Beyond the Mainstream: English Camp's Strategies for Enhancing English Proficiency of High School Students in Indonesia

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Abstract: One of the problems of English learning in Indonesia is the low effectiveness of formal instruction in secondary schools. This study investigates how an extracurricular program (namely English Camp) conducted by an Islamic State School based in a rural area in Riau province, Indonesia, was managed to enhance their students' English proficiency. We collected our qualitative study's data through a semi-structured interview with the English Camp initiator and analysis of a webinar conducted by the Ministry of Religious Affairs of the Republic of Indonesia and recorded on YouTube. We analyzed our data inductively and thematically to recognize major themes that will later enable us to answer our research questions. We found that the English Camp had comprehensive course contents covering the four English skills. In terms of learning methods, it applied some 'out of the box' strategies that are inspired by a contextual approach to learning. The school decided to go beyond the normal mainstream national curriculum practiced in such a state Islamic high school. Among the featured programs of the English Camp are taking the pledge (collective commitment) for English use, English Zone, weekly roleplay performances, and public speaking exams with university lecturers. Based on our findings, we suggest that other schools study the school's breakthroughs, especially with their "out of the box" and contextual programs to help students develop their English skills.

Keywords: *Contextual approach, English Camp, learning English, learning strategies, ELT in Indonesia.*

Introduction

As the language of international communication, English is strategic and important to be mastered by citizens of the world as it functions as a communication tool in many fields, including economy, politics, socio-culture, and education (Al-Issa, 2006; Cheng, 2012; Warschauer, 2000; Wright, 2016). In Indonesia, many parties have long understood the importance of English in many aspects of life. For this reason, English has been a compulsory subject in Indonesian schools for a long time. However, the main problem here is that English language teaching (ELT) in Indonesia has not yet exhibited significant results (Renandya et al., 2018), especially in the teaching process in formal education (Basalama, 2010). Teacher certification programs initiated in 2007 also have not yet increased the quality of teachers' instruction (e.g., Halim, 2011; Napitupulu, 2012).

Many discussions, seminars, and scientific studies have discussed the phenomenon of the low level of success of ELT in Indonesia. The causes of the problems are complex. Some of them are related to technical factors, such as a non-conducive learning environment, limited time allocation, and large class size, while the others are related to non-technical factors, like the absence of communicative tests, the curriculum, and the quality of the teacher (Afrianto, 2020; Fahmi et al., 2014; Kirkpatrick, 2007; Marcellino, 2008; Yusuf, 2010). Nevertheless, we see that of all these reasons, the most important factor that contributes to this low success of English learning in Indonesia is the absence of a conducive environment where students can get the needed amount of exposure to English or, simply put, the lack of English exposure (Wahyuningsih & Afandi, 2020).

According to the second language acquisition theories, every human being has an innate ability to absorb and speak any language as long as they are sufficiently exposed to various elements of the spoken language. Krashen (1988), an American linguist, called it a 'comprehensible input', which is a language input that can be comprehended by listeners

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even though initially they did not understand all the words and structures of it (Schütz, 1998). This proposition is then known as Krashen's hypothesis.

In order to create an environment with this comprehensible input, Krashen (1988) emphasized that teachers have to generate a learning condition that allows students to communicate meaningfully and interact with one another by using English. In this condition, what is important for learners is how their words can be understood, not whether they are correct or not in the language rules. As a result, this process causes language acquisition to occur naturally.

Although this language acquisition theory originally centered more in the context of English acquisition as a second language, in our opinion, the principles remain relevant when we discuss the acquisition of English as a foreign language, as in Indonesia. This is particularly related to the importance of exposure to language inputs for English learners. These exposures include vocabulary, context, spoken English, and various other linguistic elements during the learning process, not to mention the opportunities for them to interact with each other in the target language.

An English camp initiated by several teachers at an Islamic State School based in a rural area in Riau province, Indonesia, is relevant for one best practice. This program is an extracurricular activity the school instigated outside the official curriculum structure. A number of students who participated in this program were obligated to follow a set of language activities that had been prepared by the school. Students stayed together in one hostel for at least six months, accompanied and guided by some English teachers. Students are compelled to use English daily in their daily interactions and communication. Here they have to keep listening to many English inputs, such as listening to English tapes, watching English movies, or discussing a topic in English. The result is very encouraging as these activities seem to be effective in enhancing students' English proficiency.

There are a number of English achievements accomplished by the Islamic State School students who participated in this English Camp program. For instance, this school was chosen to be the representative of the Province of Riau for the national English Speech Contest in the *Ajang Kompetisi Seni dan Olahraga Madrasah Aliyah*/Art and Sports Championship of Islamic High Schools (AKSIOMA). Then this school also represented Riau Province in the competition of the English language courses held by the National Department of Education. In addition, some students of this school have also won the National School Debate Competition (NSDC) at the district level, outperforming the well-known pilot school of the region – 'SMA Pintar' (a pilot school managed by the Ministry of National Education where only high achieving students admitted in this school). Furthermore, the English Camp students also triumphed in other competitions at the Riau Province level, for example being the second runner-up in the Story Telling Competition of Sumatra English Olympiad (SEO) and several times entering the final round of the National Speech Contest with the last time managing to get the 3rd place.

Considering the rapid and impressive development of the English Camp, this study aims to investigate what strategies and featured programs are carried out in the camp to improve their students' English skills. So far, several similar studies have reviewed the English Camp of Pare Kediri, located in East Java Indonesia (Hamonangan, 2020; Nurhayati et al., 2013; Lathifah et al., 2020; Putera, 2019). However, no comprehensive one has explored how the English Camp of this state Islamic high school developed and became a pilot school in Riau and its surrounding areas. For this particular reason, this research was conducted, and it filled the void in the literature.

Methodology

This research employs a qualitative approach with a case study design (Yin, 2002). It aims to explore the strategies and programs owned by the English Camp of the Islamic State School as an effort to enhance their students' English proficiency. The data were collected from September to October 2021 through a semi-structured interview and documentation. We interviewed the administrator of the English Camp of this school – Mr Seprion, M.Pd. He was deliberately chosen as the main resource and informant because of his roles as the camp's initiator and main organizer.

Due to the social distancing policy during the pandemic, the interview was done via WhatsApp's Voice Note. Then, these voice note recordings were transcribed verbatim. Besides the interviews, the research data was also taken from the informant's presentation recording for the Ministry of Religion that was published online on YouTube. Just like the voice note, the recording of the webinar presentation was also transcribed, but selectively. Furthermore, this research also reviewed a few additional documents, such as the description of the English Camp program that was on the school website, as well as the informant's presentations that had been documented on the YouTube account of the Ministry's GTK Madrasah Berbagi (Madrasah's Sharing Session).

We analyzed the data inductively through thematic analysis procedures to find themes and answers to research questions. Our analysis was guided by the following research questions: 1) What contents/materials are covered in the English Camp? 2) What are teaching strategies practiced by teachers in the camp? 3) What are the featured programs in the camp that deem enhancing the students' English proficiency, specifically their speaking ability?

We coded our data to generate categories (e.g., curriculum contents, learning strategies, and featured programs) which then enabled us to recognize major (e.g., contextual learning strategies, learning commitment) and minor themes (e.g., English Zone, experiential learning, examination with university lecturers).

To ensure the reliability of the analysis, we used NVivo software as a tool to manage the data and conduct the analysis systematically. After the data were imported into the software, the coding process was then done. It was first conducted by categorizing the findings based on the research questions. All themes that emerged were then categorized and stored under specific codes. These codes were revisited several times to see if they have been located under relevant themes. The revisit was done by reading and comprehending the essence of data collected from the participants. NVivo has helped us do this rechecking more easily, as all data and the emerging themes were easily accessed in one place. After thoroughly analyzing the data, we finally come up with several themes as previously mentioned.

Findings

Profile of the English Camp

Interviews with the key informant recorded the history of the establishment of this English Camp. Originally, this program was an English extracurricular project initiated by several teachers at the Islamic State School (MAN 1) Kuntan Singingi in 2011. This school is located in Kuantan Singingi region, about 165 kilometers away from the capital city of Riau province, Pekanbaru. At that time the school was led by Drs. Zulkifli, M.Pd. As part of extracurricular activity, this school sent some of its teachers to Pare's English Camp in East Java to study and do internships there in the early years.

Being inspired by the success of Pare's English Camp, this Islamic state school made a breakthrough by opening its own Intensive English Course class for its students. The main difference between their English Camp and that of Pare is in terms of the management aspect. While Pare's English Camp is managed by private individuals enabling them to have the freedom to be creative without being bound by all government rules and curriculum, this English Camp is initiated and managed by personnel of government schools. This project was initially implemented under the Deputy Head of the Religion and Language Development program.

In 2014, the English Camp of Taluk Kuantan was officially established. It is organized under a foundation in the name of an individual school leader. The reason is that schools are generally not allowed to have their own foundations. After almost eight years, the English Camp already has more than 700 alumni. The majority came from students of the Islamic State School itself while the rest came from other schools around Riau province, such as Dumai, Bengkalis, Inhil, and Kampar. Some are even those from outside the province of Riau, such as from schools located at Lubuk Pakam, North Sumatra.

The development of this English Camp is quite rapid. Many achievements have been made and brought the good name of the Islamic State School to the national level. One of these achievements is that the Islamic State School won the Best *Madrasah* in Indonesia in 2015. Students of the Islamic State School also triumphed in other competitions, including the English Debate Competition at the Senior High School level in Kuansing and the Speech Contest at the Sumatra English Olympiad (SEO) at the University Riau.

Currently, this English Camp has received national attention from the Ministry of Religious Affairs in Indonesia. This project has become a reference for other schools in organizing innovative English programs. Recently, the initiator and administrator of the English Camp, Mr. Seprion, M.Pd, was invited by the Ministry of Religion of the Republic of Indonesia as a keynote speaker to a webinar entitled 'Madrasah Sharing Event, related to International Language Development at the Ministry of Religion'.

Course Contents

In terms of curriculum, this English camp focuses on improving students' oral communication skills through developing vocabulary, grammar, speaking practice, and language expressions. To strengthen these aspects of oral competence, the camp also includes learning materials related to pronunciation, phonetic symbols, and native-like pronunciation, mainly American English accents.

> "We have seven learning activities per day (two camp sessions and five more afternoon sessions). The camp session is after the dawn prayer when students learn vocabulary. They memorize at least ten words each day. Then for the afternoon session, we start from 8.30 in the morning until 9 o'clock. Then from 9 to 11, it's called a grammar session. In this grammar session, the students learn basic grammar, like mastering 16 tenses. ... Then, also at 10.45 - 12.00, the students learn speaking. ... So in total, there are five sessions; two grammar, two speaking, and one public speaking. Now for grammar and speaking materials, the students learn pronunciation and the American accent after the third-month mark. We provide pronunciation materials, introduction to phonetic symbols, how to read phonetic symbols, how to make word connections, how to change strong form to weak form ...."

~Interview with Mr. Seprion, 8 October 2021

The data shows that the English camp has a comprehensive course contents which cover the four English skills as well as language aspects such as grammar, vocabulary, and pronunciation. Apart from the subjects above, this English camp also delivers some materials that focus on oral skills such as public speaking.

> "From 2.00 to 3.30 in the afternoon, the students study speaking for the second session. After *Asr prayer,* 4 o'clock, they start again until 5 o'clock the last session of learning Public Speaking. Here, the students learn choral speaking, roleplay, storytelling, speech, and others."

> ~Interview with Mr. Seprion, 8 October 2021

Learning Strategies

Some themes emerged from the analysis of interviews with Seprion, and from the analysis of his presentation on a Webinar hosted by the Ministry of Religion on International Languages at Madrasah. The themes are classified into course contents, learning strategies, and featured programs. A summary of the findings can be seen in the following Figure 1.
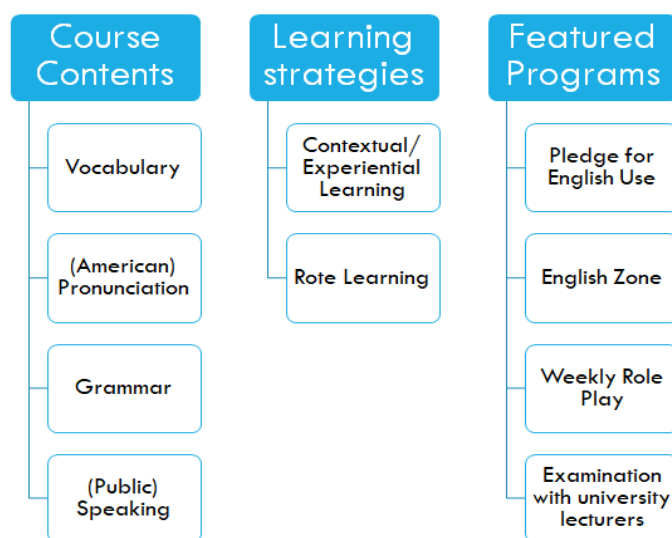

Figure 1. Emerging Themes from Data Analysis

Contextual Learning

The next result of the interviews showed that the main strategy used in the learning process at the English Camp is experiential learning strategies which lie under a contextual learning theory. This English Camp implements this strategy by only allowing students to communicate with teachers or each other using English and by interacting directly with native speakers. Camp students can interact with these native English speakers when they voluntarily visit their camp or when they conduct field tests in the form of excursions to tourist attractions abroad, such as Malaysia and Singapore. The students are required to be active in 'hunting' foreigners or looking for native speakers to practice their English (see Figure 2).

> "Then since the fourth generation from before the pandemic, we had the opportunity to take our students abroad, such as Malaysia and Singapore with the route from Batam."

> ~Interview with Mr. Seprion, 8 October 2021

Figure 2. 'Hunting Foreigner' Activity for Field Tests

This contextual learning is also employed when students look for examples in their conversations and communication during camp. The students are directed to use examples that are close and connected to their lives, not something foreign.

> "So, I often say to the teachers, I told them a question like 'how tall is the Monas' should not be used because there is no Monas in our area. We have 'pacu jalur'. So, if you want to ask a question, just ask that one 'How long is the line of *pacu jalur*, for example. Indeed, contextual expressions that are true with students' surroundings are used in everyday conversation by students at camp, on trips, with each other or teachers."

> ~Interview with Mr. Seprion, 8 October 2021

In addition to test facilities and language practice, this excursion is also a proposition to learn and understand foreign cultures for camp students. This is an opportunity for them to see how the outside world is and learn not only the culture outside Kuantan Singingi, but also the culture of people abroad. On top of that, excursions to Singapore and Malaysia are expected to inspire and motivate them to one day be able to continue their study overseas.

> "Besides learning English, they also learn cultural differences while in Malaysia and Singapore. The term knowing or understanding foreign cultures is called Cross Culture Understanding (CCU). And that's what we do in our madrasa. On the other hand, when we interviewed students about why they were interested in joining MAN, their answer was that they were interested in going abroad. They want to master English and want to go abroad."

> ~Interview with Mr. Seprion, 8 October 2021

Thus, this contextual learning has had various positive impacts on the growth of the English Camp students. Not only do they have the chance to practice their English directly with native speakers, but also they have an opportunity to gain new experiences, see the outside world, learn about other people's cultures, and get inspired to keep moving forward and flap their wings for a brighter future through education.

Regarding the teaching methodology, this English Camp practices a variety of approaches as a result of a combination of learning methods that have been applied by instructors from other institutions, including the method used in Pare's English Camp and Modern College, Adzkia English Course in Padang. This is the place where Mr Seprion used to teach. Learning activities start with ice breaking, scene setting, presentation, and cooling down at the end.

> "So it is a mix; experience in Pare, then my experience teaching at ... AEC and ... at Modern College. It turned out that I felt that there was a lack of learning in Pare, so I combined it with that and Alhamdulillah, I transferred it to my colleagues. And starting from the ice breaking: scene setting, presentation, whiteboard consolidation, drilling, control, practice, free practice, cooling down. Those are the patterns that make our learning interesting. "

> ~Interview with Mr. Seprion, 8 October 2021

Rote Learning

Additionally, the English Camp also applied the rote learning method in their learning process, particularly in memorizing materials related to language expressions.

> "In the evening after the Isha prayer, the students are given an Expression session. So conversations or routine expressions are used daily, students get ten expression numbers every day. They're also memorized. Every week, it will be tested like a verse, the difference is that this is an expression. What people usually say every day is what our students memorize".

> ~Interview with Mr. Seprion, 8 October 2021

The choice of this rote method is somewhat different from what practitioners believe in language learning with a communicative approach. Normally they tend to avoid memorizing activities. The process of teaching vocabulary and grammar in the view of a communicative manner would be better done indirectly through the use of the language in situations that are close to real situations. In brief, the rote method will not be practical if it is not contextualized by creating an atmosphere that is connected to students' daily lives.

Featured Programs

Extending the themes of the learning strategies, this study also found some featured programs that might have positively contributed to the effectiveness of the English Camp program in the field.

Pledge for English Use

One of the important strategies carried out by the English Camp at the Islamic State School in the early days of students participating in camp activities is to declare a pledge together that as camp participants they will fully use English only in every communication to one another.

> "… In the fourth month, we pledge together that the camp students no longer speak Bahasa but 100% Arabic for those who take the Arabic camp and 100% English for those who join the English camp."

> ~Interview with Mr. Seprion, 8 October 2021

> "The English/Arabic Camp Pledge activity is held after the Monday ceremony where the students apply or practice English or Arabic without speaking Bahasa at all. There is a term "No English, no Service"

> ~ Seprion's Seminar Presentation, 29 September 2021

Technically the pledge is conducted after the morning ceremony at the school. Each camp participant stands in front of all students and teachers and wears a camper's uniform. The camp leader then reads out the pledge related to *'no English, no service'*. Each participant repeats the pledge solemnly and carefully (see Figure 3). After the pledge is recited, each camp participant is officially bound by their commitment.

Figure 3. The Recitation of 'No English, No Service' Pledge

English Zone

Besides the contextual approach that allows students to learn and use English directly in the real world as discussed previously, analysis of the interview and documentation also found a number of excellent programs of English Camp at the Islamic State School. One of them is to set one area in the camp location as the English Zone. This is a zone where anyone entering the area must communicate in English. In this English Camp, the area used as the English Zone is the laboratories.

> "In the laboratory, there are only carpets and a TV connected to foreign broadcasts and can be used at any time. In addition, in labor, there is a reminder on the wall that whoever enters the labor is not allowed to speak Bahasa, English, or Arabic only. Our labor prioritizes functions over means and infrastructure."

> ~ Seprion's Presentation Seminar, 29 September 2021

The obligation to speak English is also applied when students are assigned to be on the committee for the MTLC competition (a language competition organized by the school).

> "Next is MTLC activities. It is an organizational activity where the committee is the English Camp students and Arabic Camp students. They are not allowed to use Bahasa and have to serve the contestants well. The committee prepares everything needed during the competition, starting from raising funds, inviting participants, etc."

> ~Interview with Mr. Seprion, 8 October 2021

The atmosphere explained above has promoted a conducive learning environment and community for students to learn to use English in real-world situations. Not only that, but students have also unknowingly practiced being responsible, communicative, and confident individuals, especially in terms of speaking English.

Weekly Roleplay Performance

Another excellent program that could have accelerated the growth of English Camp students' speaking skills is the 'weekly roleplay performance'. Just like its name, it is a weekly activity usually held on Saturday mornings at school.

For the roleplays, all students in the school are allowed to join, not just the camp students. In this activity, students in groups perform roleplays on various topics for about 20-30 minutes in front of everyone in the school. After that, they are given comments and feedback from the teachers and the present audience.

> "Then roleplay activities every Saturday morning. Not only camp students but regular students can also join. Even alumni camps can, and there are times when they appear according to schedule. Usually, in one semester, each class can perform roleplay 1-2 times. So it has to be properly prepared and contested. This is an example of how students are challenged to display the results of their learning."

> ~Interview with Mr. Seprion, 8 October 2021

Examination with Lecturers

This is one of the distinctive features of the English Camp program at the Islamic State School. Since 2016, they have always involved several lecturers from Universitas Riau to become examiners and contributors to the camp students' English improvement. Some lecturers were deliberately invited to give assessments as well as provide feedback and motivation to the students regarding English and other matters related to education.

> "Next is the English exam process. What is the result of our mutual agreement is that those who test the English camp children are English lecturers who are alumni of universities in English-speaking countries. In the photo is Dr. Afrianto Daud. He is a graduate of S2 and S3 from Australia."

> ~ Seprion's Seminar Presentation, 29 September 2021

The invitation of lecturers from universities as a team of examiners is to let students interact and get exposed to the figure of a lecturer. Culturally in Indonesia, the position of lecturers is often considered 'superior' and highly respected. Lecturers are often regarded as individuals with high intelligence and a lot of knowledge. For those who are not used to it, dealing with lecturers can make someone nervous and apprehensive. Accordingly, if English Camp students have experienced interacting with lecturers earlier, they are expected to be more confident when becoming university students in the future.

Challenges during the camp

As additional data, we also examined some challenges the camp has encountered during the program. According to the key informant of this study, the camp has generally run well without serious obstacles. Some challenges did appear during the first year of establishment, particularly related to the adjustment with regular curriculum policy in the state Islamic school. As the students join the camp, they have to leave the regular classes at school. Yet, the camp organizer can deal with it well by intensively communicating with related authorities.

> "At first, there were obstacles because our program was not very familiar yet to many parties at school. The issue was about the regular learning at school. The campers have to stay in the camp and leave the regular class. Some teachers seem couldn't accept that. As if this broke the rules. We don't have permit from the central office to allow students to leave the regular class."

> ~ Follow-up interview with Seprion, 24 January 2023

The only serious problem they had was when the camp had to shut down for almost two years due to pandemic. This closure has disrupted the learning process and slowed down the students' learning progress significantly.

> "We don't really have a big problem during the camp. Yet, one of the most significant challenges we had was during pandemic due to lock down policy. There are two camp generations that have to leave the camp due to Covid and shifted to online learning mode. This pandemic has significantly affected the quality of learning in the camp."

> ~ Follow up interview with Seprion, 24 January 2023

Discussion

Apparently, the English camp has practiced some ideas of contextual learning in managing teaching and learning activities during the camp. In general, contextual learning is a theory that believes "learning occurs only when students process new information or knowledge in such a way that it makes sense in their frame of reference" (Hull, 1995, p.23). In practice, teachers can relate the material they teach to students' real-world situations and encourages students to make connections between their knowledge and its application in their daily lives. This approach was developed based on the opinion of Dewey (1916) who believes that students will learn much better if they can connect what they learn with what they already know in their real and daily lives. In the case of this English camp, the practices can be seen, for example, when the students practice English with native speakers during the field trip or when they interact with other students using English in their daily communication in the camp life.

What this English camp has done can be further discussed using input hypothesis (Krashen, 1988) and interaction hypothesis (Long, 1985) as theoretical frameworks. The input hypothesis argues that one can learn a language naturally as far as he or she is exposed to sufficient comprehensible inputs. The interaction hypothesis suggests that interactive strategies such as language input adjustment and structural adjustment can help learners understand and assimilate language inputs.

In order to create an environment with this comprehensible input, Krashen (1988) emphasized that teachers have to generate a learning condition that allows students to communicate meaningfully and interact with one another by using English. In the case of this study, the making of an English Zone in this English camp can be said as an example of the provision more comprehensible input on the student's learning process naturally. The English Zone has facilitated the students in the camp to get exposed to English inputs. That is when they hear other students speak English on a daily basis. Following Krashen's proposition, the acquisition of language happens in trying to understand what others say or when learners hear an informational discourse and try to understand its meaning. Furthermore, the camp has also been conducive to using English naturally for communication purposes without worrying much about the accuracy issues. In other words, the camp focused more on the meaning of the language, not the form.

The English Zone has actually been performed by many schools and other English learning communities (Pratiwi et al., 2020; Syahidah, et al., 2019; Wibowo, 2014). However, what is unique in this specific English Zone is the provision of supporting equipment in the mandatory English-speaking zone, such as TV sets that are connected to various English language channels. This way, the students will feel a conducive atmosphere with sufficient exposure to English input. As stated previously, research shows that exposure to intense language input is an important precondition that supports language acquisition, both first and second language (Al Zoubi, 2018; Baroto, 2016; Muñoz & Cadierno, 2021).

What is practiced by the camp can be further discussed using the interaction hypothesis by Long (1985), which emphasizes the provision of interactive process between two parties (native speakers and learners) under some degrees of language adjustment. The adjustment can be in the form of language forms that make language input closer to the learners' levels or it can be adjusting in terms of structure and function of discourse leading to the students' comprehension of input through the assistance of asking questions, repeating speeches, and explaining meaning (Liu, 2022).

 The 'hunting foreigner' program is a clear example of the practice of the interaction hypothesis in the camp. The program has enabled the students to interact naturally with the native speakers, meaning that can communicate and use the language in a natural setting. At the same time, their English is enhanced through asking questions, answering the questions, listening to the answers, or explaining a topic to the native speakers.

The weekly roleplay has also facilitated the students to experience interactive strategies to enhance their English development. This weekly role play during the camp not only facilitates students to use the language in more real life contexts, but also provides students with more comprehensible input to progress their learning. A number of studies have proven that role play is one of the helpful methods to enhance the oral skills of English learners (Aliakbari & Jamalvandi, 2010; Alzboun, et al., 2017; Guilfoyle & Mistry, 2013; Krebt, 2017). Roleplay enables students to use English in real and meaningful situations. Students can absorb vocabulary and use it contextually. Furthermore, roleplay has supported a conducive environment for students to get sufficient language input by listening to dialogues and practicing them weekly. Negotiation of meanings also takes place as students are collaboratively preparing for their performance in English, i.e., role play.

Involving university lecturers as examiners during the English camp is another unique practice conducted by this English camp. This practice can also be seen as a practice of the input and interaction hypotheses. This involvement could have positively impacted the students' identity formation as language learners. They could have been motivated and inspired to practice and use English more after their early interaction with the university professors. The university lecturers have acted here as significant others who have played role as role model as well as inspiratory for the students' English learning journey. In the context of identity formation, the self is fundamentally relational— that is, entangled with significant others (Andersen et al., 2002). The significant others are those who have an important influence or play a formative role in shaping the behaviour of another. The involvement of the university lecturers for the examination as well speaking in the seminar during the camp has positively impacted part of students' identity as language learners in this English camp.

Conclusion

The present study revealed that the English Camp at an Islamic State School in Riau had provided examples of good practice in the English learning process outside the formal education or the official school curriculum. The camp has successfully done something beyond the mainstream. This camp applies learning strategies in contextual English learning, which allows students to get exposed to comprehensible inputs and have a conducive environment to use English in real life situation. The success of the English Camp at the Islamic State School should be imitated and used as a model for many other schools in Indonesia; it takes courage to innovate and find strategies and methods of learning English in schools. Approaches, strategies, and programs that allow students to be exposed to sufficient language inputs

and use English in real situations, such as what has been done at English Camp the Islamic State School, can be good references and practices that other schools can take note of and follow.

Recommendation

We encourage other schools in Indonesia to pay a visit to the English Camp portrayed in this paper so they can learn more and get inspired on how to manage such a camp. In addition, the ministry of education and ministry of religious affairs in Indonesia could use this English camp as a best practice in finding ways to improve high school students' English proficiency in Indonesia. For other researchers, it is recommended to conduct further research, especially on the future sustainability of similar camps. Collecting data from multiple resources with significant participants is also recommended so similar studies in the future could get more comprehensive data leading to the enhancement of the findings credibility.

Limitation

We note that the qualitative study was limited in terms of the number of participants, data sources, and methodological choices. Collecting data from multiple sources, such as teachers, students, school principals, and parents, may yield more detailed information on the subject. For example, conducting participant observation in one of the camp's featured programs will likely give us a clearer picture of how it promotes second language acquisition. For this reason, we suggest that future researchers can investigate this topic with a more rigorous design and richer data so it can shed light on different aspects of the study.

Authorship Contribution Statement

Daud: Designing the study, collecting and analyzing the data, and writing the first draft of the manuscript. Astuti: Providing critical revision of the manuscript as well as adding some relevant studies to strengthen the theoretical framework and the discussion.

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