



Recontextualizing the Sorogan Method: Bilingual Development of Minhajut Tholibin and Its Impact on Students' English Literacy and Classical Fiqh Comprehension

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Abstract

This study aims to analyze the effectiveness of the implementation of the Sorogan Method in developing instructional materials for the classical Islamic text *Minhajut Tholibin*, transforming the original Arabic text glossed in Indonesian (*makna gandul*) into an English version glossed in English and subsequently translated back into Indonesian, as well as examining its implications for enhancing students' competencies. This research employed a qualitative approach with a case study design at Pondok Pesantren Al-Khoirot, involving first and second-grade students of Madrasah Diniyah Tsanawiyah. Data were collected through participant observation, in depth interviews, and document analysis, and were systematically analyzed using thematic analysis techniques. The findings reveal that the implementation of bilingual instructional material development through the Sorogan-based learning model significantly enhances students' learning motivation, active English proficiency, reading and translation skills of English-language classical texts, and overall academic literacy. Furthermore, the method strengthens students' conceptual understanding of classical fiqh, improves textual analytical accuracy, deepens academic vocabulary mastery, and fosters greater learner autonomy and self-confidence in the learning process.

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INTRODUCTION

In an era of globalization, Islamic educational institutions are increasingly challenged to integrate classical religious scholarship with contemporary linguistic competencies, particularly English proficiency (Afandy et al., 2026; Azaim et al.,

2025). This study is important because it addresses the growing societal demand for graduates who are both grounded in classical Islamic knowledge and capable of engaging in global academic discourse. The reason lies in the expanding transnational networks of Islamic scholarship, digital knowledge circulation, and the dominance of English in higher education and research publication. Evidence from current educational trends shows that students with strong bilingual literacy possess greater access to international scholarship, academic mobility, and cross cultural dialogue (Bisri et al., 2026; Muhlis et al., 2025). However, many traditional Islamic boarding schools continue to rely on monolingual pedagogical models that limit students' global engagement. Therefore, research that bridges classical textual traditions with bilingual literacy development is socially significant, as it contributes to educational reform, intellectual inclusivity, and the empowerment of santri within both local and global knowledge communities.

Despite the importance of integrating religious mastery and global competencies (Antika et al., 2026; Arisih & Muhammad, 2026), a persistent problem remains within many pesantren based educational systems (Hasbiyalloh et al., 2025; Maqfiroh & Sumarni, Yustina, 2025): the separation between classical Islamic text learning and modern language acquisition (Muhlis et al., 2025; Zaironi & Husni, 2026). The Sorogan Method has long been recognized as an effective individualized approach for studying kitab kuning, yet it is rarely adapted to foster bilingual or multilingual literacy. As a result, students often achieve competence in reading Arabic texts with Indonesian glosses but struggle to access broader academic resources in English. This limitation restricts their participation in global scholarly conversations and reduces their competitiveness in higher education contexts. Furthermore, instructional materials are typically designed for traditional comprehension rather than cross linguistic transfer. Consequently, there is a pressing need to re examine how classical pedagogical traditions can be revitalized to respond to contemporary educational challenges without compromising their epistemological foundations.

Field observations at Pondok Pesantren Al-Khoirot indicate an emerging pedagogical innovation that attempts to address this gap through bilingual instructional material development. The classical text *Minhajut Tholibin* is not only studied in its original Arabic form with Indonesian gloss (makna gandul), but also reconstructed into an English glossed version and translated back into Indonesian. This layered linguistic process transforms traditional text study into a multidimensional literacy practice. Students in the first and second grades of

Madrasah Diniyah Tsanawiyah actively engage in reading, translating, and explaining passages in English, demonstrating increased motivation and confidence. The phenomenon reflects a dynamic reinterpretation of the Sorogan Method, shifting from a solely traditional recitation model to a bilingual analytical framework. Such practice illustrates the possibility of harmonizing pesantren heritage with global linguistic competencies while maintaining fidelity to classical fiqh scholarship.

Previous studies on the Sorogan Method primarily emphasize its effectiveness in enhancing individualized learning, textual accuracy, and teacher student interaction within traditional pesantren contexts (Hasbiyalloh et al., 2025; Muhlis et al., 2025; Zaironi & Husni, 2026). researchers have highlighted its role in preserving sanad based transmission and deep textual comprehension (Noor, 2020; Rachmawan, 2024). Meanwhile, research on bilingual education underscores the cognitive and academic benefits of cross linguistic transfer, particularly in improving literacy and metalinguistic awareness (Chung et al., 2019; Zhang et al., 2017). Studies in Islamic education reform have also advocated for curriculum integration between religious sciences and modern subjects (Fakhridana et al., 2026; Nia Hasanah, Muchammad Syamsul Ma'arif, Nurul Ma'rifah, 2025; Syauqillah et al., 2023). However, these strands of research largely remain disconnected. Investigations into Sorogan rarely explore its adaptation for bilingual literacy development, while bilingual education research seldom engages with classical Islamic text pedagogy. This fragmentation suggests a conceptual gap between traditional instructional models and contemporary linguistic innovation.

Furthermore, existing research tends to focus either on Arabic-Indonesian translation practices in kitab kuning studies or on English language acquisition in secular educational settings. Limited attention has been given to the transformation of classical fiqh texts into bilingual learning resources that systematically integrate Arabic, English, and Indonesian within a single pedagogical framework. Empirical evidence regarding the effectiveness of such integration, particularly through the Sorogan Method, remains scarce. Few qualitative case studies have examined how this approach influences students' motivation, analytical precision, and academic literacy simultaneously. This research gap is significant because it concerns not only language pedagogy but also the epistemological continuity of Islamic scholarship. Addressing this gap

contributes to a more holistic understanding of how traditional and modern educational paradigms can be synergized.

The novelty of this study lies in its conceptualization of Sorogan as a bilingual textual pedagogy rather than merely a traditional recitation technique. By transforming *Minhajut Tholibin* from an Arabic text glossed in Indonesian into an English glossed and retranslated instructional resource, this research proposes a multilayered literacy model rooted in pesantren tradition. This state-of-the-art approach positions classical fiqh study as a platform for active English acquisition, academic vocabulary development, and critical textual analysis. Unlike prior studies that treat religious and linguistic competencies separately, this research integrates them within a single instructional design. Such innovation is crucial for ensuring that pesantren education remains contextually relevant while preserving its intellectual authenticity.

Based on these considerations, this study addresses the following research problem: How effective is the adaptation of the Sorogan Method in developing bilingual instructional materials for *Minhajut Tholibin*, and how does it influence students' competencies? The provisional argument of this research is that integrating bilingual glossing and translation into Sorogan-based learning significantly enhances students' motivation, English proficiency, academic literacy, and conceptual understanding of classical fiqh. By empirically examining this model through a qualitative case study, the research contributes theoretically to Islamic pedagogy and practically to curriculum innovation in pesantren education. Ultimately, it argues that pedagogical revitalization grounded in tradition can serve as a strategic pathway toward globally engaged yet epistemologically rooted Islamic scholarship.

RESEARCH METHOD

This study employed a qualitative approach with a case study (Gammelgaard, 2017; Viera, 2023) design to obtain an in depth understanding of the adaptation of the Sorogan Method in developing bilingual instructional materials for *Minhajut Tholibin*. A qualitative case study was selected because the research seeks to explore processes, meanings, pedagogical interactions, and contextual dynamics rather than to measure variables statistically. The case study design enables a holistic investigation of instructional practices within their natural setting, capturing the complexity of bilingual glossing, translation activities, and teacher–student engagement. This design is appropriate for

examining how traditional pedagogical models are recontextualized to address contemporary linguistic demands. By focusing intensively on a bounded system, the study generates rich, contextualized insights into instructional innovation in Islamic boarding school education.

The research was conducted at Pondok Pesantren Al-Khoirot. The site was purposively selected because it has implemented an innovative bilingual adaptation of the Sorogan Method in teaching *Minhajut Tholibin* to first and second-grade students of Madrasah Diniyah Tsanawiyah. This pesantren represents a relevant and information rich case, as it integrates classical Arabic text study with English glossing and translation practices. The institution maintains a strong tradition of kitab kuning learning while simultaneously encouraging English language development, making it a strategic setting to examine the intersection of tradition and modernity. The accessibility of instructional activities and the willingness of teachers and students to participate further supported the selection of this location.

Data were collected through participant observation, in depth interviews, and document analysis (Khan et al., 2025; Mbanaso et al., 2023). Participant observation allowed the researcher to directly examine classroom interactions, bilingual glossing practices, and the implementation of the Sorogan Method. In depth interviews were conducted with teachers and selected students to explore their experiences, perceptions, and reflections regarding bilingual instructional development. Document analysis included lesson plans, annotated texts, students' translation outputs, and institutional records related to curriculum design. The triangulation of these techniques ensured comprehensive data capture, enabling the researcher to understand both pedagogical processes and learning outcomes. Data collection was conducted systematically to ensure credibility and contextual depth.

Data analysis followed an interactive model consisting of data condensation, data display, and conclusion drawing/verification (Mbanaso et al., 2023; Ravindran, 2019). Data condensation involved selecting, focusing, simplifying, and transforming raw field data into meaningful categories related to bilingual pedagogy and student competence. Data display was conducted through thematic matrices and narrative descriptions to facilitate pattern identification. Verification involved continuously comparing findings with field evidence to ensure consistency and validity. To ensure trustworthiness, the study applied triangulation of sources and techniques, member checking with participants,

prolonged engagement in the field, and peer debriefing. These strategies strengthened the credibility, dependability, confirmability, and transferability of the research findings.

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

RESULT

Bilingual Development of Minhajut Tholibin and Its Impact on Students' English Literacy and Classical Fiqh Comprehension through Metode Sorogan

The recontextualization process of the Sorogan Method in the development of bilingual instructional materials for the classical text *Minhāj al-Ṭālibīn* is carried out by transforming Arabic texts annotated with *makna gandul* (Indonesian glosses) into Arabic texts accompanied by English glossaries, which are then translated back into Indonesian. This recontextualization functions not only as a pedagogical strategy but also as a reflective learning mechanism that integrates academic English literacy with a deeper engagement with classical fiqh understanding. In practice, this approach is implemented through individual Sorogan sessions, in which students read, interpret, explain, and account for their understanding directly before the ustadz (teacher), resulting in dual internalization processes: linguistic and conceptual.

Table 1. Interview Data

The following table summarizes interview data representing the related sub-findings:

Interview Excerpt	Indicator	Informant
"I now understand the meaning of the text not only in Indonesian but also in English, which makes me more careful in grasping its fiqh implications."	Precision in fiqh understanding and bilingual literacy	Grade II Student
"Sorogan using English makes me actively search for vocabulary and legal meanings, rather than merely copying interpretations."	Learner autonomy and active literacy	Grade I Student
"Students become more critical because they must re-explain the text in two languages."	Textual analysis and conceptual reflection	Ustadz (Instructor)
"This method trains students to understand linguistic structure alongside legal substance."	Integration of language and fiqh comprehension	Head of Madrasah

The table demonstrates that the recontextualization of Sorogan through the development of bilingual instructional materials encourages a shift in students' roles from passive recipients of meaning to active learning agents. The statement from the Grade II student emphasizes that the use of English as an

intermediary language strengthens epistemic caution in interpreting fiqh texts. Language no longer functions merely as a translation tool but becomes an instrument for meaning clarification and the verification of Islamic legal concepts.

Furthermore, the perspectives of the ustadz and the head of the madrasah indicate that bilingual Sorogan introduces an additional cognitive layer into the learning process. Students are required to simultaneously comprehend Arabic, English, and Indonesian linguistic structures, thereby enhancing both the accuracy of textual analysis and the depth of fiqh understanding. This finding suggests that the method does not obscure the traditional scholarly practices of pesantren education; rather, it expands its literacy horizon in a contextual and academically grounded manner.

Research observations conducted at Pondok Pesantren Al-Khoirot reveal that students participating in bilingual Sorogan exhibit greater confidence when reading classical texts, demonstrate the ability to independently correct interpretations, and actively engage in discussions concerning English fiqh terminology. The researcher also noted an increased frequency of students consulting fiqh dictionaries and supplementary references, indicating the emergence of a culture of academic literacy and self-directed learning.

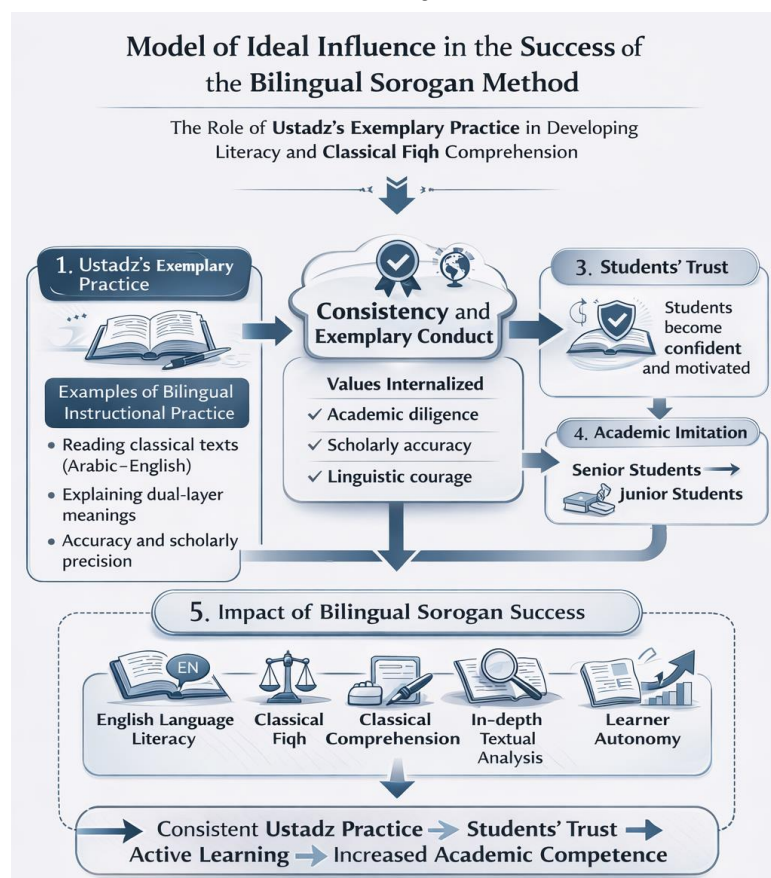


Figure 1. Model of Ideal Influence in the Success of the Bilingual Sorogan Method

Overall, the findings indicate that the recontextualization of the Sorogan Method through the development of bilingual instructional materials for *Minhāj al-Ṭālibīn* contributes significantly to the enhancement of students' English literacy, the precision of classical fiqh textual analysis, as well as learner autonomy and academic self-confidence. The pattern emerging from the data suggests a linear relationship between the intensity of bilingual Sorogan practice and the improvement of students' linguistic and conceptual competencies. The more actively students engage in cross linguistic meaning making and explanation processes, the higher their level of fiqh comprehension and academic literacy.

Table 2. Influence The Development of Minhajut Tholibin Bilingualism

Informant Position	Interview Excerpt	Indicator
Ustadz (Instructor)	"I must set an example by reading and explaining the text correctly in two languages."	Academic role modeling
Head of Madrasah	"Teachers must be consistent so that students trust this method."	Consistency of values and methodology
Senior Student	"We imitate the way the ustadz explains fiqh in English."	Internalization of role modeling
Junior Student	"If the ustadz is confident, we are also confident to try."	Trust and motivation

The Ideal Influence table indicates that the success of bilingual Sorogan is largely determined by the pedagogical role modeling of the ustadz. Consistency in practicing bilingual reading and explanation builds students' epistemic trust in the method. This role modeling functions as an ideal influence that instills values of intellectual rigor, scholarly precision, and linguistic courage.

Moreover, ideal influence is also reflected in the process of academic imitation among students. Senior students act as value mediators for junior students, fostering a collective learning culture grounded in exemplary practice. Consequently, bilingual Sorogan not only enhances individual competencies but also constructs a reflective, sustainable, and globally oriented fiqh learning ecosystem.

The overall data pattern demonstrates that the ideal influence of the ustadz → student trust → learning motivation → improved literacy and fiqh understanding forms a consistent causal chain. When academic role modeling is concretely manifested, bilingual Sorogan functions optimally as a transformative instrument in the teaching and learning of classical Islamic texts.

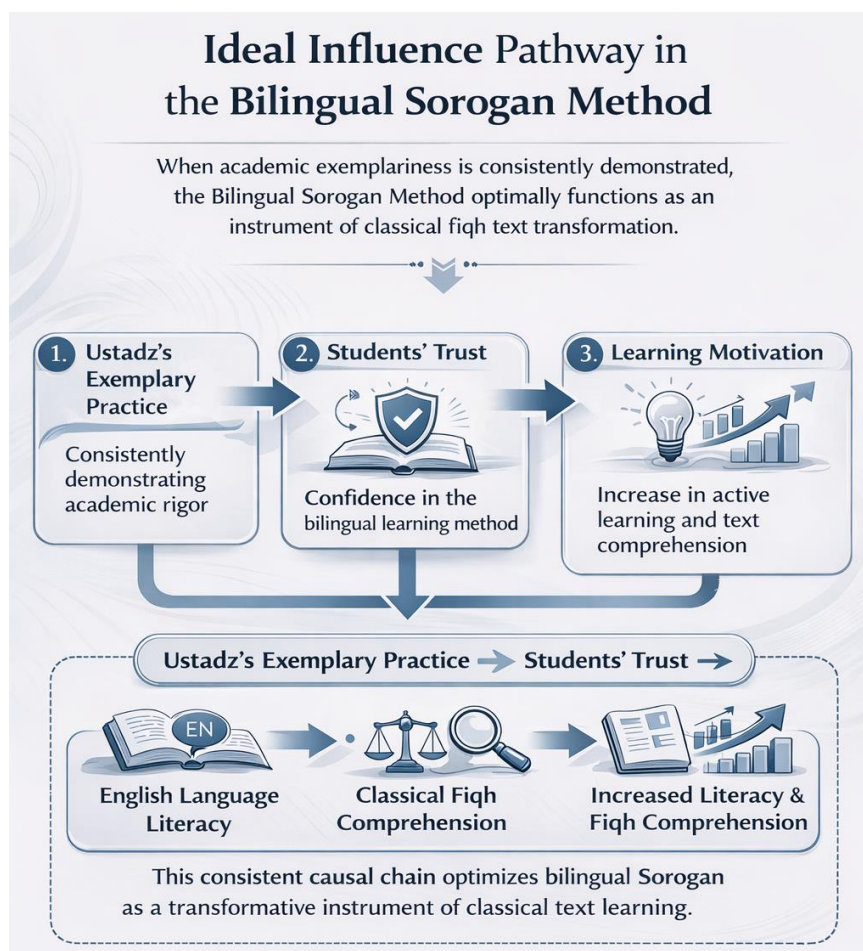


Figure 2. Model of Ustadzs' Ideal Influence on Students' Trust, Learning Motivation, and Fiqh Literacy

DISCUSSION

The findings of this study align with and extend existing scholarship on the Sorogan method as a traditional pesantren pedagogy emphasizing individualized guidance and deep textual engagement (Muhlis et al., 2025; Subagyo & Arifin, 2025). Previous studies have highlighted Sorogan's effectiveness in cultivating accuracy in classical text comprehension through direct teacher student interaction (Mardani, 2025). However, unlike conventional Sorogan practices that rely primarily on Arabic Indonesian translation, this study demonstrates that recontextualizing Sorogan through bilingual instructional material development introduces an additional epistemic layer. The integration of English as an intermediary language differentiates this study from earlier research by showing that bilingual mediation can enhance not only linguistic competence but also conceptual rigor in fiqh interpretation, suggesting an expanded pedagogical potential of traditional methods in contemporary educational contexts.

From a theoretical perspective, the findings resonate with constructivist learning theory and bilingual education frameworks, which emphasize active meaning making and cognitive engagement across linguistic systems (Nuri, 2025; Song et al., 2023; SWARGIARY, 2024). The requirement for students to process Arabic, English, and Indonesian simultaneously fosters deeper cognitive elaboration and metalinguistic awareness. This supports prior research indicating that bilingual learning environments can strengthen analytical precision and conceptual understanding (Bairy & Inamdar, 2025; Buxton et al., 2019). Moreover, the emergence of learner autonomy and epistemic caution observed in this study adds nuance to existing theories of Islamic education by illustrating how classical pedagogical models can be theoretically reinterpreted to support higher-order thinking and reflective learning without compromising their traditional epistemological foundations.

The study also contributes to leadership and pedagogical literature through its identification of ideal influence as a critical mechanism in bilingual Sorogan implementation. Consistent with transformational leadership theory, particularly the concept of idealized influence, the ustadz's academic role modeling plays a decisive role in building students' epistemic trust and motivation (Mathari, 2025; Syauqillah et al., 2023; Zaironi, 2025). While prior pesantren studies often emphasize authority-based transmission, the present findings suggest a shift toward trust based pedagogical leadership, where consistency and scholarly exemplarity encourage active student participation. This refines existing understandings of teacher authority in Islamic education by positioning it as relational, performative, and pedagogically generative rather than merely hierarchical.

Practically, the findings offer important implications for pesantren curriculum development and instructional design. The bilingual recontextualization of classical texts demonstrates that English can be strategically integrated into religious instruction without diluting fiqh substance. Instead, it enhances academic literacy, independent learning habits, and students' confidence in engaging with global scholarly discourse. This model provides a viable framework for pesantren seeking to balance tradition and modernity, particularly in responding to global demands for multilingual competence while maintaining fidelity to classical Islamic scholarship.

Finally, the linear causal pattern identified ideal influence leading to trust, motivation, and enhanced literacy highlights the transformative capacity of

pedagogical consistency in traditional learning environments. When academic role modeling is concretely enacted, bilingual Sorogan functions not merely as a methodological adaptation but as a transformative learning ecosystem. This finding challenges dichotomies between traditional and modern pedagogies, suggesting instead that recontextualization grounded in pedagogical integrity can serve as a sustainable pathway for advancing both linguistic literacy and classical fiqh comprehension in contemporary Islamic education.

CONCLUSION

This study concludes that recontextualizing the Sorogan Method through the bilingual development of Minhāj al-Ṭālibīn offers a meaningful pedagogical innovation that strengthens both English academic literacy and classical fiqh comprehension among pesantren students. The most significant insight derived from this research is that the integration of English as an intermediary linguistic layer does not dilute traditional Islamic scholarship; rather, it enhances epistemic caution, analytical precision, and reflective engagement with classical texts. The bilingual Sorogan model facilitates dual internalization linguistic and conceptual while transforming students from passive recipients of meaning into active, self-regulated learners.

In terms of scholarly contribution, this study advances the field of Islamic education by demonstrating how a traditional pedagogical method can be theoretically and practically reinterpreted within a bilingual learning framework. It contributes to existing literature by bridging pesantren based pedagogy, bilingual education theory, and idealized influence in instructional leadership. By empirically showing the causal relationship between ustadz role modeling, student trust, learning motivation, and improved literacy outcomes, this research provides a novel conceptual model for understanding instructional transformation in classical religious education contexts.

Nevertheless, this study is subject to several limitations. Its qualitative case study design and focus on a single pesantren context limit the generalizability of the findings. Additionally, the study did not quantitatively measure learning outcomes or compare bilingual Sorogan with other instructional models. Future research is therefore encouraged to employ mixed-methods or experimental designs across diverse pesantren settings, to examine longitudinal impacts, and to explore the applicability of bilingual Sorogan in other classical Islamic

disciplines. Such studies would further strengthen the empirical foundation and scalability of this pedagogical model.

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