

# Islamic Moral Education through Linguistic Habituation: Local Wisdom, Polite Speech, and the Formation of *Adab* as a Hidden Curriculum

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**Abstract:** This study investigates Islamic moral education through linguistic habituation grounded in local wisdom, emphasizing polite speech as a hidden curriculum for the formation of *adab*. The research was conducted as an in-depth case study involving 18 informants (one religious leader, three teachers, two administrators, and twelve students). Data were generated through participant observation, in-depth interviews, and analysis of institutional language practices. Data credibility was ensured through source and method triangulation as well as member checking. Thematic analysis using an interactive model reveals that polite language is not treated as formal linguistic instruction but operates as a culturally embedded pedagogical practice within everyday Islamic boarding school life. Linguistic habituation functions as a hidden curriculum that shapes moral dispositions, including verbal politeness, emotional self-control, humility (*tawadhu'*), and respect toward teachers and peers. Continuous exposure to polite speech fosters an orderly, respectful, and low-conflict communicative environment, strengthening social harmony among students. This study contributes conceptually by positioning language as a pedagogical mechanism for Islamic moral education and proposes a locally grounded yet contextually adaptable model for diverse Islamic educational settings.

**Abstrak:** Penelitian ini mengkaji pendidikan *adab Islami* melalui habituasi linguistik berbasis kearifan lokal dengan menempatkan bahasa santun sebagai hidden curriculum pendidikan Islam. Penelitian ini dilakukan dalam bentuk studi kasus mendalam dengan melibatkan 18 informan, terdiri atas 1 kiai, 3 ustaz, 2 pengurus pesantren, dan 12 santri. Data diperoleh melalui observasi partisipatif, wawancara mendalam, dan telaah praktik kebahasaan institusional. Keabsahan data dijamin melalui triangulasi sumber dan metode serta member checking. Analisis tematik berbasis model interaktif menunjukkan bahwa pembiasaan bahasa santun tidak diposisikan sebagai pembelajaran bahasa formal, melainkan sebagai praktik kultural yang terintegrasi dalam kehidupan sehari-hari pesantren. Habitasi linguistik berfungsi sebagai hidden curriculum yang membentuk *adab lisan, pengendalian emosi, sikap tawadhu', dan penghormatan terhadap guru serta sesama santri*. Pembiasaan ini menciptakan pola komunikasi yang tertib, santun, dan minim konflik, sekaligus memperkuat harmoni sosial. Penelitian ini menegaskan bahasa sebagai mekanisme pedagogis pendidikan *adab Islami* yang adaptif secara kontekstual.

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## INTRODUCTION

The rapid expansion of digital technology and the increasing intensity of global information flows have significantly reshaped communication patterns among younger generations. While technological advancement has broadened access to knowledge, it has simultaneously generated serious ethical challenges, particularly the erosion of linguistic politeness and the decline of respectful interaction in everyday social life (Sukowati & Subrata, 2022; Eslami et al., 2023; Sætra & Danaher, 2022). This phenomenon constitutes not only a social issue but also a pedagogical challenge within Islamic education, given that the cultivation of *akhlak* and *adab* represents a fundamental objective of the Islamic educational process (*tarbiyah*).

From an Islamic educational perspective, learning is not confined to the cognitive transmission of knowledge but is fundamentally directed toward the formation of ethically grounded individuals (*insān adabī*) (Abdalla, 2025; Papakostas, 2025). Education is therefore understood as a holistic process that integrates intellectual development with moral cultivation, in which everyday behavior becomes a central site of value internalization. Within this framework, language holds a strategic pedagogical role, as patterns of speech reflect and simultaneously shape moral consciousness. Ethical use of language fosters respect, self-restraint, and social sensitivity, positioning speech not merely as a neutral medium of communication but as a formative instrument in character development (Zahiya, 2024; Li & Li, 2025; Tomar, 2025). The practice of safeguarding speech entails avoiding harmful, humiliating, or aggressive expressions while nurturing gentle, polite, and meaningful verbal interaction. Through continuous linguistic practice, moral values are gradually embodied and normalized in daily social relations, allowing ethical dispositions to be internalized through habituation rather than formal instruction.

Within the context of Islamic boarding schools (*pesantren*), language occupies a particularly strategic position in the cultivation of *adab*. Pesantren education extends beyond formal classroom instruction and operates through cultural transmission, moral exemplification, and habituation embedded in everyday life (Mujahid, 2021; Irfani et al., 2025; Sumardi, 2013). Among Javanese pesantren communities, the sustained use of Javanese *Krama Inggil* as a daily mode of interaction represents a distinctive cultural practice. This refined linguistic register requires speakers to attend carefully to ethical norms, social hierarchy, and respect toward interlocutors, thereby embedding moral values intrinsically within everyday communication.

Previous studies suggest that the habituation of Javanese *Krama Inggil* contributes positively to the development of communicative character and mutual respect among students (Hidayah et al., 2023; Pangestu, 2025; Nursanti et al., 2024). Polite language use is widely associated with moral integrity, whereas harsh or aggressive speech often correlates with declining ethical behavior and the emergence of negative social phenomena, including verbal bullying in educational settings (Elvira et al., 2024; Haugh et al., 2022). However, most existing studies continue to conceptualize language primarily as a communicative instrument or as a

supportive element of general character education, rather than as a pedagogical mechanism within Islamic moral education.

Although prior research has acknowledged the importance of polite language habituation in character formation, such studies generally position language as an auxiliary component of communication ethics or moral education in a broad sense. Scholarly inquiries that explicitly conceptualize language as a pedagogical medium within the system of Islamic moral education, particularly in pesantren contexts, remain limited. This gap is significant, considering that linguistic habituation in pesantren traditions is inseparable from *tarbiyah* and is deeply integrated with Islamic values, local wisdom, and continuous educational practices embedded in everyday life (Mujahid, 2021; Sabaruddin & Mastur, 2023; Sumardi, 2013).

In Javanese pesantren settings, Javanese *Krama Inggil* functions not merely as a means of communication but as a mechanism for internalizing *adab*, including respect for religious authority, self-regulation in speech, and the cultivation of harmonious social relations. Language in this context operates as a lived moral practice rather than an abstract ethical principle. Therefore, a deeper pedagogical examination is needed to understand how linguistic habituation contributes to the formation of moral dispositions within Islamic educational environments.

This study offers a novel contribution by reconceptualizing linguistic habituation as a pedagogical mechanism in Islamic moral education rather than merely a cultural or communicative practice. Unlike previous studies that treat polite language as an accessory to character education, this research positions language as a form of hidden curriculum through which *adab* is continuously internalized in everyday educational life. By integrating Islamic moral theory with local linguistic wisdom, this study demonstrates how habitual polite speech functions as an embodied moral practice that shapes self-restraint, humility (*tawadhu'*), and respectful social relations. Conceptually, this research enriches the discourse on Islamic education by bridging moral pedagogy, local wisdom, and hidden curriculum theory. Practically, it proposes a contextually grounded model of Islamic moral education that can be adaptively applied across diverse Islamic educational settings without detaching moral formation from cultural realities.

## METHOD

This study employed a qualitative case study design to investigate Islamic moral education through linguistic habituation within its natural educational setting. A case study approach was selected because it enables an in-depth examination of complex social and pedagogical phenomena that are inseparable from their real-life contexts, particularly when the boundaries between the phenomenon and context are not clearly evident (Yin, 2018; Merriam & Tisdell, 2016). This design is especially appropriate for exploring how moral values and educational practices are constructed, experienced, and sustained within Islamic boarding school environments, where education operates through continuous interaction, habituation, and cultural transmission rather than solely through formal instruction (Stake, 2015; Denzin & Lincoln, 2018).

The study involved 18 purposively selected informants consisting of one religious leader, three teachers, two boarding school administrators, and twelve students. Purposive sampling was applied to ensure that participants possessed direct experience and sufficient insight into linguistic practices and moral education processes under investigation. This sampling strategy aligns with qualitative research principles that prioritize information-rich cases over statistical representation, allowing for deeper analytical engagement with participants' lived experiences and interpretive perspectives (Patton, 2015; Palinkas et al., 2015).

Data were generated through participant observation, in-depth semi-structured interviews, and document analysis. Participant observation enabled the researcher to engage directly with daily interactions, communicative routines, and behavioral norms within the boarding school, thereby capturing naturally occurring linguistic practices and moral expressions that might not emerge through interviews alone (DeWalt & DeWalt, 2011; Emerson et al., 2014). In-depth interviews were conducted to elicit participants' interpretations of polite speech, linguistic habituation, and the moral meanings attached to language use, while document analysis provided institutional context through the examination of regulations, activity records, and written policies related to language and discipline (Kvale & Brinkmann, 2015; Bowen, 2009).

Data analysis followed a thematic analytical process informed by the interactive model of qualitative analysis. The first stage involved data condensation, referring to the process of selecting, simplifying, and transforming raw data into analytically meaningful units without detaching them from their contextual significance (Miles et al., 2014; Saldaña, 2021). Condensed data were then organized and displayed through thematic matrices and analytic narratives to facilitate pattern recognition and conceptual linkage across data sources. The final stage involved drawing and verifying conclusions through iterative comparison, reflexive interpretation, and constant engagement with the data corpus to ensure analytical rigor and theoretical coherence (Braun & Clarke, 2021).

To ensure data trustworthiness, multiple validation strategies were employed. Source triangulation and methodological triangulation were applied by comparing findings derived from observations, interviews, and documentation to enhance credibility and analytical consistency (Carter et al., 2014; Flick, 2018). Member checking was conducted by sharing preliminary interpretations with selected participants to confirm the accuracy of meaning and representation from their perspectives. These procedures align with established criteria of qualitative rigor, including credibility, dependability, and confirmability, as widely endorsed in contemporary qualitative research literature (Nowell et al., 2017).

## **RESULT AND DISCUSSION**

### **RESULT**

#### **Integration of Language, Culture, and Islamic Moral Education**

Islamic moral education in the pesantren is not articulated through explicit curricular formulations but is enacted through everyday social practices that integrate language, cultural norms, and institutional routines. Field observations

reveal that linguistic interaction constitutes a central medium through which moral expectations are communicated, negotiated, and internalized. Javanese *Krama Inggil* is consistently used across instructional spaces, dormitories, prayer halls, dining areas, and informal gatherings, particularly in interactions involving religious leaders, teachers, administrators, senior students, and junior students. Rather than functioning as a subject of instruction, language operates as a lived moral environment that shapes behavior continuously.

Interview data indicate a shared understanding among institutional actors that linguistic practice is fundamentally moral rather than technical. The religious leader articulated this orientation clearly:

*“Krama language is not meant to be tested or memorized. What matters is *adab*, how students learn self-restraint and respect for others through speech.”* (K1)

Teachers emphasized that linguistic refinement emerges through exposure and modeling rather than correction:

*“We rarely correct students directly. Usually, they learn by imitating how teachers speak.”* (U1)

*“If we correct them too harshly, students become afraid. Polite language must be cultivated gradually.”* (U2)

*“Students who are accustomed to refined language tend to show calmer attitudes overall.”* (U3)

Administrators reinforced this experiential view of language as moral behavior:

*“From the way students speak, we can usually tell whether their emotions are well controlled.”* (P1)

*“When conflicts arise among students, they often begin with changes in tone and speech.”* (P2)

Students described their early adaptation as emotionally challenging but ultimately transformative:

*“At first, I was afraid of saying something wrong, so I preferred to stay quiet.”* (S1)

*“My vocabulary was limited, so I felt insecure speaking to senior students.”* (S3)

*“Over time, it became a habit. Speaking politely started to feel natural.”* (S5)

*“Now, using informal language feels less respectful.”* (S8)

Observational data corroborate these accounts. Teachers and senior students consistently model refined speech, while junior students gradually adjust through immersion. Linguistic errors are tolerated, and conformity emerges organically through participation rather than coercion. Language thus functions as a moral climate that shapes behavior through continuity and repetition.

This subtheme demonstrates that linguistic habituation operates as an integrated moral-cultural system. The embedding of refined language within daily

routines allows *adab* to be internalized as lived experience rather than imposed regulation. Moral education unfolds implicitly through participation, suggesting that culturally embedded linguistic practices can sustain ethical formation without formal curricular enforcement.

### **Islamic Oral *Adab* and Linguistic Self-Regulation**

Beyond shaping social interaction, linguistic habituation plays a crucial role in cultivating oral discipline and emotional self-regulation. Observations across classroom discussions, dormitory life, and communal activities indicate that verbal confrontations are rare. Students commonly pause before responding, select words carefully, and avoid confrontational expressions, even in moments of disagreement.

Teachers described refined language as a mechanism that mediates emotional impulses:

“Using polite language forces students to think before they speak.” (U2)

“When the language is refined, emotions tend to remain controlled.” (U3)

Administrators confirmed the behavioral impact of this practice:

“Cases of harsh or aggressive speech are very rare compared to students' previous schools.” (P1)

Students articulated how language affects their emotional awareness:

“When I use polite language, it feels inappropriate to express anger.” (S4)

“Refined speech makes me think twice before responding.” (S7)

“Even when I feel emotional, I can restrain myself.” (S10)

Observational evidence supports these statements. In situations involving disagreement or correction, students maintain calm tones and indirect phrasing. Emotional regulation appears linguistically mediated rather than enforced through formal disciplinary mechanisms.

These findings reveal that oral *adab* is cultivated through linguistic self-regulation. Language functions as an internal checkpoint that intervenes between emotion and expression, enabling students to discipline themselves without external sanctions. This highlights the role of language as a practical medium for ethical self-control within Islamic moral education.

### **Formation of Tawadhu' and Respectful Social Relations**

The formation of tawadhu' and respectful social relations emerges as a central outcome of linguistic habituation. Observations show that students consistently adjust speech according to social roles, particularly when interacting with religious authorities and teachers. Honorific expressions, softened tones, and indirect phrasing signal humility and respect embedded in daily communication.

Teachers emphasized that humility is learned experientially:

“Students learn humility not from sermons, but from how they speak every day.” (U1)

Administrators observed its broader institutional impact:

"When language is respectful, the overall atmosphere of the pesantren becomes calmer." (P2)

Students articulated the relational effects of refined speech:

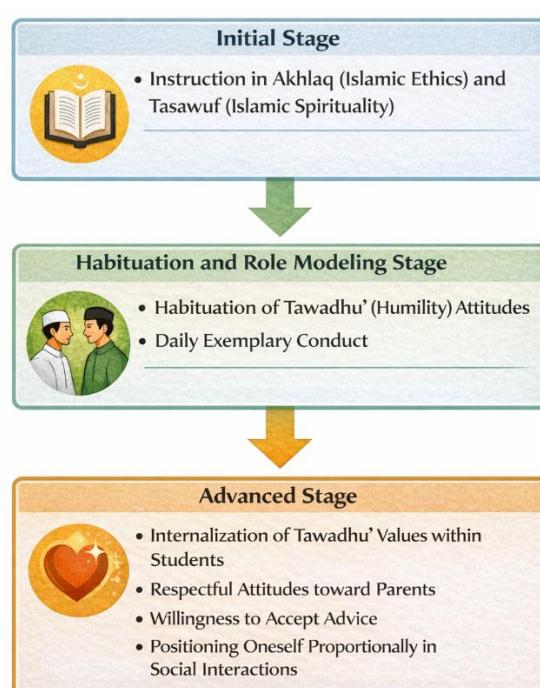
"Speaking politely automatically makes me feel more respectful." (S2)

"*Krama* language reduces tension among students." (S6)

"At home, I now use polite language when speaking to my parents." (S9)

"Over time, humility becomes a habit." (S12)

Observational data further indicate that humility is expressed not only verbally but also through tone, posture, and timing of speech, reinforcing respect as embodied practice rather than symbolic compliance.



**Figure 1. Stages of Tawadhu' Formation through Linguistic Habituation**

The figure illustrates a progression from imitation to internalization. Empirical data indicate that students move from conscious effort toward spontaneous respectful speech, reflecting the gradual consolidation of humility as a stable moral disposition.

This subtheme demonstrates that tawadhu' is cultivated through sustained linguistic practice embedded in social relations. Respect becomes embodied through language, shaping both vertical and horizontal interactions. The transfer of these habits beyond the pesantren indicates moral continuity rather than situational conformity.

### Language as a Hidden Curriculum in Islamic Education

Although institutional regulations emphasize discipline and ethical conduct, they do not explicitly mandate the use of Javanese *Krama Inggil*. This absence highlights language as an implicit educational mechanism embedded within

pesantren culture. Observations confirm that linguistic norms are maintained through cultural expectations and role modeling rather than written rules.

Teachers described this implicit process:

"We never write an obligation to use *Krama* language, but students understand it naturally." (U1)

Students confirmed experiential acquisition:

"I learned *Krama* language not in class, but through daily interaction." (S1)

"The more you hear it, the more you naturally follow it." (S11)

Observational data show that linguistic norms are reinforced through everyday interaction rather than authority enforcement, allowing moral learning to occur continuously and contextually.

This finding positions language as a powerful hidden curriculum. Its implicit nature enables uninterrupted moral education, as values are absorbed through routine participation rather than episodic instruction. Linguistic habituation thus functions as a sustained moral infrastructure within pesantren life.

### Implications of Linguistic Habituation for Students' Character

Linguistic habituation influences students' character across personal, social, and spiritual dimensions. Observations reveal increased patience, harmonious relationships, and heightened moral awareness in daily conduct. Interview data confirm these outcomes while also indicating variation in depth of internalization.

Teachers acknowledged this diversity:

"Not all students immediately understand the deeper meaning; some initially just follow the habit." (U3)

Students expressed personal transformation:

"I have become more patient." (S5)

"Speaking politely feels like guarding myself." (S11)

The table illustrates that linguistic habituation shapes emotional control, social harmony, and moral awareness beyond verbal expression alone.

**Table 1. Dimensions of Islamic *Adab* and Their Observed Impacts on Students**

Dimension of Islamic Character	Implemented Elements	Observed Impacts on Students
Individual (Personal Character)	Politeness in speech, emotional self-control	Students become more patient and refrain from using harsh or inappropriate language
Social (Social Character)	Respectful attitudes and empathy	Increased solidarity and harmonious relationships among students
Spiritual (Moral Character)	Intention of worship in guarding one's speech	The emergence of awareness that speech etiquette is an integral part of <i>akhlaq al-karimah</i> (noble character)

These findings suggest that linguistic habituation operates along a continuum, from symbolic adaptation to genuine internalization. While internalization varies among individuals, the linguistic environment provides a consistent moral framework that supports gradual character development.

### Pedagogical Challenges and Adaptive Strategies

Despite its strengths, linguistic habituation presents pedagogical challenges. Students from non-*Krama*-speaking backgrounds reported psychological barriers such as fear and low confidence during early adaptation. Teachers also acknowledged the tension between enforcing norms and maintaining emotional safety.

Students described these challenges:

“I was afraid of making mistakes, especially when speaking to more fluent students.” (S3)

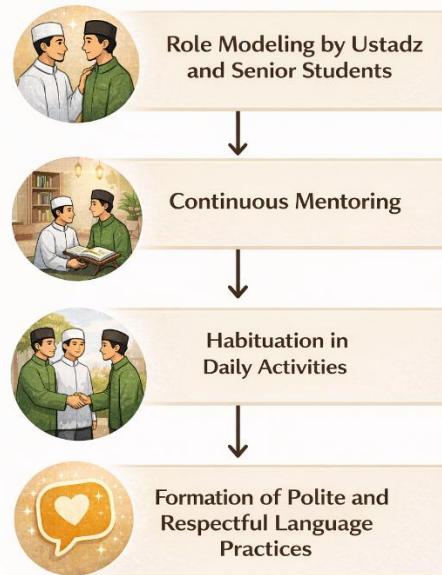
“At the beginning, I felt insecure.” (S5)

Teachers reflected on pedagogical balance:

“We must be firm, but not make students feel pressured.” (U2)

Observations show that the pesantren addresses these challenges through gradual habituation, mixed-language communication, and personal mentoring, creating an inclusive learning environment.

The figure depicts a cyclical process of exposure, imitation, reinforcement, and internalization, emphasizing the gradual and adaptive nature of moral habituation.



**Figure 2. Process Model of Linguistic Habituation in Islamic Moral Education**

This subtheme highlights that effective linguistic habituation requires pedagogical sensitivity. Adaptive strategies prevent moral discipline from becoming symbolic pressure, enabling sustainable and inclusive moral education.

Synthesizing the empirical findings, linguistic habituation emerges as a multidimensional pedagogical mechanism integrating moral discipline, emotional

regulation, social harmony, and spiritual awareness. The novelty of this study lies in empirically demonstrating that language functions as *lived moral pedagogy* and a *hidden curriculum*, shaping *adab* through continuous, culturally embedded practice. Unlike previous studies that treat polite language as a communicative accessory or cultural marker, this research reveals how linguistic habituation systematically produces moral self-regulation and humility within Islamic education.

## DISCUSSION

The findings of this study enrich contemporary discussions on Islamic moral education by demonstrating that the formation of *adab* is most effectively realized through sustained lived practice rather than through formalized moral instruction. In line with established perspectives in Islamic pedagogy, moral education in pesantren operates through habituation, exemplary conduct, and immersion in a value-laden environment, rather than through the mere transmission of normative knowledge (Ningsih, 2021; Mauludin et al., 2025; Zainuri et al., 2025). This study affirms that *adab* is not an abstract ideal to be memorized, but a disposition cultivated through daily participation in morally structured social life.

From a broader theoretical standpoint, these findings resonate with virtue ethics, which conceptualizes moral character as the outcome of repeated practice rather than rule compliance. Virtue ethics emphasizes that moral excellence emerges through habituation, where ethical dispositions are formed gradually as individuals repeatedly enact morally appropriate behavior in concrete situations. The linguistic habituation observed in this study reflects such a process: refined speech practices are not imposed as moral rules but become part of students' habitual ways of engaging with others. This supports the view that moral education is fundamentally formative, shaping character through action rather than instruction.

The empirical evidence that polite language fosters emotional restraint and reflective speech aligns with classical Islamic moral thought, which positions control of the tongue as a central component of ethical self-discipline. In Islamic ethics, speech is understood as a direct manifestation of the inner moral state, and regulating language is inseparable from regulating the heart (Kokhichko, 2022; Li, 2025; Zuhara, 2023; Wulandari & Verlantika, 2021). The findings of this study extend this perspective by showing how linguistic discipline operates as an everyday mechanism of moral self-governance. Through refined language, students learn to pause, reflect, and restrain impulses, translating abstract moral ideals into embodied daily practice.

This process can also be understood through the lens of moral habitus. Habitus refers to durable dispositions formed through repeated social practice within a structured environment. The pesantren context provides such a structure, where linguistic norms are consistently reinforced through social interaction. Over time, polite speech becomes an embodied disposition rather than a conscious strategy, shaping how students perceive, feel, and act in social situations. The fact that many students continue to use refined language beyond the pesantren environment indicates that these dispositions have begun to stabilize as part of their moral habitus.

The identification of language as a hidden curriculum further strengthens the theoretical contribution of this study. Hidden curricula operate through implicit norms, routines, and expectations that shape learners' values without explicit articulation (Koutsouris et al., 2021; Abdurrohman et al., 2025; Halid, 2019). Unlike formal curricula, which are episodic and bounded, hidden curricula function continuously. This study demonstrates that language is a particularly potent vehicle for such implicit moral education because it permeates all social interactions. Through constant exposure to refined speech, students internalize norms of respect, restraint, and humility without perceiving them as formal lessons.

Importantly, this study extends existing scholarship on hidden curriculum by showing that language is not merely a medium of instruction but a moral infrastructure that organizes social relations. Linguistic practices subtly regulate power, hierarchy, and interpersonal distance, shaping how students position themselves in relation to others. In this sense, language does not simply reflect moral order but actively produces it through everyday interaction.

The integration of local linguistic wisdom within Islamic moral education also carries significant theoretical implications. The alignment between Javanese ethical philosophy, particularly the emphasis on *unggah-ungguh* and linguistic hierarchy, and Islamic values of *adab* and humility illustrates how local culture can serve as a conduit for religious moral formation rather than an obstacle (Cheng & Sikka, 2025; Riaz et al., 2023; Agung, 2018; Afiah et al., 2020). This finding challenges rigid dichotomies that separate religious education from local tradition, demonstrating instead that culturally resonant practices can deepen moral internalization by grounding abstract values in familiar social forms.

The findings related to the formation of *tawadhu'* further reinforce this argument. Humility in this study emerges not as a doctrinal concept but as a lived disposition cultivated through repeated respectful interaction. The staged internalization observed among students corresponds with models that conceptualize moral development as a gradual process moving from external imitation to internal commitment (Coldwell et al., 2022; Mustofa & Nasucha, 2024). This supports the view that humility cannot be instilled instantaneously but must be nurtured through sustained engagement with moral practices embedded in everyday life.

At the same time, this study acknowledges important limitations of habituation-based moral education. While linguistic discipline produces observable politeness, the depth of moral internalization varies among students. Some students comply primarily due to social expectations rather than intrinsic moral conviction. This finding echoes critical perspectives that caution against conflating behavioral conformity with moral maturity (Al Hadiq, 2023; Krettenauer, 2022; Gray et al., 2023). Habituation, when unaccompanied by reflection, risks producing disciplined behavior without ethical autonomy.

The pedagogical challenges identified in this study also reflect broader issues in contemporary pesantren education. Linguistic diversity among students, coupled with psychological factors such as fear and low confidence, complicates the process of moral habituation (Dražnik et al., 2024; Malik et al., 2021; Sari & Jauhari, 2022). While adaptive strategies such as gradual exposure and mentoring mitigate these

challenges, they also highlight the necessity of creating reflective spaces where students can articulate and critically engage with the moral meanings underlying linguistic practices. Without such reflection, moral education risks remaining implicit and unevenly internalized.

In this regard, the findings support recent arguments that pesantren pedagogy must balance tradition with reflexivity. While habituation and exemplification remain powerful tools for moral formation, they need to be complemented by dialogical engagement that enables students to understand not only how to behave, but why such behavior matters in ethical and spiritual terms (Huda & Salem, 2022; Baidya & Baidya, 2023; Small, 2023; Hosaini et al., 2024).

This study contributes to the field of Islamic education by offering a conceptually grounded and empirically rich account of linguistic habituation as moral pedagogy. By situating language at the intersection of hidden curriculum, virtue ethics, and moral habitus, it demonstrates that *adab* formation is most effective when moral values are embedded in daily social practice, culturally resonant, and sustained over time. Linguistic habituation thus emerges as a powerful, though not unproblematic, pathway for cultivating ethical subjectivity in Islamic educational settings.

## CONCLUSION

This study demonstrates that Islamic moral education is most effectively realized when *adab* is cultivated through sustained linguistic habituation embedded in everyday social practice. The habituated use of Javanese *Krama Inggil* in daily interactions does not merely function as a communicative convention, but operates as a formative moral process that shapes students' dispositions toward polite speech, emotional self-regulation, humility (*tawadhu'*), and respect for others. Through continuous participation in a linguistically structured environment, these moral qualities gradually become part of students' habitual ways of acting and relating, rather than remaining abstract ethical ideals.

The findings further establish language as a powerful form of hidden curriculum within Islamic education. Rather than being transmitted through explicit instruction, moral values are internalized implicitly through routine interaction, cultural expectation, and role modeling. This study shows that linguistic practices constitute a moral infrastructure that organizes social relations, regulates emotional expression, and sustains ethical order in the pesantren community. In this sense, language functions not only as a medium of expression but as a mechanism of moral formation that works continuously and contextually.

At a theoretical level, this research contributes to global discussions on moral education by demonstrating how habituation, virtue formation, and moral habitus intersect within an Islamic educational setting. The formation of *adab* observed in this study aligns with virtue-ethical perspectives that view moral character as the outcome of repeated practice, as well as with sociological understandings of habitus as durable dispositions shaped by structured social environments. By situating linguistic habituation at the center of moral pedagogy, this study offers an

empirically grounded model of how ethical subjectivity can be cultivated through lived experience rather than formal moralization.

Importantly, the integration of local linguistic wisdom within Islamic moral education challenges assumptions that religious pedagogy must be detached from cultural particularity in order to be normatively valid. On the contrary, this study shows that culturally resonant practices can deepen moral internalization by translating universal Islamic values into familiar social forms. This insight carries broader relevance for Islamic education in diverse cultural contexts, suggesting that local traditions, when critically aligned with ethical and spiritual objectives, can serve as effective vehicles for moral formation.

At the same time, the study highlights that habituation alone does not guarantee uniform depth of moral internalization. Observable politeness may, in some cases, reflect social conformity rather than fully developed moral consciousness. This underscores the need for pedagogical balance, where habituation and exemplification are complemented by reflective engagement that enables learners to grasp the ethical and spiritual meanings underlying their practices.

This study positions linguistic habituation as a sustainable yet critically nuanced pathway for *adab* formation in Islamic education. By foregrounding language as lived moral pedagogy and hidden curriculum, it offers a conceptual and practical contribution to global debates on character education, demonstrating how moral values can be effectively cultivated through everyday practices that are culturally embedded, ethically grounded, and socially sustained.

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