The Role of English Day Strategy in Enhancing Speaking Skills: A Case Study in Darul Falah Boarding School

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Abstract
This study aims to examine how the English Day strategy in English learning contributes to the improvement of students' speaking skills. Fluency in English has become more than an ability in an increasingly globalized world. This study used a qualitative case study design supported by a mixed-methods approach, applying interviews with English teachers, student questionnaires, and pre-post speaking assessments analysis from 20 students of Darul Falah Boarding School Klaten. The results show that English Day greatly improves students' confidence and speaking fluency, however, through limited practice, students writing skills remained underdeveloped, indicating an imbalance in the integration of language skills. These findings highlight the value of immersive teaching methods backed by thorough resources and engaged teachers.

Keywords
Boarding School, English Day, Enhancing Speaking Skill

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INTRODUCTION

The ability in English, especially in speaking, is crucial for success in the classroom, in social situations, and in the workplace in an increasingly globalized world. Speaking is frequently seen as the most difficult of the four language skills to develop, particularly in situations where English is not used every day (Güneş & Sarıgöz, 2021). English is learned as a foreign language in Indonesia, and many students find it difficult to speak because they do not have enough exposure, feel less confident, and have less enough practice time (Agista, 2022). English Day, which encourages students to use English constantly in real-life contexts especially in places like boarding schools where peer interaction is constant is one of the immersive and communicative learning strategies that educators have started implementing to solve these issues (Fitria, 2023).

In the case of Darul Falah Boarding School in Klaten, the appropriation of the English Day strategy adjusts with the institution's objective of improving its students' communicative competence in English. English Day activities have been carried out since the second year this Islamic boarding school was founded. As a religious boarding school, Darul Falah faces the unique challenge of balancing religious instruction in Arabic and Indonesian with the developing require for English capability (Widyantoro & Owusu Adoma, 2023). English Day is held for 2 weeks every month with a 1 week break. If in the first week students use Arabic as their daily conversation language, then in the second week students use English for daily conversation. Then the implementation of English Day is continued in the fourth week after the use of Arabic in the third week. The implementation of English Day begins in the morning after waking up until 10 pm. The main activities of students during English Day include memorizing new vocabulary, practicing conversation, memorizing simple sentences in English that are used everyday.

One such strategy is the usage of English Day, where students are required to speak as it were in English for a particular period usually a day or more each week. This immersive approach is planned to encourage students to practice their speaking abilities in real-life contexts, cultivating not only etymological competence but moreover certainty in utilizing the language. The procedure leverages the immersive environment to create opportunities for speaking practice, which is regularly missing in conventional classroom settings (Beay et al., 2023). In the communal boarding school setting provided a unique advantage. Since students lived together, English Day extended beyond the classroom and encouraged continuous practice. A consider by Setyowati and Fauziah highlighted that English-speaking environments in boarding schools positively contribute to the students' speaking ability since of the consistent practice and feedback they receive from peers and teachers (Ardini et al., 2020).

Additionally teachers observed improved pronunciation and sentence structure among students who participated actively in English Day. Effective speakers have certain traits. As a further finding discovered five traits common to successful speakers in their research; they are creativity, as they placement, formatting, delivery, and recall in spoken language. Although the above characteristics appear common, they are challenging for adolescents in junior high schools the students are not familiar with English and unwilling

to learn speaking english (Holandyah et al., 2022). One of the challenges confronted by students is how they can apply what they have learned within the classroom. This term appears difficult for a few of the students since they lack motivation, they did not sure in giving suppositions, they cannot composed sentences to be conveyed, they had difficulty pronouncing sentences, and lack vocabulary. These challenges happen since of the concerns of students to memorize a language (Silvia et al., 2023). In any case, by cultivating a supportive environment where mistakes are seen as part of the learning process, institutions like Darul Falah can relieve these challenges.

The effectiveness of English Day programs in religiously based school environments, despite it occurs in Indonesian boarding schools. By concentrating on Darul Falah Boarding School, where English Day is consistently observed, this study fills that knowledge space. Investigating how this approach affects students' speaking development is the goal through a qualitative case study combined with a mixed-methods approach. It seeks to understand students' and teachers' perceptions of the strategy and to evaluate the effectiveness of the program based on measurable progress in students' speaking ability. By focusing on an underexplored educational context, this research contributes to the growing literature on language immersion in EFL learning, particularly in faith-based institutions.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Speaking English is a critical ability for students learning English as a foreign language (EFL) since it is necessary for verbal communication (Ahmed Al-Hassaani & Mahmood Qaid Al-Saalmi, 2022). The English Day strategy is one of several innovative teaching practices that have been implemented in EFL settings as a solution to the increasing need for English competence, especially speaking abilities (Auliyah & Sujannah, 2023). The method is beneficial in boarding school environments where peer-supported, participation learning may succeed. As stated in the introduction, English Day requires students to speak only English at periods of time in order to encourage an English-speaking environment. Ellis (2024) emphasizes that because students are participating by exciting, daily life conversation, experiences like these increase higher-quality learning of languages as compared to conventional classroom methods.

The effectiveness of English Day in increasing students' confidence and fluency has been demonstrated by earlier research. For example, (Beay et al., 2023) discovered that speaking skills among learners at a Makassar governmental high school that took part in English Day significantly improved. In a similar vein, (Silvia et al., 2023) found that speaking performance was much improved by English Day when accompanied by teacher-guided conversation practice and vocabulary memory. English Day has even more promise in boarding institutions, where students reside in close-knit communities. Continuous language use in a shared living environment improves speaking practice frequency and quality, according to (Holandyah et al., 2022).

However, several studies have also highlighted some key challenges that limit the effectiveness of English Day programs. The primary issue is that many learners struggle with pronunciation and limited vocabulary, which frequently makes them afraid to participate in conversations (Rizkiya & Pratolo, 2023). (Putri & Mahripah, n.d.). Point out that English Day may not be as effective if it is lacking with systematic vocabulary and pronunciation exercises. The motivational variables are important (Sarah et al., 2024). According to (Dewaele Chengchen Li, 2020), student performance is improved when language learning is enjoyable and emotionally engaging. Activities like role plays, games, and discussions that are commonly employed on English Day help increase this emotional engagement and lower language anxiety (Muftiari Aulia & Dalimunte, n.d.).

Another important success factor is still teacher participation. (Li, 2023) points out that a major factor in the success of immersion tactics like English Day is the active involvement of teachers in correcting mistakes, giving feedback, and modeling good speech. Finally, the effectiveness of English Day may also be impacted by resource availability and technological integration. Most of schools rely on teacher innovation and classroom engagement to maintain immersion, even though some have started using multimedia or even VR-enhanced instruction (Yan et al., 2024). All things considered, the research backs up the idea that English Day is a good way to help students get better at speaking, particularly in group learning settings like boarding schools. However, for best outcomes, the method needs to be used consistently and backed by active teacher facilitation, vocabulary improvement and learning resources.

RESEARCH METHOD

This study uses a qualitative case study methodology combined with a mixed-methods approach to investigate the role of the English Day strategy in enhancing students' speaking skills (Marilin & Ahmadi, 2024). The study was conducted in Darul Falah boarding school in Klaten, combining qualitative interviews with three English teachers were interviewed to provide insights into the strategy's implementation and effectiveness from the educators' perspective (Atmowardoyo & Salija, n.d.) and quantitative data from 20 random student participants across three grade levels (first, fourth, and fifth KMA) who were actively involved in the English Day. To supplement the qualitative findings, quantitative data were collected via pre-test and post-test assessments of students' speaking performance, as well as questionnaires evaluating student impressions using Likert-scale items.

The pre-test and post-tests assessed the students progress in aspects such as fluency, vocabulary, and spelling, while the questionnaire collected the students' perceptions toward the program (Berliana et al., 2025). The data were evaluated qualitatively using thematic analysis and quantitatively using descriptive statistics. The findings from both methodologies were combined using a connecting parallel design to provide a thorough knowledge of how English Day helps students build speaking skills (Poth et al., 2024). Ethical guidelines were followed throughout the study, with participants' agreement and confidentiality guaranteed. The combination of numerous data sources provides greater

insight into the effectiveness and perceptions of English Day as a learning strategy. This approach is consistent with current research suggestions that combine qualitative depth and quantitative assessment for investigating complicated educational interventions.

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

To find a better understanding of how students referred to the English Day strategy, the researcher used a questionnaire to 20 students from grades 1, 4, and 5 at Darul Falah Boarding School. The questionnaire included 20 items about several areas of speaking skill improvement, such as vocabulary use, confidence in speaking, motivation, and fluency on English Day. The Likert scale provided five response alternatives for each statement: Strongly Disagree (1), Disagree (2), Neutral (3), Agree (4), and Strongly Agree (5). Students were asked to honestly chose the one choice for each statement that best expressed their opinion or experience. The replies were then collected, and the number of students who chose each choice was noted for each statement. The table below displays the number of participants who chose each response choice for each statement.

Table 1. Student questionnaire response

Item	Statement	SA	A	N	SD	D
A	**Method and Media**	**5**	**4**	**3**	**2**	**1**
01	Diversity of method used in English Day activities	4	9	6	1	0
02	Diversity of media used in English Day activities	3	8	5	4	0
03	Diversity of facilities and infrastructure for English Day activities	1	5	7	7	0
04	Convenience of methods and media used in English Day activities	6	8	5	1	0
B	**Materials and Learning Resources**					
05	Completeness of the materials taught during English Day	4	7	5	4	0
06	Innovation in materials taught during English Day	3	9	6	2	0
07	Diversity of learning resources available during English Day	5	0	9	6	0
08	Completeness of listening materials used in English Day	7	5	5	3	0
09	Completeness of reading materials used in English Day	5	10	2	3	0
10	Completeness of speaking materials used in English Day	4	7	6	3	0
11	Completeness of writing materials used in English Day	1	3	5	10	1

12	Ease of understanding the material during English Day	2	11	6	1	0
C	**Learning Evaluation**					
13	Ease of understanding the material during English Day	6	4	9	1	0
14	Ease of questions in English Day activities	4	7	9	0	0
15	Innovation of questions in English Day activities	2	8	7	3	0
16	Teacher assistance in solving questions	6	7	7	0	0
D	**Student's English Ability**					
17	Students' reading skill after attending English Day	4	7	6	3	0
18	Students' speaking skill after attending English Day	3	9	5	3	0
19	Students' listening skill after attending English Day	3	10	6	1	0
20	Students' writing skill after attending English Day	1	7	8	4	0

Based on the data results from the questionnaire responses were summarized using descriptive statistics to calculate average scores for categories such as methods and media, learning materials, evaluation, and students' English skills that had been conducted, the researcher concluded the results using code analysis as follows:

A. Method and Media
   1. Teaching Methods: 65% of students agreed that English Day activities used diverse methods, but 30% were neutral.
   2. Learning Media: 55% found the media varied, though 20% disagreed, indicating room for improvement.
   3. Facilities & Infrastructure: 35% were neutral, while another 35% disagreed, suggesting a need for better resources.
   4. Convenience of Methods & Media: 70% found them effective, showing positive engagement in learning.

B. Materials and Learning Resources
   1. Completeness of Materials: 55% agreed, but 20% felt some areas needed improvement.
   2. Innovation in Materials: 60% found the materials innovative, while 10% were dissatisfied.
   3. Diversity of Learning Resources: 45% were neutral, and 30% disagreed, highlighting the need for more varied materials.
   4. Listening, Reading, Speaking, and Writing Materials: Listening: 60% agreed the materials were adequate. Reading: 75% found them complete. Speaking: 55%

agreed they were sufficient. Writing: Only 20% strongly agreed, with 50% dissatisfied, indicating a need for improvement.

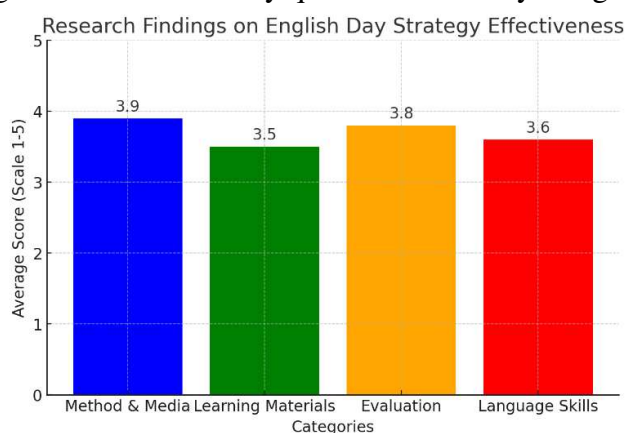   5. Ease of Understanding: 65% found the materials easy to understand.

C. Learning Evaluation

    1. Question Difficulty: 50% found them easy, but 45% were neutral or disagreed, suggesting mixed responses.

    2. Completeness & Innovation of Questions: 55% agreed they were comprehensive, while 50% found them innovative.

    3. Teacher Assistance: 65% confirmed receiving adequate guidance, highlighting strong teacher involvement.

D. Students' English Skill Development

    1. Reading: 55% reported improvement.

    2. Speaking: 60% noticed progress.

    3. Listening: 65% experienced better skills.

    4. Writing: Only 40% saw improvement, while 20% felt no progress, indicating challenges in writing.

The researcher also designed a bar chart to represent the questionnaire findings, including variables such as method & media learning, materials, evaluation, and the language skills of students to understand English. Researcher create this graphic shortly with the average scores for the study questionnaire's key categories.

Figure 1. A bar chart to represent the questionnaire findings

Considering an average score of 3.9 for Methods and Media, it appears that students generally thought the strategies implemented during English Day were interesting and approachable. Better resources are needed to support the curriculum, however, as some students had worries regarding the infrastructure and facilities' sufficiency. In regards to a Learning Materials and Resources average score of 3.5, students regarded the reading and listening materials to be thorough, but they had trouble with the writing assignments. This is consistent with Ellis's research, which found that because of its cognitive complexity, writing is frequently the hardest talent to learn(Ellis, 2024).

For the Learning Evaluation average score of 3.8, students agree the evaluation techniques are useful and innovative. In line with research by Beay et al. which shows that teacher support is required for the effectiveness of immersive learning methods, teachers actively help students answer questions(Beay et al., 2023).

Afterwards, students' speaking, listening, and reading English skills increased, with an average score of 3.6. Writing is still a weakness, though, perhaps as a result of a lack of organized practice and assistance. Previous study highlights that a balanced development of all four language abilities is crucial for overall competency.

The findings in the table show that the majority of students responded positively to the questionnaire's assertions. The majority of participants agreed or strongly agreed that the English Day technique improved their speaking skills, notably in terms of vocabulary expansion, confidence boost, and encouragement to speak English more regularly. For example, several students confirmed that they felt improved at speaking English during English Day, and that they had greater motivation to practice speaking than on other days. Only a few students answered negatively or neutrally, indicating that the strategy was mostly well-received.

Table 2. Speaking Performance Assessment Summary

Total Students	Average Pre-Test Score	Average Post-Test Score	Average Score Improvement	Improvement Percentage (%)
20	3,1	4,11	1,01	32,66

The findings of the pre-test and post-test evaluations, which included 20 students, suggested significant improvements in their speaking skills after the English Day program was implemented. The average pre-test score was 3.10, while the post-test average increased to 4.11. This means to a 1.01point improvement per student, or a 32.66% increase in speaking skills. This finding indicates that consistent practice during English Day through controlled discussion, vocabulary memorization, and spontaneous speaking activities helped students improve their fluency, pronunciation, and confidence. Furthermore, the findings make support to the the opinion that participating and routine-based practice of English increases higher participation and assessed language improvement, particularly in non-native institutions such as religious boarding schools.

The findings of this study reveal several key insights into the implementation of the English Day strategy at Darul Falah Boarding School, particularly in its influence on students' speaking skills. The data were categorized into three major themes: (1) improvement in speaking fluency and confidence, (2) motivational impact of English Day, and (3) persistent challenges in vocabulary and consistency.

1. Improvement in Speaking Fluency and Confidence

Students and teachers reported a noticeable increase in speaking fluency and confidence. Many students indicated that regular exposure to English during English Day reduced their fear of making mistakes and encouraged them to speak more frequently. Qualitative data from teacher interviews reinforce these observations. One teacher noted:

> *"Yes, students feel that this strategy helps to improve their speaking skills because of the frequent real-life practice. We provide audio recordings and videos to model conversations, and we motivate them by giving feedback and appreciation."*

This insight supports the role of consistent exposure and positive reinforcement in developing speaking fluency. The teacher revealed that one of the strategies used was to provide recordings of English conversations to students as listening and provide short English videos as examples of expressions in English. Correcting mistakes, giving appreciation and providing motivation to continue improving English language skills. Additionally, teachers observed improved pronunciation and sentence structure among students who participated actively in English Day. The immersive environment mimics real-world language use, supporting the idea that language acquisition is more effective when learners are actively engaged in communicative contexts(Ellis, 2024).

2. Motivational Impact of English Day

The program served as a motivational tool. Refers to result of the interviewed with the teacher, "Some students feel enthusiastic, although there are some who are reluctant because learning a new language was previously quite unfamiliar to their ears". Students expressed excitement and enjoyment during English Day activities such as role-plays, debates, and games. This aligns with the theory that enjoyment and emotional engagement enhance language learning outcomes(Dewaele Chengchen Li, 2020). The presence of peer encouragement and teacher support fostered a sense of belonging and purpose.

3. Challenges: Vocabulary and Consistency

Despite the benefits, the program also faced several challenges. A common issue reported by students was limited vocabulary, which often led to hesitation or code-switching into Bahasa Indonesia. Another teacher highlighted pronunciation challenges:

> *"Students often struggle with pronunciation because the way English is written is not how it's spoken. I usually ask them to repeat words multiple times after demonstrating the correct pronunciation."*

This confirms that pronunciation difficulties persist and require active intervention from educators, which aligns with the findings of (Yan et al., 2024) on the importance of teacher modeling in immersive environments. Another challenge was maintaining consistency. While the program was scheduled weekly, some students and even staff members did not fully commit to using English throughout the day. This inconsistency weakened the potential impact of the immersion. To address these issues, it is recommended that the English Day program be complemented with focused vocabulary-building sessions and regular training for both students and staff to reinforce the importance of the strategy. The findings highlight the importance of immersive learning environments in improving speaking proficiency. However, the study also reveals certain areas for improvement, particularly in writing skills, materials and resources learning. Schools implementing English Day programs should ensure that they provide adequate writing resources, structured exercises, and interactive activities to enhance students' overall language proficiency.

According to study by Hiver, role-playing, presentations, and debates are examples of structured speaking activities that greatly aid in the development of speaking ability(Li, 2023). By demanding that students speak only in English, the English Day strategy encourages this kind of practice and engagement. Considering its effectiveness, several kinds of issues were found to prevent students from reaching their whole speaking ability: Many students are afraid of making grammar or pronunciation mistakes, which makes them uninterested to speak. According to the study's findings, students have trouble communicating themselves clearly because of their limited vocabulary. According to the study's findings, students have trouble communicating themselves clearly because of their limited vocabulary. The research study emphasizes that while speaking abilities have improved, writing abilities are still lacking.

CONCLUSION

The conclusions of this study showed that English Day is a successful strategy for enhancing students' speaking skills in a boarding school condition. Students' fluency, pronunciation, and confidence improved as a result of daily practice and effective functions. However, writing remained a recurring weaknesses, probably due to the program's main focus on oral communication and a lack of routine writing support. To optimize the effectiveness of English Day, educators should take a more balanced approach that includes writing modules, vocabulary development, and ongoing teacher involvement. Institutional commitment is required to ensure consistency in execution and enough learning materials.

Further research should look into how English Day could be combined with writing focused activities and supported by technology enhanced tools to encourage general language development across all four abilities. The results of this study demonstrate that the adoption of the English Day strategy at Darul Falah Boarding School creates a significant and engaging environment for language acquisition, especially in enhancing

students' speaking skills. Nonetheless, the study underscores various aspects that need enhancement to guarantee that English Day effectively promotes all four essential language skills. Significantly, writing emerged as the most challenging area, as many students reported struggles with creating coherent pieces of text. This disparity may arise because English Day emphasizes verbal communication and does not provide structured writing exercises.

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