotional barriers. The communicative approach also encourages tutors to become facilitators, creating a classroom atmosphere that supports students' personal expression. All this proves that the integration of the cultural context of Ramadan triggers students' intrinsic motivation and emotional involvement, which according to language learning theory is very important in strengthening the learning of speaking skills.

Positive Emotional Response and Student Engagement. Students show positive emotional responses and high involvement when learning in the context of Ramadan (Prayogo & Agustin, 2025). This supports the Affective Filter Hypothesis theory by Krashen, which states that positive emotional conditions such as a sense of security and high motivation will reduce affective barriers, so that language input is easier to acquire. (Zuhra et al., 2024) also found that the use of videos based on local wisdom can increase students' motivation and involvement in learning English.

b. Challenges in Speaking while Fasting,

Although morale generally remains high, there are physical challenges that arise from fasting. The tutor notes that the student *"They often complain about fasting, but it doesn't reduce their activity. They just complain because they are thirsty and hungry."* One student admitted, *"I'm definitely hungry and thirsty, but because the tutor is fun and the material is good, I'm still enthusiastic."* This way, even if energy and concentration are slightly affected (tired or thirsty), students remain active. Tutors also adjust their speaking workload to be lighter when fasting (i.e. use more *phrases* rather than full sentences). This adjustment is similar to *scaffolding* according to Bruner, where tutors reduce demands to follow students' conditions. Theoretically, physical difficulties such as hunger can increase cognitive load, but tutors' support and motivation make these barriers relatively minor. These findings are consistent with studies on emotional involvement: support and a sympathetic environment (low-anxiety environment) helps students continue learning even though it is physically challenging. Thus, the challenge of fasting does not hinder the achievement of speaking goals, as long as the tutors are sensitive and the atmosphere remains conducive.

Challenges in Learning Speaking while Fasting, Even though students face physical challenges such as hunger and thirst when fasting, they still show enthusiasm

for learning. Tutors adjust their speaking workload to make it lighter when fasting (Purnami et al., 2024), for example by using more phrases than full sentences. This adjustment is similar to scaffolding according to Bruner, where the tutors reduce demands to follow the student's conditions. Research by (Meilasari et al., 2023) shows that the integration of cooperative learning can reduce students' speaking anxiety, which is relevant in the context of learning while fasting.

3. Effective teaching strategies for enhancing students' speaking skills through
  - a. Ramadan-based curriculum at Rumah Kita English Course.

The integration of local Ramadan cultural elements has proven to be effective in enlivening learning. The tutor gives an example of the use of authentic materials, for example asking students to name the sahur and iftar menus using authentic takjil. This approach makes learning highly contextual; students learn vocabulary with real experience. Observation results show that students are comfortable talking about their own culture, as one student admitted: *"Other friends have the same culture as me. So it's easy"*. A culturally oriented approach is in line with intercultural competence theory and CLT practices that advocate the use of authentic contexts. This means that the cultural aspect is not just a thematic background, but becomes a learning tool: discussing Ramadan values and local traditions while enhancing English. Overall, integrating local cultural contexts in speaking lessons enhances the relevance and authenticity of the material, strengthening language learning through students' socio-cultural experiences (in line with the principles of contextual and authentic learning).

The discussion of this study reveals that the implementation of the Ramadan-based curriculum at Rumah Kita English Course has a significant positive impact on students' motivation and speaking skills. By integrating religious themes, values of togetherness, and sharing activities such as discussions about the tradition of breaking the fast together, short speeches about the meaning of fasting, or dialogue simulations at the takjil market students feel that the material is very relevant to their daily experiences during the month of Ramadan (Manuhutu et al., 2023). This sense of involvement encourages them to be more enthusiastic about practicing speaking, in line with idea about the importance of culturally relevant pedagogy in increasing student engagement.

Various teaching strategies specifically designed for the context of Ramadan have proven effective in improving students' authentic communication skills. Role-plays with scenarios as takjil sellers, kultum speakers, or leaders of the buka bersama event force students to use appropriate vocabulary and sentence structures, while practicing intonation and expression more naturally (Geubrina et al., 2022). Meanwhile, small group discussions on current issues during Ramadan such as zakat management or the iftar on the go phenomenon stimulated critical thinking and enriched functional language, with teachers acting as facilitators who provided open-ended questions, conducted constructive error correction, and modeled complex sentences. In addition, the use of multimedia and authentic materials such as cultum videos, light podcasts, and infographics about Ramadan traditions provided scaffolded input that made students feel more confident when asked to speak spontaneously (Zuhra et al., 2024).

From a pedagogical perspective, this study confirms that linking English language materials to local culture and events in this case Ramadan can improve students' engagement and vocabulary retention. In addition, the variety of methods combining role-play, group discussions, and authentic media helps develop speaking skills holistically, while the role of the teacher as a facilitator who provides positive

reinforcement and constructive correction is crucial to maintain classroom dynamics (Hasan et al., 2022).

However, this study has several limitations. The sample that only came from one institution with a relatively small number of students requires caution in generalizing the findings. The duration of the intervention that only lasted for one month of Ramadan also does not provide a picture of long-term effectiveness (Hasan et al., 2022). Variables such as religious background and students' initial proficiency level have not been strictly controlled. Therefore, further studies are recommended to adopt a quasi-experimental design with a control group, increase the duration of the intervention, and include in-depth interviews to explore students' perceptions qualitatively (Edo et al., 2023).

Overall, this study shows that teaching strategies that highlight the nuances of Ramadan can enhance students' speaking skills at Rumah Kita English Course (Nuha, 2025). The implementation of a contextual curriculum, supported by active methods and authentic materials, successfully facilitates meaningful interactions while strengthening intrinsic motivation. With future design improvements, this model has the potential to be developed more widely in various language course institutions (Hayati & Amalia, 2023).

Effectiveness of Local Cultural Integration: Integration of local Ramadan cultural elements has proven to be effective in bringing learning to life. The tutor gives an example of the use of authentic materials, for example asking students to name the sahur and iftar menus using authentic takjil. This approach makes learning highly contextual; students learn vocabulary with real experience. The study by (Manuhutu et al., 2023) shows that the integration of local wisdom in English language teaching can build student character and increase the relevance of learning

## **KESIMPULAN**

Based on the research results, it can be concluded that the use of the Ramadan cultural context in learning to speak English significantly enhances students' motivation, participation and emotional involvement. Ramadan topics are proven to be very relevant to students' personal experiences, thereby providing a meaningful and authentic context in the learning process. This approach is in line with language learning theories such as *Communicative Language Teaching* (CLT), *Affective Filter Hypothesis* by Krashen, as well as the principles of contextual learning. The use of interactive methods such as Total Physical Response (TPR), storytelling, and educational games (matching games) helps strengthen the language acquisition process, by reducing anxiety and encouraging active student involvement. Even though there are physical challenges during fasting, students are still enthusiastic about participating because of the relevant material and fun approach. The tutor's adjustment of teaching strategies also shows sensitivity to students' needs, in line with Bruner's scaffolding principle. Overall, the integration of local Ramadan culture in speaking learning not only enriches teaching content, but also creates a conducive, enjoyable and meaningful learning environment for students. Therefore, a local culture-based approach is worthy of being an effective teaching strategy in the context of English as a foreign language education in Indonesia.

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