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English for *Da'wah*? L2 Motivation in Indonesian Pesantren Schools

Abstract

Anecdotal evidence suggests that some students, in some of Indonesia's Islamic boarding schools (pesantren), harbor negative attitudes towards English, prompting resistance to learning the language at individual and institutional levels. This paper reports on an empirical study investigating this issue in three pesantren in Java. Employing Dörnyei's (2005) L2 Motivational Self System as the main theoretical framework, a questionnaire consisting of well-established and context-specific constructs was designed to measure students' motivation for learning English (n = 376). The one-way MANOVA performed suggested that religious factors do play a role in shaping learners' motivation. To further examine this, a follow-up qualitative study involving class observations and student interviews was conducted. This revealed that the participants relate their motivation to their spiritual vision, i.e. using English mainly as a means of *da'wah* (Islamic propagation) and for communicating with other Muslims worldwide. However, this *da'wah* motive does not appear to generate much learning effort, and is possibly a way of overcoming the dissonance they feel in studying the non-believer language. The paper concludes by emphasizing the need for L2 researchers to further examine religious attitudes and religiosity as consequential socio-cultural aspects of learning English with pedagogical implications for institutions in many global contexts.

Keywords: L2 motivation; religious identity; English for *da'wah*; spiritual vision

1. Introduction

It has become a central tenet of second language (L2) learning motivation theory in the past two decades that people's desire to learn is influenced by how they see themselves, now and in the future. Future L2 selves are core concepts in the dominant model of L2 motivation, the L2 Motivational Self-System (Dörnyei 2009, see below), but several contemporary

researchers have also examined the links between L2 motivation and particular aspects of a learner's current identity, such as age (Kormos & Csizér, 2008), gender (Carr & Pauwels, 2006), socio-economic background (ANON, 2012; Kormos & Kiddle, 2013) and nationality (ANON, 2013; Taguchi et al., 2009). All these have been shown to affect individuals' intentions to learn a language. One aspect of identity has been strangely neglected however – people's religious affiliations. This is strange both because religion is recognized as a salient component of many people's 'core' identity (Joseph, 2004; Block, 2014), and also because some languages are inextricably linked to certain religions, notably Arabic and English with Islam and Christianity respectively.

The link between English and religion is apparent from the way the language was widely used in colonial missionary work (Pennycook, 1994). Even now, as the global language, English is a primary vehicle for the rapid spread of evangelical Christianity in the developing world, providing incentives for people to learn it and for missionaries to teach it (Wong & Canagarajah, 2009). These links with Christianity are one potential cause of hostility towards the language in some Muslim quarters. Another cause, somewhat paradoxically, is its association with western nations' perceived atheism and moral laxity (Kumaravidavelu, 2006; Chowdhury, 2019).

There is some anecdotal evidence that these attitudes towards English do affect Muslims' motivation to learn the language, especially in contexts where conservative Islamic values are more heavily inculcated. In an Indonesian Salafi pesantren school, for example, the curriculum is dedicated to religious subjects at the expense of secular subjects like mathematics and sciences, but students are still expected to study English twice a week. During visits to this school, the first author witnessed acts of apparent resistance towards learning English, for example, some students coming late to an English lesson without showing any guilty feeling, not wanting to reply to the teacher's greeting in English, or

simply walking out of class when they felt like it. We hypothesized that these acts may arise at least partly from their commitment to their religion.

In the study reported here we investigated these issues with reference to conventional measures of motivation – utilizing the well-established L2MSS (Dörnyei, 2009) – while also including constructs related specifically to religious beliefs, and other context-specific factors. The study was conducted in three pesantren schools which differed in their degree of religious conservatism, to enable a comparison of the L2 motivation of pupils in each institution.

2. Literature Review

2.1. The L2 Motivational Self System

In the field of L2 motivation research, Dörnyei's (2005) L2 Motivational Self System (L2MSS) has been a dominant theoretical framework. This theory has been shown to be applicable in many different contexts with participants from different cultural and linguistic backgrounds (e.g. Kormos et al., 2011; Taguchi et. al., 2009; Al-Shehri, 2009), and aligned well with established self-related theories in general motivational psychology, i.e. Higgins' (1987) self-discrepancy theory and Markus and Nurius' (1986) concept of possible selves. We regard the L2MSS as a suitable theoretical framework because it has also been shown to be an effective lens through which to investigate various aspects of L2-mediated identity in different parts of the contemporary world (e.g. ANON, 2013; ANON, 2009; Yashima, 2009) and it offers applicable methodological tools to gather data from a sizeable population.

Dörnyei's L2MSS framework has been used in over 40 L2 motivation studies in recent years (Boo et al., 2015) and its precepts are now well-known. The model comprises three facets: the Ideal L2 Self, the Ought-to L2 Self, and the L2 Learning Experience. The Ideal L2 Self is a representation of the L2 user that the learner would ideally like to become. The Ought-to L2 Self is 'the attribute that one believes one ought to possess…and which therefore may bear little resemblance to desires or wishes' (Dörnyei, 2005, p. 100). The third aspect of

the L2MSS is 'the L2 learning experience', which accounts for the influence of classroom situation factors such as teacher, teaching strategies, teaching materials, and other factors that can impact learners' motivation to continue learning (Dörnyei, 2005).

Recently, Al-Hoorie (2018) conducted a meta-analysis of the L2MSS which showed that the construct of the Ideal L2 Self was a powerful predictor of intended effort in 32 studies involving over 30,000 participants from different language backgrounds (see e.g. Ryan, 2009; Islam et al., 2013; Taguchi et al., 2009). The construct of Ought-to L2 Self, which has been used in 19 studies involving over 18,000 participants, has however much weaker predictive validity, which might be because the construct is, as Al-Hoorie (p.737) puts it, 'concerned only with the less internalized forms of motives' (see e.g. Taguchi et al., 2009; ANON, 2012; Dörnyei and Chan, 2013; and Papi, 2010). The third construct, the L2 learning experience, is often the most powerful explanatory factor, Al-Hoorie identifying 18 studies involving over 19,000 participants in which it was the strongest predictor of learners' intended learning effort (see e.g. Taguchi et al., 2009; and ANON, 2012; Alshahrani, 2016).

The L2MSS has already been employed to examine links between religious beliefs and L2 motivation. In a qualitative study of seven L2 learners with a strong Christian background, Lepp-Kaethler and Dörnyei (2013) found that the ideal L2 selves of the participants were bound up with their religious future self, for example imagining reading the Bible in English or even in the original languages, becoming a Bible translator, and/or to spreading the Word among non-believers. Strong religious visions enabled them to overcome formidable personal challenges, and learning was sustained over many years, sometimes even decades, reaching very high levels of competence; as Lepp-Kaethler and Dörnyei (2013) note, '[faith is] a hidden but surprisingly powerful motivator for SLA' (p.186).

2.2. Religious Identity and Language Learning

Language and religion have always intersected in complex ways. For example, sacred texts are often closely associated with the language they were originally written in, none more

so than Arabic with the Quran, Hebrew with the Torah, and Sanskrit with Vedas. However, in the case of the Bible, it has largely lost its connection to the languages of its creation, the Semitic languages Hebrew and Aramaic (Price, 2007), and through the intensive use of the King James translation in colonial missionary work, gradually became associated with English in many global contexts (Pennycook, 1994), though not it should be noted in Latin America, where Spanish and Portuguese have strong religious functions.

Some studies conducted in Muslim-majority countries report negative attitude towards English, propagated in the milieu of family and community. Sellami (2006), for example, shows how some Moroccan English major university students are influenced by the negative media portrayal of the English-speaking cultures as 'slaves of sex, money, and alcohol' (p.179), and therefore felt conflicted in their language studies. In Kuwait, Haggan (1998) found that undergraduate students felt uncomfortable reading modern English literature because they felt it conveyed values inimical to those of Islam. In the Bangladesh context, Chowdhury (2017), found a strong discourse within a traditional madrasah community which positioned English as the language of western development programmes. They showed resistance to it and were emboldened by their commitment to Islam and Arabic language, which connotes the 'Quranic identity' and other religious and utilitarian values (p. 48). In contrast, Chowdhury (2019) describes another Bangladeshi Madrasa where a different discourse prevails, one that positions English as critical for national economic and technological development, and as valued cultural capital for its students.

It is therefore important to acknowledge that every religion affords multiple possible identities. Joseph (2004) discusses how different linguistic identities were developed from religious-sectarian divisions, giving the example of how Irish Gaelic and Scots Gaelic are bound up with Roman Catholicism and Free Church of England respectively. Another reason why co-religionists might exhibit contrasting identities can be found in the degree of conservativeness. As Wulff (2010) puts it, religious conservatism reflects the extent to which

individuals rigidly uphold core religious values, rules, and practices; that is, how far they obey the religious teachings that they follow, as described in Chowdhury's studies above, where two groups of Muslims have different views on English. Another example can be drawn from Al-Haq and Al-Masaeid's (2009) study in Jordan. While some of their participants expressed a dislike of English, others considered the language an important contemporary life skill and a way of learning about Western cultures and values, without necessarily adopting them. Instead of considering it a threat to their faith, they were 'religiously, rather than materialistically, motivated to learn English' (p. 283), for English can be used to propagate the true message of Islam.

We acknowledge that alternative, poststructuralist approaches to identity and language education potentially offer a more complex and nuanced understanding of the relationship than reductionist psychological theories such as the L2MSS. In Darvin and Norton's (2015) triadic model for example, investment in language learning is conceptualized as lying at the intersection of personal identity, ideology and capital. In the context of pesantren schools, we can anticipate that learners have other identities that are relevant to their language studies (e.g. gender, social class, ethnicity), that they are exposed to powerful ideologies beyond the religious realm (e.g. school disciplinary discourses) and that they possess and aspire to many forms of symbolic capital beyond English language skills, not least other languages like Arabic, and other tokens of religious or social esteem. Exploring religious identity in this way, adopting suitable research methodologies (cf. Norton & De Costa, 2018) is an important future task. In this study however we deliberately chose to pursue the more well-trodden motivation research path, as this would enable us to identify and measure relationships between language learning and religiosity in the way that other individual difference factors (e.g. age, gender, nationality, and milieu) have been investigated.

Our specific research questions were formulated as follows:

1. How motivated are the Muslim students in three differently affiliated pesantren to learn English?
2. How, if at all, does religious identity affect their English learning motivation?

3. Methods

In this research we adopted a mixed methods approach in a sequential explanatory design (Creswell & Plano Clark, 2007). The first quantitative phase of the study used a survey instrument to investigate English learning motivation in three institutions which differed in their degree of religious conservatism and sought to identify patterns of association among the variables. The qualitative phase of the study sought to offer at least partial explanations for these patterns of association by observing learners in class and talking to them afterwards about their L2 motivation and religious beliefs.

3.1 Sampling for the study

Phase 1 involved giving a survey to 376 students aged 16-18 from three different pesantren schools. Pesantren A is in East Java, affiliated with the Nahdlatul Ulama (NU), known as being among the most progressive and moderate groups of Muslims in Indonesia. The second school was Pesantren B in Central Java, affiliated with the Muhammadiyah group, which is religiously more conservative than those of NU, but still very moderate. The third one was Pesantren C in East Java, affiliated with Salafism, arguably the most conservative (legal) Muslim movement in Indonesia. Although all three pesantren are mixed gender, only male participants were recruited for the study to avoid possible ethical issues around a male researcher dealing with female students in Pesantren C. Out of 376 participants involved in the study, 365 participants' responses were eligible for analysis, eleven being eliminated due to their invalid responses, e.g. showing no meaningful effort at all by answering in a zig-zag pattern.

Phase 2 of the research was located exclusively in Pesantren C, to allow us to probe in more depth the relationship between religious conservatism and motivation to learn English. Several English classes were observed, and seven focal learners were selected for interview based on their observed behaviour in class (see section 4.2 below).

3.2 Instrument

A questionnaire in Bahasa Indonesia was designed to generate the quantitative data (see Appendix A). It contains an open-ended question at the beginning of the questionnaire and then 51 statements that require the participants to indicate their agreement on a 4-point Likert scale ranging from 1 (strongly disagree), 2 (disagree), 3 (agree), to 4 (strongly agree). This even-numbered scale is preferred to that with a midpoint to avoid indifferent responses which are difficult to interpret, and on the basis that there are not usually differences in the reliabilities of 4-, 5-, and 7- point scales (Krosnick & Presser 2010). The open-ended question, *'What is your main reason to study English?'* was aimed at generating students' personal rationales for learning English. The 51 items represented nine constructs, of which six were adapted from previous studies using the L2MSS as the theoretical framework (e.g. ANON 2012, Ryan 2009, Dörnyei et al. 2006); besides the self-related constructs (Ideal and Ought-to L2 selves) and the L2 learning experience, we included scales to measure 'attitudes to English' and 'milieu' to see if these differed among the three school populations. The remaining three constructs specifically related to religion – 'English as a threat to Muslim Identity' and 'English as a medium to propagate Islam', adapted from Al-Haq & Al-Masaeid (2009) and a scale of participants' degree of religious conservatism adapted from Hernandez (2011) and Koenig & Büssing (2010).

3.3 Procedures for data collection and analysis

The data yielded from the questionnaire were inputted into SPSS version 20 for Windows to measure the internal consistency of all scales. As suggested by Larson-Hall (2010), the acceptable alpha value set to determine the internal consistency reliability was 0.70-0.80, and

tests for Cronbach Alpha showed that all of the scales reached this minimum, with most well over 0.70. Levene's tests for equality of variances found that the assumption of homogeneity of variance was met, $F(2, 362)$, all $ps > 0.05$, *ns*, and it was found that the data is not very skewed, which suggests that a parametric test can be performed to compare means (Larson-Hall, 2010). Therefore, in order to describe the students' motivation and to identify how motivational factors vary among the students across the three institutions, a one-way MANOVA (multivariate analysis of variance) was conducted. In addition, because there are several dependent variables, MANOVA was performed to obtain a multivariate F value (Wilks' Lambda). Bonferroni adjusted alpha was used to correct the *α-level* for multiple comparisons, setting the level of significance at $p < .006$.

Interview data were subjected to thematic analysis. The recordings were listened to several times before they were transcribed in the original language to avoid any misinterpretation in the analysis. As the first author speaks the same language as the participants, the transcription process was not difficult. After the interview data were transcribed, they were organised into columns and tables in Microsoft Word. Text highlighting colours were applied to systematically categorise participants' responses and find emerging themes.

4. Findings

4.1 Mean Values and Differences

Preliminary analysis of the data revealed that overall students' motivation, as measured by Intended Learning Effort, to learn English in the three institutions was moderately high ($M = 2.69$, $SD = .471$). The Ideal L2 Self obtained a relatively high mean value, while English as a Threat to Muslim Identity showed a very low mean value, which indicates that participants did not consider that English constitutes a threat to their Muslim identity. However, closer analysis of the data shows important differences as there was a significant effect for pesantren

type on the means of motivational factors for English motivation, Wilks' Lambda = 0.53, F (16, 710) = 16.716, p= .000. The multivariate analysis of variance (Table 2) shows that the participants from Pesantren C have significantly lower learning effort than those from Pesantren A and B in all motivational factors with effect sizes ranging from 0.15 (small) to 0.3 (medium), which indicate that around 10% to 25% of the variability in the participants' mean scores of motivational factors are accounted for by group membership (Plonsky and Oswald, 2014). The students from Pesantren A and B have stronger future L2 selves, more positive learning experiences, more favourable attitudes towards English, their milieu is more supportive, and they intend to put more effort into actually learning the language. The analysis also reveals that Pesantren B students are more conservative than those of Pesantren A, and Pesantren C students are religiously the most conservative among the three groups, with a large effect size of 0.8, suggesting that around 75% of the variability in the participants' religious conservatism is accounted for by the Pesantren type. However, in the two other constructs related to religion, no significant differences were found, and the effect sizes were very low – 0.03 and 0.02 for English as a Threat to Muslim Identity and English as a Medium to Propagate Islam respectively. What the survey data seems to be telling us, therefore, is that there is an association between religious conservatism and lower English learning effort. However, the participants hold similar views about the direct relationship between English and Islam i.e. that far from being a threat to the faith, it is genuinely useful for propogating it – or as Muslims say, for *da'wah*.

[Insert Table 1 about here]

Table 2 presents the percentages of categorized responses related to the participants' expressed reasons for why they learn English in their Pesantren. In all three institutions, there are participants who linked their purpose of learning English with *da'wah*, but the proportion increases from just 2% in Pesantren A to 12.3% in Pesantren B and 20% in Pesantren C (see Table 3), thus rising in line with level of religious conservatism. In other words, there was a

strong indication that the more conservative the participants, the more they link English with *da'wah*. To confirm this statistically, a chi-square test of independence was performed to examine the relationship between students' religious conservatism and the *da'wah* motive. The correlation between these variables was significant, X^2 (1, N = 365) = 8.9, p = .003, which suggests that more religiously conservative students were more likely to have the *da'wah* motive to learn English. In their responses to the open item on the survey, students from Pesantren A wrote, for example: 'so that I can spread Islam to the west' (Participant 59), 'so that I can spread Islam to all non-Muslims' (Participant 82). In Pesantren B, some students wrote more detailed answers, for example: 'in order to be able to communicate and to conduct *da'wah* to common people, who have not understood Islam profoundly, as well as to straighten the Muslim's faith…' (Participant 73). Interestingly, in Pesantren C, the expressions to associate English with *da'wah* are not only more numerous but also more elaborate, including using some Arabic expressions, for example: 'to spread Islam to the western world and explain to them that Islam is *rahmatan lil-alamin* (a mercy to all creation)' (Participant 45), 'I want to be like Dr Zakir Naik, whose contribution to Islam is huge. After finishing my study, I have decided to live and die in the path of '*da'wah*' *bi-ithnillah* (with the permission of Allah)' (Participant 80).

[Insert Table 2 about here]

Apart from the popularity of *da'wah*, it is also noteworthy that 'school subject' is the most common response in Pesantren C, while in Pesantren A and B students tended to refer to the global functions of English ('international language' and 'studying abroad'), indicating perhaps a more worldly outlook.

[Insert Table 3 about here]

4.2 Qualitative Phase

The quantitative findings confirmed our presumption that the group holding more conservative religious values would have lower intended effort to learn English. Analysis of

the responses to the open-ended question also suggests that in Pesantren C there are considerably more students who related their aim to learn English to *da'wah*, and to the need to fulfil curriculum requirements, than in Pesantren A and B. Accordingly we sought to investigate this further by generating some qualitative data in this institution.

In particular, with research question 2 in mind, we wanted to understand how the students related learning English with their Islamic faith and how it affected their actual learning behaviour. We did this in two ways, firstly by observing three classes in order to get a general sense of the level of student engagement. Then, having identified seven students who were apparently more or less motivated and so might offer a range of opinion, we interviewed them using a set of questions (see Appendix B) designed to probe in more depth their feelings and thoughts about English, to help explain the patterns of results from Phase 1. We first present a brief description of the observed lessons, and then analyse the learners' comments.

4.2.1 Student engagement in English classes

In the three classes observed, there were a few students who were genuinely engaged in the lessons or showed enthusiasm for learning. For example, they attempted to answer the teacher's questions and worked hard on the tasks and exercises. They also showed positive classroom interactions, such as helping their peers with their work. However, there were far more students who appeared disengaged. Their disinterest in the lesson was conveyed in many different ways, for instance:

- Late attendance; typically, only about half the students (10-16) were present at the beginning of the class. Some came late, and others did not show up to class at all.
- Passive behaviour; most students participated minimally and remained silent even when called on to read their work aloud.
- Distracting interactions with peers; some students talked to their seatmates about topics not related to the lesson.

- Not paying attention; some students were playing with their school equipment, staring out of the window, laying their heads on the table, or leaving the classroom without permission.

It has to be said, however, that the teacher, Mr Pramono (all participants' names are pseudonyms), appeared somewhat disengaged himself. For example, he did not admonish latecomers. For his teaching material he relied on a textbook (Betty Azar's Grammar) that has been ubiquitous in Indonesia since the late 1970s, and on teaching techniques of even greater historical pedigree – explanations of grammar points, followed by decontextualized grammar exercises (written on the board and then copied down by students in their notebooks), sentence translation or reading aloud. No teaching props or modern audio-visual teaching aids were used, though these are now very common in other Indonesian classroom contexts.

While students' disinterest in English was obvious, it is worth mentioning that they did show interest in the Arabic language. This was evident from their attitude when the observer greeted the students. When he said the greetings in English, most of them did not reciprocate, but when he switched to Arabic, they gave a very enthusiastic response, asking him to keep speaking Arabic, and one student said '*li anna ni afhamu al-arabiyyah'* ('because I understand Arabic'). The fondness for Arabic was also expressed by some students in their individual interviews (see section 4.2.2 below). Knowing the students' liking for the language, Mr. Pramono occasionally used Arabic to flavour his English teaching. For example, he referred to Arabic grammar when explaining English grammar or asked the students to translate Arabic sentences to English.

4.2.2 Students' expressed beliefs about the value of English

Seven students were invited to take part in individual interviews. Four of them were chosen because they appeared particularly disinterested in the lessons, three because they appeared to be actually enjoying learning English.

The main reason mentioned by all the students – both the more and less motivated – for learning English was for *da'wah*; all seven said that English was important for the propagation of Islam among non-Muslims in the western world. They believed that it is necessary for Muslims to learn English so that they can carry out this noble mission. For instance, when asked about his purpose to learn English, Ihsan replied:

> It's for *da'wah*. How can we propagate Islam to other people if we do not speak the language spoken by those people? Meanwhile, the Messenger (pbuh) was sent to a people with the language spoken by his people. So, if we want to propagate Islam to western people, we have to learn their language (all quotations are translated from Bahasa Indonesia).

Asked if he himself had a future vision of propagating Islam, he added:

> 'Definitely, yes. Conducting *da'wah* is our duty. Allah says: *'ud'u ila sabili rabbi-ka'* (original Arabic) 'and invite to the path of your Lord'. So, the command is a general command, not only [conducting *da'wah*] to [other] Muslims or to non-Muslims, but to all mankind because the Messenger (pbuh) was sent to all mankind'.

Inspired by the Qur'an *surah* 16: 125, he emphasised that *da'wah* should be conducted to all people regardless of their religions, nationalities and language backgrounds, and therefore he needs English as a tool to conduct the mission.

Other interviewees were unequivocally supportive of the use of English for the purpose of *da'wah*. Alfian's desire to learn English is coupled with his vision to go abroad to call people to Islam: 'English serves a good purpose, especially for propagating Islam abroad…for example, if I am sent on a *da'wah* mission to Singapore, I will need English…I might be able to give talks in the mosques there'. Alfian's statement is in line with Nabil's, who even specified the person who inspired him to use English to carry out *da'wah* missions:

> I just want to be competent in English…and then I can use it, for example, to propagate Islam to other countries…it should be propagating Islam in non-believer-

majority countries. You know, like Zakir Naik; he is very fascinating…doing *da'wah* in English.

He explained further that he liked to watch videos of Zakir Naik on YouTube and felt inspired by his success in converting many non-Muslims to Islam. Therefore, he considered that competence in English is crucial. The desire to spread the word of Islam widely was also expressed by Fahmi, who said: 'we should explain the religion (Islam) not only to other Muslims, but also to people from different cultural backgrounds, so it is necessary to speak the language.

Two interviewees recognised the value of digital technology in promoting Islam, but that they would still need English to take advantage of the internet and social media. Ihsan for example said that if he masters English, it would be easier for him to use the internet for *da'wah*. He said: 'we'll attempt to propagate Islam as we also have the internet'. Similarly, when discussing the idea of *da'wah,* Rizal said 'maybe I can write something on the social media, such as writing…Islamic articles in English'.

Even though most of the interviewees were inspired to learn English for *da'wah*, some of the interviewees were ambivalent about the language. On the one hand, Ihsan, Alfian, Nabil, and Ubaid believed that English is the language of *kafir*[1]. This view was based on the geographical origin of English, being spoken in predominantly non-Muslim countries. Ihsan said: 'I consider English as the language of non-believers because the language indeed comes from the west.' On the other hand, they considered that in this globalized world English should not be considered dangerous for their faith. Nabil, for example, made it clear that as long as the language is not used for a purpose that is religiously forbidden, Muslims are allowed to learn English. He said: 'In my opinion, yes, it is the language of *kafir*. But it

[1] *Kafir* is an Arabic term referring to an individual who disbelieves in Allah, the one and only God in Islam.

depends on…the use of the language. If English is used for something bad, for example singing, it is not allowed.'

Responding to the same topic, Rizal commented: 'Nowadays, I don't really see English as the language of non-believers because we need English in our daily lives…there are also many Muslim brothers and sisters living there who also speak English.' Fahmi's opinion echoes that of Rizal. He said: '… I'd rather disagree because we should explain the religion (Islam) not only to other Muslims, but also to people from different cultural backgrounds, so it is necessary to speak the language.

As mentioned above, two of the students (Danis and Ubaid) showed overt disinterest in the English lesson and they confirmed their dislike in the interview. Danis said he particularly disliked English because 'pronunciation is difficult, and the spelling too', he said. He compared the status of English and Arabic, arguing that from a religious point of view, learning Arabic is compulsory but learning English is not. Quoting Omar ibn Khattab, a companion of Prophet Muhammad; he said *'ta'alamu al-Arobiyyata, fa innaha juz'un min deenikum'* (original Arabic) 'learn Arabic language because it is indeed part of your religion'. He also explained why he was not engaged in the English lesson he had just attended: he did not like the language, and he did not like the teaching methods. However, despite his dislike for English, he still believed that the language is important for Muslims in general, especially for Islamic *da'wah*. When asked if he ever thought of using English for *da'wah*, Danis said 'yes, actually I want to, but I don't have the tool (English).

Similarly, Ubaid also acknowledged the importance of English for Islamic *da'wah*, saying 'it can be used for *da'wah*…we can do *da'wah* with the non-believers' language'. However, when asked if learning English is important, he further explained that English is not important for him (at the individual level) and would not be useful for him in the future, unlike Arabic, and therefore he had no interest in learning English. He said, 'I don't know why after learning Arabic I became uninterested in learning English'. Asked why he was disengaged from the

English lesson, He said 'the teacher's way of teaching is fine…it's just because I don't like English'. He said that when the teacher was explaining about the lesson, he was playing with picture puzzles because he felt bored and did not understand the teacher's explanations.

5. Discussion

The main aim of this study was to describe the motivation to learn English of Muslim students in three Islamic boarding schools affiliated with different Islamic groups, using Dörnyei's (2009) L2MSS and taking into account some context-specific factors related to participants' Islamic religious identity. Our intention was to address the relative absence of research on L2 motivation and Islamic religious identity. Even where religious identity has been investigated previously, it only involved participants with a Christian background and did not take their religious conservativeness into account (Lepp-Kaethler & Dörnyei, 2013).

Our findings suggest that L2MSS is a useful tool to measure students' motivation in this unique global context, as a comparison of motivational factors across the three contexts can be obtained. This study confirms that particular contexts may determine the significance of each component. For example, the relatively high scores obtained for the Ideal L2 Self in the three pesantren indicates that the participants have a strong future English Self, in common with the other 32 previous studies where Ideal L2 Self is found to be the strongest component of L2 motivation (*rs* = .61) (Al-Hoorie, 2018). The findings in Pesantren A and B, where the Ought-to L2 Self is relatively high, also supports Kormos et al.'s (2011) proposal that the Ought-to L2 Self may have more importance in Asian contexts, but not in other contexts such as Europe or South America. The finding in Pesantren A, where L2 Learning Experience has a high mean, however, suggests that attitude to learning experience also matters, as it does in ANON's (2012) study in Indonesia, ANON's (2013) study in Pakistan, and Taguchi et al.'s (2009) in Iran and Japan.

Despite the significant difference of means between those obtained for Pesantren C and Pesantren A and B in almost all scales (see Table 2), all pesantren students seem to share the view that English is not a threat to Muslim identity. It is now nearly three decades since Pennycook (1994) wrote that '…there is a strong feeling that English is connected to forms of knowledge and culture that are oppositional or even threatening to an Islamic way of life' (p. 208). While these decades have of course witnessed a surge in extremist Islamic opposition to Judeo-Christian civilization, globalization has also brought about much greater mutual awareness and familiarity, and a general acknowledgement of English as a natural (if not neutral) medium for intercultural communication. This perhaps enables these young Muslims to draw a distinction between the language and the perceived negative cultural values associated with English. In other words, they are rejecting the notion of 'linguistic symbolism' (Mahboob, 2009, p. 178), the view that English is a symbol of Western, hedonic and un-Islamic identity and so should be avoided. The only condition, for some more conservative Muslims like Nabil, is that English is not used for something *haram*[2] like singing and dancing (Korpe, 2004).

Looking at this phenomenon through the L2MSS lens, Dörnyei (2005) pointed out that the more positive the learners' disposition towards the language being learned, the more likely they would put effort into learning the language. In our study, in order to have a positive view on English, the participants had to consider English and its perceived negative culture as two separate entities. The positive view on English was generated as they consider that at some point English can be utilised to serve Muslims' religious needs – for communicating with other Muslims living in different parts of the world. This echoes the findings in ANON's (2013) and Chowdhury's (2019) studies. In the former, the participants reject what they regard as a traditional Pakistani Muslim stance on English – that it is a danger to their

[2] Haram means religiously forbidden; thus it would be sinful to do an activity labeled as *haram.*

religious identity –and instead consider it a useful means by which they can present a better image of their faith to the world, and as something that their nation can be proud of. Similarly, Chowdhury's participants from a Bangladeshi traditional madrasa who aspired to become *tableeg* missionaries, 'spreading the message of Islam in the world' (p. 192), consider that learning English can be useful for communicating with Muslim foreigners coming to Bangladesh. This thought is very similar to that of Ihsan and Fahmi, who wanted to use English as a tool to conduct *da'wah* among Muslims worldwide.

The fact that the students from the three pesantren scored relatively high in the construct of English as a Medium to Propagate Islam is also worth discussing. This finding echoes other studies such as Erling et al. (2012) and Coleman (2010). Erling et al. reports that many Bangladeshi religious leaders see English as 'an Islamic language', in that it can be used for spreading 'the word of Allah' to the world (p. 15). In the context of *dini madrasas* in Pakistan, Coleman reported that English has been valued as a language through which they can communicate Islam to the world, i.e. using English to preach Islam and to show the world that Islam is a religion of peace.

One explanation for why these young Muslims now associate English with *da'wah* lies in how they themselves learn about Islam. It is clear from our data that the internet and/or social media are in wide use in Pesantren C, and the students report listening to Islamic talks by preachers of global repute. Much of this communication about Islam, and direct teaching, is done through the medium of English. It is therefore not so surprising that Ihsan says he would like to use English to conduct *da'wah* through the internet, and Rizal and Fahmi would like to spread the word of Allah by writing Islamic articles in English on social media. As Stockwell (2013) has argued, 'as technologies have become more sophisticated, the growing range of uses of technology in and out of the classroom increases the potential for enhanced motivation' (p. 156).

It is also important to note that the students were religiously inspired to learn English by their Islamic teachings, and as in Lepp-Kaethler and Dörnyei (2013), the role of a 'sacred text' is paramount. However, whereas in their study the participants related their motivation to learn English with the ability to read, understand, and translate the Bible, our participants were motivated by the desire to mediate the Arabic text of the Quran, Hadeeth, and other Islamic teachings to English-speakers. Maehr (2005) has argued that religion has the potential to motivate learning by shaping future components of the self, and we can see here evidence that these young Muslims' motivation for English is nurtured by their 'spiritual vision' (p. 184), or what we might term 'religious self-guides', that is, a future religious identity that they aspire to.

However, in Lepp-Kaethler and Dörnyei (2013)'s study the 'spiritual vision' had considerable long-term effects on their participants' language learning and achievement. This is not apparent among learners in Pesantren C, who exhibited relatively low 'intended learning effort' in the survey data, reported more negative L2 learning experiences and generally showed low levels of engagement in actual classroom study. The most commonly stated reason for learning English is that it is on the school curriculum. This certainly raises a question about how far their 'religious self-guide' actually motivates learning behaviour. Are these noble ambitions to propagate the faith with English genuine statements of intent, or more a way of rationalizing the fact that they *have* to learn English (in addition to the much more popular language Arabic) and they do not particularly enjoy it? The concept of rationalisation (Beauvois and Joule, 1996) is closely related to the notion of cognitive dissonance in the field of behavioural psychology, which Festinger (1957) defined as the feeling of emotional ambivalence accompanying a certain behaviour, arising out of a conflict in beliefs or values. People tend to resolve the conflict by adjusting their beliefs or values, providing a justification for the problematic behaviour so that it no longer feels dissonant. In this case, Pesantren C students may appeal to *da'wah* as a way of resolving feelings of

uneasiness with the language, and frustration with the language learning process which offers dull classes and little sense of progress. As Harmon-Jones and Harmon-Jones (2007) point out, '[d]issonance should be greater, the greater the unpleasant effort required to obtain the outcome' (p. 8). Of course, it is possible that this rationale for study of English – *da'wah* – is a prominent discourse within the pesantren, but since we did not interview teachers or other school authorities we cannot be certain of that. It is likely though that such rationalizations, being focussed on explaining or justifying current behaviour rather than energizing new paths of activity, will have weaker motivational power than clear and accessible visions of a future self.

6. Conclusion

The study has some limitations which should be noted. Firstly, no claims can be made that the institutions are representative of their religious affiliations, unless more schools with the same affiliations are involved in larger future studies. Secondly, because we used a 4-point Likert scale, the participants could not express a neutral option, which may have forced some participants to choose a response. Thirdly, because no regression analysis is presented here, we are not able to discuss the precise relationship between predictor variables and the criterion measure nor compare the results with previous studies. Fourthly, we have acknowledged that our conception of religious identity is a narrow one, and we only touch tangentially on important dimensions of our participants' lives like ideology and capital.

However, the current study still offers robust evidence for the presence of religious elements in students' motivation to learn English in the three Islamic institutions. Few of the students believe that English is a threat to their religious identity, but rather it can be utilised as a tool for Islamic proselytization. The qualitative analysis also offers an insight into how the students relate their purpose to learn English to their religious future self-guides – as a lingua franca for Muslims and as a medium for *da'wah*. These findings suggest that to some

extent religious vision does play a role in shaping L2 learner's motivation, supporting Maehr's (2005) claim that '[r]eligion demonstrably has been, and remains, a powerful motivational force in the lives of many people' (p. 141), though in our case the motivational power of religious vision remains vague because their reported and visible learning effort is low. We argue that some of the more conservative religious students are in a state of dissonance, feeling ambivalent about both the fact and the process of learning English; viewing it as worthy preparation for Islamic proselytization at least makes it feel less like pointless drudgery.

Stakeholders in Islamic educational institutions should take note of this finding. They can raise students' awareness of the importance of mastering English for religious purposes, i.e. for communicating with other Muslims worldwide and for *da'wah*. Then teachers like Mr Pramono can employ religion-related motivational strategies to increase the students' interest in learning English; for example, supplementing general English course books with texts designed for Muslim readers, or even with extracts from sacred texts; these would potentially make appealing sources for reading and listening comprehension, while productive tasks could be oriented towards exchange of views about Islam among the Believers, or communicating Islamic values to Non-Believers. This would bring a much needed sense of authenticity to the English classroom. Ushioda (2013) argues that L2 learners' motivation is usually bound up with 'how they wish to see themselves – that is, part of their desired identity or sense of self' (p.9). Therefore, if the ambivalence toward learning English noted above can be diminished, the students would not feel any conflict between their English self and their religious self, and this could eventually engender real learning effort in and out of class.

Tables

Table 1 Means and Standard deviations of motivational factors and religious conservatism in the three institutions.

		Motivational Scale Scores	
Constructs	*n*	*M*	*SD*
Ideal L2 Self	365	3.03	.647
Ought to L2 Self	365	2.64	.615
L2 Learning Experience	365	2.60	.596
Attitude towards English	365	2.66	.618
Milieu	365	2.60	.548
Intended Learning Effort	365	2.69	.471
English as a Threat to Muslim Identity	365	1.73	.527
English as a Medium to Propagate Islam	365	3.18	.506
Religious Conservatism	365	2.72	.898

Table 2 Comparison of the English motivational scales for the three pesantren institutions (Pesantren A, B, and C)

Variables	Pesantren	Means	*SD*	*F*	Sequence	ηp2
Ideal L2 Self	A	3.22	0.52	54.08*	C<B,A	0.23
	B	3.32	0.57			
	C	2.64	0.60			
Ought to L2 Self	A	2.78	0.48	64.98*	C<B,A	0.26
	B	2.98	0.58			
	C	2.25	0.52			
L2 Learning Experience	A	2.93	0.47	32.25*	A<C,B	0.15
	B	2.57	0.59			
	C	2.37	0.58			
Attitude towards English	A	2.84	0.46	38.47*	C<B,A	0.2
	B	2.87	0.66			
	C	2.33	0.55			
Milieu	A	2.76	0.50	45.72*	C<B,A	0.3
	B	2.82	0.54			
	C	2.29	0.43			
Intended Learning Effort	A	2.82	0.37	31.04*	C<B,A	0.15
	B	2.83	0.47			
	C	2.45	0.46			
English as a Threat to Muslim Identity	A	1.67	0.51	4.84	–	0.03
	B	1.66	0.53			
	C	1.84	0.52			
English as a Medium to Propagate Islam	A	3.11	0.54	3.79	–	0.02
	B	3.28	0.48			
	C	3.14	0.49			
Religious Conservatism	A	1.69	0.40	673.11	C<B<A	0.8
	B	2.62	0.50			
	C	3.63	0.34			

'<' indicates significant difference, ',' indicates non-significant difference.

*. The mean difference is significant at the .006 level.

Table 3 Participants' stated purposes to learn English

Main reasons for learning English		Responses	Percentages (%)
Pesantren A			
1	International language	42	31
2	For studying abroad	34	25
3	Desire to master English	30	22
4	Important/interesting language	11	12
5	School subject	11	8
6	*Da'wah*	3	2
	Total	131	100
Pesantren B			
1	For studying or going abroad	33	25
2	International Language	31	23
3	Important/interesting language	24	18
4	Desire to master English	17	13
5	*Da'wah*	16	12
6	School subject	12	9
	Total	133	100
Pesantren C			
1	School subject / curriculum	44	31
2	*Da'wah*	28	20
3	Important/interesting language	26	19
4	International language	17	12
5	Desire to master English	13	9
6	No interest in English	6	4
7	Avoiding non-Muslims deception	4	3
8	Study/going abroad	2	1
	Total	140	100

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Appendices

Appendix A

English Learning Motivation in Indonesian Pesantren Schools Questionnaire (with English translation)

A. Open question

What is your main reason to study English?

B. Closed items

Ideal L2 self

B5 Saya sering membayangkan diri saya sebagai seseorang yang bisa berbahasa Inggris.
I often imagine myself as someone who speaks English.

B12 Saya bisa membayangkan diri berkuliah dalam bahasa Inggris di universitas di luar negeri
I can imagine myself studying in English at an overseas university.

B18 Di karir saya di masa depan, saya akan fasih berbicara bahasa Inggris.
In my future career, I see myself as fluent in English.

B26 Apa yang ingin saya lakukan di masa depan membutuhkan bahasa Inggris.
The things I want to do in the future involve English.

B4 Saya sangat ingin menjadi orang yang mahir berbahasa Inggris.
I truly desire to become a person who's competent at English.

Ought-to L2 self

B23 Saya harus belajar bahasa Inggris agar tidak ketinggalan di tempat saya bekerja nanti.
I have to learn English so I don't get left behind in my work in future.

B13 Penting bagi saya untuk mempelajari bahasa Inggris agar dinilai cakap oleh guru saya.
Studying English is important to me to gain the approval of my teachers.

B29 Orang tua dan keluarga saya meyakini bahwa saya harus mempelajari bahasa Inggris agar menjadi orang berpendidikan.
My parents and family believe that I must study English to be an educated person.

B33 Saya merasa memiliki kewajiban untuk mempelajari bahasa Inggris dengan baik.
I feel a duty to learn English well.

B6 Penting bagi saya untuk mempelajari bahasa Inggris agar dinilai cakap oleh orang-orang di sekitar saya.
Studying English is important to me to gain the approval of the people around me.

L2 Learning experience in school

B7 Saya menyukai suasana pembelajaran bahasa Inggris di sekolah saya.
I like the atmosphere of my school English classes.

B14 Di sekolah saya merasa bosan mempelajari bahasa Inggris. (R)
I feel bored studying English at school. (R)

B8 Guru saya membuat pembelajaran bahasa Inggris menjadi sangat menarik.
My school English teachers make lessons really interesting.

B24 Saya sangat menyukai pelajaran bahasa Inggris.
I enjoy my English lessons.

Attitude towards English

B36 Saya sangat senang berbicara menggunakan bahasa Inggris.
I enjoy speaking English.

B1 Bahasa Inggris sangatlah menarik.
English is interesting.

B38 Bahasa Inggris sangat sulit. (R)
English is a difficult language. (R)

B22 Bahasa Inggris adalah salah satu hal penting dalam hidup saya.
English is one of the important things in my life.

B3 Saya tertarik mempelajari tentang budaya dari negara yang berbahasa Inggris.
I'm interested to learn about English-speaking cultures.

Milieu

B31 Kebanyakan teman saya beranggapan bahwa mempelajari bahasa Inggris hanya membuang-buang waktu. (R)
Most of my friends think that learning English is a waste of time. (R)

B16 Teman saya di asrama menganggap bahasa Inggris sebagai mata pelajaran yang penting.
My friends in the dormitory consider English important school subjects.

B21 Kebijakan di asrama saya mendukung pembelajaran bahasa Inggris.
My dormitory's policy support English language learning.

B10 Ustadz saya di pesantren menganggap penting untuk mempelajarai bahasa Inggris.
My ustadz in the Pesantren think that learning English is important.

Intended learning effort (Criterion measure)

B28 Saya selalu berusaha keras dalam mengerjakan PR pelajaran bahasa Inggris.
I put a great deal of effort into my homework in English subject.

B17 Jika di sekolah ada ekstrakurikuler pelajaran bahasa Inggris di kemudin hari, maka saya akan mengikutinya.
If English extracurricular activity was offered at my school in the future, I would like to participate.

B19 Saya merasa telah berusaha sebaik mungkin dalam mempelajari bahasa Inggris.
I think that I am really doing my best to learn English.

B35 Saya rela menghabiskan banyak waktu untuk mempelajari bahasa Inggris.
I would like to spend lots of time studying English.

B2 Penting bagi saya untuk belajar Bahasa Inggris.
It is important for me to learn English.

B30 Jika saya bisa mengakses saluran YouTube dan film-film berbahasa Inggris, saya akan sering-sering menontonnya.
If I have access to English-speaking YouTube channels and movies, I would try to watch them often.

English as a threat to Muslim identity

B25 Penggunaan bahasa Inggris mengancam identitas saya sebagai muslim.
The use of English threatens my Muslim identity.

B11 Belajar bahasa Inggris bisa membuat Muslim terkena pengaruh budaya tidak Islami.
Learning English leads to Muslims being exposed to un-Islamic culture.

B27 Menurut saya bahasa Inggris adalah salah satu alat penyebaran nilai-nilai tidak Islami.
I think English is one of the vehicles of the spread of non-Islamic values.

B34 Saya rasa belajar bahasa Inggris bisa membahayakan iman seorang Muslim.
I believe that learning English can harm Muslims' religiosity.

English as a medium to propagate Islam

B15 Saya belajar bahasa Inggris karena saya ingin menyebarkan Islam ke non-Muslim.
I learn English because I want to propagate Islam to non-Muslims.

B37 Belajar bahasa Inggris adalah suatu keharusan untuk menyebarkan Islam ke dunia Barat.
Learning English is a must to spread Islam to the West.

B9 Pemahaman saya tentang Islam mengharuskan saya untuk belajar bahasa Inggris.
My understanding of Islam requires me to learn English.

B32 Belajar bahasa Inggris bermanfaat untuk menyebarkan nilai-nilai Islam ke seluruh dunia.
Learning English is beneficial for the promotion of Islamic values to the world.

B20 Saya belajar bahasa Inggris agar saya bisa memposting sisi positif Islam di media sosial.
I learn English so that I can post the positive sides of Islam on social media.

Religious Conservativeness

C1 Saya suka mendengarkan musik.
I like listening to Music. (Dummy Item)

C2 Mendengarkan music dilarang dalam agama Islam.
I think listening to music is religiously forbidden.

C3 Saya suka lagu-lagu Islami.
I like Islamic songs. (Dummy Item)

C4 Menurut saya lagu-lagu Islami sebenarnya dilarang dalam Islam.
I think nasheed (Islamic songs) are forbidden in Islam.

C5 Saya berusaya sebaik mungkin untuk mengikuti Al-Qur'an dan Hadits.
I do my best to follow the Qur'an and Hadith. (Dummy Item)

C6 Orang Islam seharusnya hanya berpegang kepada Al-Qur'an dan Hadits saja, tidak yang lain.
Muslims should only hold on to Quran and Hadith, nothing else.

C7 Saya berusaha sebaik mungkin mengikuti ajaran Nabi Muhammad SAW.
I try my best to follow the teaching of my Prophet (pbuh). (Dummy Item)

C8 Segala praktek agama yang tidak dicontohkan oleh Nabi adalah bid'ah.
Any religious practice that is not exemplified by the Prophet is an innovation (bid'a).

C9 Setiap bid'ah adalah sesat.
Every bid'a is misguidance.

C10 Menurut saya praktek-praktek sufi (contoh taqiqah, zikir bersama, diba') adalah hal yang baik.
I think Sufism practices (tariqa, dhikr, diba') are good. (Reverse)

C11 Menurut saya praktek-praktek sufi sebenarnya dilarang dalam Islam.
I think Sufism practice is actually forbidden in Islam.

C12 Menurut saya mengunjungi makam ulama atau wali untuk mencari berkah dari Allah adalah hal yang baik.
I think it's good to visit the graves of deceased Ulama to seek for blessings from God. (Reverse)

C13 Menurut saya mengunjungi makam ulama untuk mencari berkah adalah hal yang dilarang dalam Islam.

I think visiting the graves of deceased ulama (Muslim scholars) to seek for God's blessing is forbidden in Islam.

Appendix B

Interview schedule – English learning motivation and religious identity

1. What do you think about your school in general?
2. Do you like English? Why? Why not?
3. How is your English competence? Do you feel you make good progress?
4. Do you think it's the language of the westerners? Is it the language of the *kafir* people?
5. What do you think about British or American people and culture?
6. Is English is important for you? If yes, why? If no, why?
7. What's your purpose to learn English?
8. During the class observation I noticed you……-ing why did you do that?
9. What will you do after you graduate from this Pesantren?