

A Contradiction of the Existence of English in Rural and Urban Pesantren in Indonesia

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Abstract. Pesantren emphasizes the learning of religious knowledge based on the classical textbook given to *santri* (student). Nowadays, pesantren shifts its tradition by providing English programs. This shifting occurs as the effort of pesantren to face the challenges of modernization and fulfil society's demands. The aim of this research is to compare the adjustment of pesantren in applying for the English program as their reform in rural and urban pesantren. This study used a comparative study by using semi-structured interviews with the chief of the English program and distributed to 142 entries in both pesantren. The result showed that the existence of English programs in pesantren, both in rural and urban areas, was because of the demand of the society. In rural pesantren, the reason why they provided an English is because they wanted to develop the society surrounded pesantren, which are Indonesian Migrant Worker (*Tenaga Kerja Indonesia*). While in an urban area, they provided an English program because they were focusing on the development of *sentries* themselves to prepare for the global community.

Keywords: English teaching, pesantren" reform, urban area, rural area.

1. INTRODUCTION

Pesantren is the oldest traditional Islamic education system that still exists in this millennium era in Indonesia. These pesantren had become the local wisdom of Indonesia and could not be found in any other places in the world. The word pesantren has a long-related history with the widespread of Islam in Indonesia. Islam had spread widely in the early 13th century. The spreading was mainly through Islamic teaching in the form of Quranic study in the village mosque, prayer house, and the private home community conducted and taught by religious teachers (Hefner and Zaman, 2007). The classic style of teaching become the beginning of Islamic teaching in the form of non-formal education institutions in Indonesia. Historically, pesantren, as a traditional institution, was strongly related to Islamic education with its traditional teaching (Wahid, 2001).

The words pesantren are used differently in every region in Indonesia that is still related to that traditional Islamic educational institution. The basis of pesantren in Indonesia was in Java Island. Still, the other areas have their term to call pesantren, such as the term pesantren used in Java, *Surau* in West Sumatra, *Dayah* in Aceh. All these terms used are related to traditional Islamic education institutions in Indonesia (Azra, 2014).

The word pesantren originally comes from the phrase *santri* that added the prefix "Pe" and suffix "An" written as pesantrian. As time passed, the phrase pesantren becomes pesantren as it is easier to pronounce. Furthermore, the phrase *santri* comes from *Sastri* (Hindis), which means a Hindish holy book expert. Due to *Bahas*Indonesia's

assimilation and meaning shift, the word *santri* changed its meaning to Islamic holy book expert (*Departemen Agama Republik Indonesia*, 2004).

Etymologically, "*pesantren*" and the original word "*santri*" come from the Tamil language meaning "religious teacher." In short, *pesantren* is the traditional Islamic education institution for *santri* to learn religious lessons under the guidance of *Kyai*. Nowadays, the usage of *pesantren* in Indonesia today combining two terms of "*pondok*" (from the Arabic language: barrack or hotel) and "*pesantren*" mostly can be interchangeable, even can be merged into "*Pondok pesantren*," which usually can be shortened into "*ponpes*" (Mansurnoor, 1990). It means every *santri* must stay into *Pondok pesantren* to learn a religious lesson from *Kyai*. In short, *pesantren* is the traditional Islamic education institution for *santri* to learn Islamic knowledge under the guidance of *Kyai* (the leader of the *pesantren*).

At the beginning of the establishment, *pesantren* was more emphasizing on the *Salafi* system. The learning process focused on religious learning based on "old books" (*Kitab kuning*). The old books were usually written by a Muslim scholar, Shāfi'ī. The books comprised of Arabic grammar (*nahw*) and conjugation (*ṣarf*), Qur'ānic recitation (*qirā'ah*), Qur'ānic exegesis (*tafsīr*), theology (*tawhīd*), jurisprudence (*fiqh*), ethics (*akhlāq*), logic (*manṭiq*), history (*tārīkh*) and mysticism (*taṣawwūf*) (Federspiel, 2017). Due to time passing and the high demand from society, people have decreased of their interest in the *Salafi* system. From a personal interview with one of the *Kyai* in *Pesantren Nazhatut Thullab* in Sampang Madura, it is understood that many of *Salafi* *pesantren* in Indonesia has decreased in numbers of *santri*. The closing *pesantren* was due to the lack of *Salafi* system needs from nearby society.

The existence of *pesantren* had numerous challenges and restrictions since the Netherlands' colonialism until the present day. In the colonial era, the colonial government of the Netherlands introduced the new system of education for children by establishing *Sekolah Rakyat* (*Volkscholen*), or to be called *Sekolah Dasar* (*Nagari*), with three years period of time (Madjid, 1997). With this institution's existence, the existence of *pesantren* was somehow decreasing due to societal preference for *Sekolah Rakyat* over *pesantren*. Moreover, in the early 20th century, *Muslim* reformists made a renewal of Islamic education in the form of (1) giving Islamic education in the formal School; (2) building modern *Madrasah*, which limited to the adoption of the modern school system (Madjid, 1997).

Due to these cases, many *pesantren* tend to provide the formal education institution inside the *pesantren*. Nonetheless, ideally, society needs religious knowledge acquisition and access to formal education aimed towards the attainment of vocational certificates or diplomas (Madjid, 1997). Although *pesantren* is usually known as conservative Islamic tradition that is secured from the renewal education system, *pesantren* is not merely comprised of Islamic teaching and *Salafi* system. Still, it also contains indigenous of Indonesia (Madjid, 1985).

Therefore, *pesantren* made some adjustment steps that brought advantages for *santri*, supported the continuity of *pesantren*, and developed its education such as grading system and comprehensive curriculum (Azra, 1998). Therefore, there were two factors (internal and external) that influenced the education system in *pesantren* (Qodir, 2006). Internal factors were from the modernization and secularization of Islamic education in the context of working orientation for *santri*. External factors were from changing global influence by the development of technology and information.

The transformation of pesantren arises to encounter the modernization of Islamic education. Firstly, the pesantren education system is taught the classical book and taught the modern subject. Secondly, common pesantren arises and develops in a rural area, but now, abundant pesantren arises in urban areas. Thirdly, in rural areas, society has known the term "Kyai Nasab." On the contrary, the urban areas arise the term "Kyai Nasib," who has mastering Islamic studies and has good administrative skills to manage pesantren (Shodiq, 2011).

Based on the perspective of openness and changing (Zamakhsyari, 1982), pesantren can be divided into two categories: Pesantren *Salafi* and Pesantren *Khalafi*. Pesantren *Salafi* is a traditional pesantren that focuses on studying classical text or book (*Kitab kuning*). On the other hand, *Pesantren Khalafi* is a modern pesantren that establishes a regular school, Madrasah *Diniyah* (*Salafi* system), Higher Education, and *Takhassus* (Arabic and English) (Nasir, 2005).

Furthermore, the positive trend of English usage in pesantren was also supported by thresearcher's pilot study. Four hundred sixty-three students of the English Teacher Education Department in the State Islamic University of *Sunan Ampel* Surabaya were interviewed by the researcher. And the result was there were 101 students from 463 students who graduated from pesantren. It means that many of santri from pesantren want to continue their study at the university and prefer to choose English as their major.

Many kinds of literature in terms of English program in pesantren were emphasized more on English teaching method than the historical background of the adjustment of English program in pesantren. Furthermore, applying English in pesantren is essential to know the fundamental reason for the implementation of English in pesantren both in rural and urban areas. Moreover, study on the perspective from santri towards English program will guide us to comprehend English's objective in pesantren. Therefore, this study was never done before by the other researcher who works in English that only focused on the English teaching method in pesantren.

Nowadays, many pesantren give the best effort to provide English in their curriculum. Nevertheless, this case is contrary to the main purpose of establishing pesantren as the center of Islamic studies based on the classical textbook. Pesantren Nazhatut Thullab in Sampang Madura and Pesantren Progresif Bumi Shalawat (for further, both pesantren will be used acronym as PNT for Pesantren Nazhatut Thullab and PPBS for Pesantren Progresif Bumi Shalawat) are the examples that offers English subject for santri. Moreover, one of these pesantren also adapts Cambridge curriculum to improve santri's ability in English. From this case, the researcher was interested in observing three aspects, including the reasons of pesantrens' shift to provide English, the aims of the shifting it, and the response of sentries towards English in pesantren.

2. METHOD

This study used a comparative approach as the research design. Comparative research belongs to the term of evaluation for similarities, differences, and associations of entities or variables (Mills, 2008). In this study, the comparative framework is used to compare two different educational systems between urban pesantren and rural pesantren. The meaning of educational system shifting in pesantren is the mechanism and procedure of changing the curriculum from *Salafi* system to *Khalafi* system by providing English in pesantren. This study is emphasized the pesantren which applied the *Khalafi* system concerning the

development of the English program and students' responses towards the English program in pesantren.

The researcher used interview guidelines with a semi-structured interview with 2 chiefs of the English program in both pesantren to gather the data about the history of English program implementation, as well as establishment consideration. An open-ended interview is a common type that is often used by the researcher in the qualitative approach. Silverman (2000) argued that the choice of an open-ended interview (semi-structured) is a gold standard of qualitative research. On the other hand, an open-ended question is a kind of question that researchers pose to research participants and allow them to select their position towards the research topic (Roulston, 2008). In this study, the use of open-ended questions was formed in the term of questionnaire to collect the data about sentries responses towards English education teaching in pesantren.

The researcher selected two pesantrens: Pesantren Progresif Bumi Shalawat (PPBS) in Sidoarjo East Java as urban pesantren and Pesantren Nazhatut Thullab (PNT) in Sampang Madura as rural pesantren. The reason for choosing both pesantren was because they provided the English Program in pesantren. Besides, personally, the researcher had an immense interest in comparing the English curriculum between the two pesantrens as they had a different English curriculum. PNT adopted the local curriculum, while PPBS adopted the international curriculum.

This study's participants are 2 heads of the English program and 142 santries, including 53 santries from PNT and 89 santries from PPBS. The researcher distributed the questionnaire to 142 santries, including 53 santries from PNT who joined Nata English Club (NEC) program and 89 santries from PPBS who joined the Cambridge class. Afterward, the researcher interviewed the head of the English program to gain data about the usage of English in pesantren. In this situation, the researcher also interviewed some staff in pesantren who witnessed the history of the English program implementation.

3. RESULT AND DISCUSSION

In this context, there are huge different systems applied by rural and urban pesantren in terms of the development of the English program. In the early establishment of the English program, both pesantren have different aims to be achieved in English program. Either for the cooperation to develop the English program itself, they conducted the collaboration with some institutions. The last, pesantren in rural area pretends to choose the local curriculum from English courses, and pesantren in the urban area applied international curriculum. Those cases will be discussed below.

Table 1. Comparative Framework of English Program between PNT and PPBS

Variable	PNT	PPBS
The Aim of the English Program Establishment	To facilitate student who has potential in the English	To prepare them before applying the English international curriculum
Cooperation	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. <i>Pesantren Al-Amien</i> Sampang 2. <i>Bhineka</i> Language Institution 3. <i>Al-Fattah</i> English 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Common European Framework of Reference for Language Concept (CEFR) 2. Cambridge International

	Course (AEC)	Examination (CIE)
Curriculum	1. <i>Al-Fattah</i> English Course (AEC)	3. Act Edu Solution 1. Cambridge Curriculum (EFL) 2. Act Edu Solution (EPP)

English program provided in PNT started in the 9th generation by KHMu'afi Alif Zaini. In a different location, PPBS provided the English program in 2012, along with the establishment of a new branch pesantren. At the beginning of the English program establishment, PNT provided English courses without any formal name and was not obligatory for students. This course provided to potential *santries* who are interested in learning English.

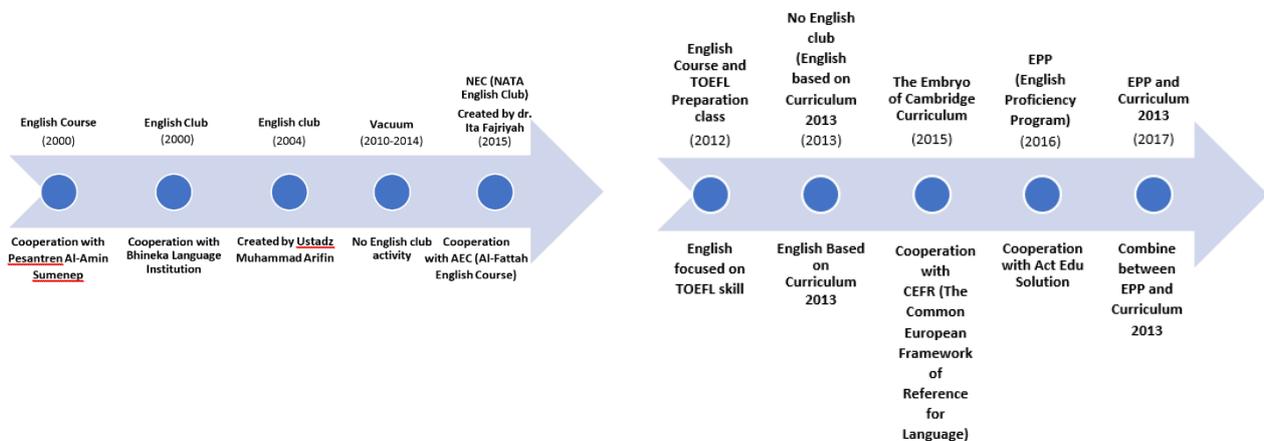


Figure 1. Comparative Development of English Program in PNT and PPBS

Pesantren Progresif Bumi Shalawat provided the English course and TOEFL Preparation class for santries to prepare them before applying the international curriculum. The concept of an integrated curriculum (combining international curriculum and national curriculum) was already planned by the owner of pesantren before establishing a new branch of PPBS. The preparation was conducted by inviting many Muslim scholars, *Kyai* from other pesantren and some Professors from the university. From this case, the pesantren provided both English course and TOEFL preparation class to enhance santries basic knowledge in English. Thus, they were prepared to face the international curriculum.

In terms of the partnership, PNT collaborates with some local institutions to support the English program in pesantren. Those institutions were Pesantren Al-Amien Sampang, *Bhineka* Language Institution, and *Al-Fattah* English Course (AEC). The cooperation was to provide English teachers and to adopt the curriculum from those institutions.

On the other hand, PPBS cooperated with an international institution to reach its vision. The vision was curriculum integration anpesantren's internationalization. PPBS had a cooperated with the Common European Framework of References for Language Concept (CEFR) for applying the Cambridge Curriculum. The other cooperation was with Act Edu Solutions. The partnership was to provide English Proficiency Program (EPP) along with

Cambridge Curriculum, which focused on English For Literature (EFL). This cooperation was primarily prepared to support English learning in pesantren, which also fitted with the national curriculum.

In conclusion, the aim of providing an English Program in PNT is to facilitate potential santries to learn English. Meanwhile, PPBS provided English courses to prepare santries before applying the International Cambridge curriculum anpesantren's internationalization.

3.1. Students' Responses towards English Program in Pesantren Nazhatut Thullab and Pesantren Progresif Bumi Shalawat

In this part, the researcher distributed an open-ended questionnaire to 142 santries, including 53 santries from PNT and 89 santries from PPBS. An open-ended questionnaire in this research was to gather data about *santries'* responses towards the English program. The responses were mainly about three aspects: the differences between learning English in pesantren and School, the aim of learning English in pesantren, and their expectation of English program in pesantren.

3.2. Santri Response towards the Reason of Learning English in Pesantren

There were similar answers to the first question, which asked santries' responses towards learning English in both pesantren. The first reason for learning English in pesantren based on countries' answers in both pesantren was for the future orientation. 28% santries in PNT argued that learning English was important for them in working orientation and studying abroad. These opinions might influence society's mindset in Sampang, who as numerous people in the city, work as Indonesian migrant workers. Afterward, santries were also influenced by some ustadz or teacher in pesantren who studied abroad such as in Yemen. The pesantren's *Kyai* has already gone to some countries such as Singapore, Yemen, Germany, and Japan. Therefore, the santries thought that the reason for learning English in pesantren was for working and studying abroad. Moreover, 9% santries of PPBS considered that English as a tool to ease getting a job and studying abroad.

Table 2. Santri Response about the Reason on Learning English in Pesantren

<i>Santries'</i> answer	PNT	PPBS
For future (working orientation, study abroad)	28%	9%
International language	28%	24%
English is essential for <i>santries</i>		16%
English also is provided in pesantren	24%	
For communication purpose		14%

Afterward, both santries in PNT and PPBS had the same answer because English is an international language (28% santries of PNT and 24% santries of PPBS). The common mindset for santries both in rural and urban pesantren was that English is an international language. Additionally, the majority of santries in PPBS said that English was important to be learned in pesantren. Learning English was useful to stay updated. Some of the *santries* also added that PPBS was International pesantren; thus, they should learn English.

On the other hand, some students in both pesantren, including 8% santri in PNT and 11% santri from PPBS, were argued why pesantren provided English in pesantren. The argument was based on the stereotype that pesantren was a place for studying Islam, not English. Furthermore, there was some benefit for santri when they were learning English in pesantren. As said by santri in both pesantren, 6% santri in PNT and 2% santri in PPBS, they could practice speaking in English with their friends in dormitory. Typically, santri were obligated to stay in the dormitory as they studied in pesantren.

Santries' Opinion about the Differences in Learning English in Pesantren and School

As the researcher mentioned above about the benefit of learning English in pesantren, the differences between learning English in pesantren and School were that School offered a theory to students, and pesantren provided a chance for santri to practice. 43% santri in PNT and 16% santri in PPBS had the same answer. This notion was also supported by the answer from 11% santri in PNT and 31% santri of PPBS. Santries believed that pesantren had allocated more time, compared to regular School. In PNT, santri learned English 3 times a day. In contrast, regular Schools limited the time for learning English based on the national curriculum.

Table 3. Santries Opinions about The Differences in Learning English in pesantren and School

<i>Santries answer</i>	PNT	PPBS
School teach English based on material, pesantren combine practice and material	43%	16%
Pesantren more detail than School	15%	
Same, nothing different	11%	31%
Pesantren has plenty of time than School	11%	16%

There were 11% santri of PNT and 31% santri of PPBS said that there was no difference in learning English, both in pesantren and in regular School. This answer was contrary to the previous answer by santri both in PNT and PPBS. In the case of PNT, the researcher argued as the teaching material of English in both pesantren, and regular Schools was the same. Therefore, this reasoning might be the justification for this answer.

On the other hand, santri in PPBS might be confused with the concept of curriculum integration. In this context, the English program at the beginning of the establishment was more focusing on pesantren. Afterward, the focus was changed when the pesantren applying the Cambridge curriculum. The curriculum emphasizes English learning in regular School, rather than in pesantren. Thus, 6% of santri in PPBS considered that they learned English in School.

3.3.Santri Opinion about the Aim of Learning English in Pesantren

The third question was regarding the aim of learning English in pesantren. 40% of santri in PNT and 21% santri in PPBS said that pesantren provided an English program to create santri who were able to speak in English. Additionally, 32% of santri in PPBS that

said to create modern santri who can speak English, added their opinion with "not backward with the development of Timor".

Table 4. Santries' Opinion about The Aim of Learning English in *Pesantren*

Santries' answer	PNT	PPBS
To create santries who can speak English	40%	21%
To introduce English to santries for future	24%	24%
To create modern santries (not left behind)	11%	32%
To improve santries' ability in English		11%

Afterward, 2% of santries from PNT and 9% santries from PPBS said that English is an international language. In this context, santri in both pesantren attempted to answer that English was not just provided in the School, but pesantren also tried to give English for santries. Furthermore, this context also had an impact on them after they graduated from pesantren. Thus, 11% of santries in PNT and 24% of santries in PPBS said that learning English in pesantren was to help them get a job and study abroad.

There were 6% santries in PNT, and 2% santries in pesantren PPBS said that the aim of learning English in pesantren was to give them English ability to compete with other pesantren or School. In the past, there was such a societal paradigm that santries who graduated from pesantren just comprehend religious knowledge and cannot compete with the student who graduated from regular School. But nowadays, the paradigm shifts slowly with the reformation of pesantren by providing English as a tool for santri to survive and compete.

Santries' Expectation for English Learning in Pesantren

In the last question in the open-ended questionnaire, both santries in PNT and PPBS have the same expectation for the English program in pesantren. There were 68% santries in PNT, and 72% santries in PPBS said that they wished English Program in pesantren can develop well. But they had different expectations towards English Program in each pesantren.

Table 5. Santries' Expectation for English Learning in *Pesantren*

Reason	PNT	PPBS
English program in pesantren can develop	68%	72%
Santries can speak English very well	9%	
Pesantren can develop through an English program	9%	
Can develop santries' ability in English		10%
Santries and <i>Ustadz</i> (teacher) can speak English fluently		7%

Santries in PNT is expected that the English Program in pesantren can develop in the case of the professional teacher, materials, and facilities. Nonetheless, there were some obstacles during the English program development in PNT. Several teachers of the English Program in PNT were not graduated from the English department. Even some English teachers were still studying at university. Subsequently, sometimes they were absent from teaching in pesantren. And for material, PNT is still adopting curriculum or textbooks from other institutions. Hence, this case might do not cover the English needs for santries in pesantren. Moreover, PNT had few facilities to support the English program in pesantren. Some English teachers just used the textbook and emphasized more on lecturing than innovative learning.

On the other hand, santries in PPBS expected that pesantren should provide more outdoor learning, English camp and invite more native English speakers. Outdoor learning meant that *santries* could study outside the classroom to learn some material related to their surroundings. This kind of activity successfully attracted the *santries'* interest to learn English. Besides, pesantren also provided an English camp for santries based on English Special Purposes (ESP) as a program to develop their English ability, based on the context of surroundings.

Furthermore, santries in both pesantren (9% santries from PNT and 7% santries from PPBS) stated that through English Program provided by pesantren, they expected an improvement in English ability. As a result, English was able to be used in pesantren as a means of instruction and Arabic. The santries also expect that through English Program, it can help them to reach their dreams, such as studying abroad. Many *santries* in both pesantren had a strong desire to continue their study to a higher degree abroad. This means that santries nowadays are not santries in the past who left behind and cannot compete with others. Through some reformation that was done by pesantren, such as English program, santries can compete in the modern era.

4. CONCLUSION

The existence of English programs in pesantren, both in rural and urban areas, was because society's demand. In rural pesantren, the reason why they provided English is because they wanted to develop the society surrounding pesantren, which are Indonesian Migrant Worker (*Tenaga Kerja Indonesia*). While in an urban areas, they provided an English programs because they focused on developing *countries* themselves to prepare for the global community. On the other hand, in the *santries'* perspective about English program in pesantren, they were agreed that santries nowadays should not be conservative. They started to recognize that scientific knowledge was as important as religious knowledge. Additionally, both santries in urban and rural areas had the same hope; English programs in pesantren must be developed to facilitate santries who want to learn English in pesantren.

However, this research only used 2 pesantren as a comparison to gathering the data about the English programs in pesantren. For more various data, the researcher suggests to the future research to apply more pesantren in the rural and urban area in their study to discover any possible variant data about the application of English in pesantren. Furthermore, this study only used pesantren, is in the East Java region. Although, there are several pesantren existed in all around Indonesia which has their own uniqueness and characteristic in providing English program in their pesantren based on the demand of the society surrounded pesantren. This condition is also a consideration for future work to use more pesantren outside East Java.

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