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# The Implementation of the Daily English Conversation (DEC) Program at Walisongo Islamic Boarding School

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## Abstract

This study aims to investigate the implementation of the Daily English Conversation (DEC) program and its role in improving students' speaking skills at the Walisongo Islamic boarding school. This study employed a qualitative approach, using a case study method. Data were collected through interviews and observations. This research involves 40 students from Class 4 of the Language Improvement Section (LIS), who actively participated in a daily English conversation program. The interview participants included several fourth-grade students of the LIS, serving as a purposively selected sample. Thematic analysis was used to analyze the data. The results showed that the program was implemented systematically through various activities, including vocabulary building, daily conversations, public speaking exercises, and activities such as Language for Fun and Morning Tea. The institutional structure involving student leaders supported the program. The habit of using English in daily life can improve vocabulary, fluency in speaking, and self-confidence. It can be concluded that this program is highly effective in improving students' speaking skills and can be applied in other boarding school educational institutions.

**Keywords**: *Daily English Conversation; Speaking Skills; Islamic Boarding School*

## Introduction

Language is a communication tool used by humans in their daily lives as a means of conveying information to others. As humans cannot live alone and inevitably need each other, conversation is important for humans. English, as an international language, is becoming increasingly important and is even necessary for anyone who wants to succeed in this increasingly advanced world. English is also an integral part of Indonesian education. English language

learning encompasses four language skills: listening, reading, speaking, and writing. Speaking skills are one of the four skills that must be developed in every English language learning program (Aulia et al., 2021). Speaking skills play an important role in English, enabling speakers to share knowledge and information with others. Speaking is the first way to interact with others in social or community environments (Beay et al., 2023). Speaking ability is also an indicator of language learning success. However, it is very difficult for beginners to learn to speak a foreign language, especially English. They may experience difficulties in speaking for various reasons, including a lack of ideas to talk about, a lack of appropriate vocabulary to express ideas, or a lack of opportunities to speak.

Speaking is a productive oral phraseology skill, similar to speakers who make oral presentations using words and phrases they remember. It is more complex than it initially appears and requires more than just using words. Interactive speaking situations consist of discussions and phone calls where people listen and speak for a while. People have the opportunity to ask for clarification, repeat words and phrases from their discussion partners, and they also have the opportunity to ask for clarification (Sharma & Puri, 2020). In learning English as a foreign language, speaking is one of the most crucial skills for effective communication. However, many students often struggle to speak fluently with confidence due to a lack of practice in direct conversation in real-life situations. When someone speaks English with another person, it is called a conversation. A good conversation requires a balance between simplicity and detail, staying on topic, and changing it by asking questions and answering them.

A conversation is where someone talks to another person about important or unimportant things. Conversations can also be between two or more people. In these conversations, two people talk to each other in turn, not at the same time: one person talks about something and then stops to talk about something else (Maziyah et al., 2023). One important component that can help develop a person's speaking skills is a language-rich environment where students are encouraged to use English regularly in their daily lives. Islamic boarding schools are one type of institution that has the ability to provide such an environment because they are not only educational institutions but also communities where students live and interact with one another.

Walisongo is one of the Islamic boarding schools located at the Ngabar Ponorogo area of East Java. This boarding school is one of the boarding schools that implements a program of speaking using two languages, namely Arabic and English. These two languages are used by students as their daily language for conversation with one another. The Daily English Conversation Program at this boarding school is a strategic effort to improve the speaking skills of the students. This program requires the students to use English in their daily activities, which helps them become more familiar with vocabulary,

sentence structure, and conversation patterns. Over time, the students will gradually become more comfortable with the vocabulary and will gain more confidence in speaking English.

There are some previous studies relevant to this research. Research by Ishak (2024) emphasized that daily language activities can enhance confidence and fluency in speaking. Asgara et al. (2022) stated that students at the boarding school feel happy about the habit of speaking English. Rahmi (2022) emphasized that English language teaching activities with daily conversations in the classroom are one of the necessary and beneficial efforts to improve students' speaking skills. In addition, Nazria (2025) researched the communication barriers faced by students learning English as a foreign language (EFL) in Indonesia and found that the main challenges include grammatical errors, pronunciation difficulties, and limited vocabulary, as well as psychological factors such as fear of making mistakes and lack of confidence.

Previous research has shown that daily English conversation programs can improve students' speaking fluency. However, these studies mostly focus on the benefits of daily practice or the difficulties faced by students, without providing an in-depth analysis of how a systematically structured daily speaking program is implemented in a boarding school environment.

Given this gap, further research is needed. This study was based on a constructivist view, which sees learning as an active process in which students acquire knowledge through their own experiences (Piaget, 2014). In particular, Vygotsky's sociocultural theory emphasizes that language development occurs through social interaction, scaffolding, and the Zone of Proximal Development (ZPD) (Veer, R. van der, 2014). In the DEC program, there are communicative tasks that can help students improve their speaking skills, and there is support from teachers and peers. In addition, this study also refers to the communicative language teaching (CLT) approach, as explained by Richards & Rodgers (2016), which emphasizes the importance of language teaching through meaningful interaction rather than mechanical memorization. Overall, this theoretical framework helps to understand how the DEC program helps students acquire speaking skills.

Therefore, the purpose of this study is to investigate how the Daily English Conversation (DEC) Program is implemented and to analyze the role of the Daily English Conversation (DEC) Program in improving students' speaking skills at the Walisongo Islamic Boarding School. This study is highly significant because it contributes to understanding how structured daily speaking programs can be effectively implemented in boarding school environments. The findings of this study provide important information for policymakers and curriculum designers on how to create communicative and context-based English language learning programs that can be integrated into Islamic educational environments. This research also provides practical insights for educators and language

program developers who aim to improve students' communication skills through the use of in-depth and contextual language. In addition, this research can be a reference for other Islamic boarding schools to use or modify similar language immersion programs to improve students' English skills while maintaining an environment that is balanced with international languages.

**Method**

This study employed a qualitative approach, utilizing a case study method. Qualitative research is a type of scientific research that aims to gain a better understanding of a phenomenon in its natural social context through intensive communication between the researcher and the phenomenon. Qualitative research is a research method based on post-positivist philosophy, used to study natural phenomena. The researcher is the primary instrument in this research, and data collection techniques are employed in a triangulation (combination) manner. The results of qualitative research emphasize meaning rather than generalization (Creswell & Creswell, 2023). The type of research used by researchers is a case study. A case study is a series of scientific activities carried out thoroughly and in depth on specific programs, events, and activities, whether at the individual, group, institutional, or organizational level, to gain a deeper understanding of the event. The event is a real-world event that is ongoing, not something that has already passed (Yin, 2018).

This research was conducted at the Walisongo Islamic Boarding School. This study involves 40 students from Class 4 of the Language Improvement Section (LIS), who actively participated in a daily English conversation program, serving as a purposively selected sample. To collect data, researchers used observation and interviews. Observation involves researchers writing field notes about the behavior and activities of individuals at the research site. Each observation lasted approximately 10-20 minutes and was conducted twice. By conducting interviews, researchers will obtain in-depth information from sources. The interview participants included several fourth-grade students or first-year high school students of the LIS section. Five students were selected based on the researchers' observations that they were very active students in the Daily English Conversation (DEC) program. The interviews were conducted, each lasting approximately 15-25 minutes.

The technique of selecting participants using purposive sampling is a sampling technique based on certain considerations. These participants were chosen because they were considered capable of providing in-depth information and were actively involved in the English conversation program on a daily basis. The interviews were conducted using a semi-structured interview method, allowing respondents to provide more in-depth answers, so that informants have the freedom to explore topics further according to their understanding and perspective. Additionally, this allows researchers to collect information that may not have been previously considered, resulting in more extensive and varied

interview outcomes (Sugiyono, 2013). This study combines observation and interviews to enhance credibility. Interviews reveal students' perceptions and personal experiences, while observations provide direct evidence of their participation in the DEC program. Comparing these two methods enhances the credibility of the results. Additionally, member verification was conducted by presenting a summary of the interviews to the five interview participants to ensure accuracy.

The data was analyzed through thematic analysis. Thematic analysis is a set of systematic procedures used to discover, analyze, and interpret thematic patterns in qualitative data, thereby gaining a deeper understanding of the phenomenon. Thematic analysis is not just technical coding; it also involves interpretive, creative, and reflective approaches. There are several common practices used in the thematic analysis process, namely reading and understanding the data, finding themes from all the data, making analytical notes during the theming process, exploring themes in the form of writing, photos, or other media, and identifying themes in greater depth (Wolgemuth et al., 2025). There are six phases in Braun and Clarke's thematic analysis process, as discussed in (Byrne, 2022).

The first step is to familiarize oneself with the data. Researchers read the interview transcripts repeatedly to understand them correctly. Next, the data is systematically coded to find the main ideas related to the research questions. Then, the codes are grouped and refined into several themes that reveal the main patterns of meaning. Each theme is examined, defined, and named to reflect its main concept. Finally, the results are presented with quotes from participants and the relationship between the themes and the research objectives. This process allows researchers to engage deeply with the data while maintaining their interpretive role in the construction of meaning.

Ethical approval was obtained from the secretariat of the Walisongo Ngabar Islamic boarding school, and each participant provided written consent. Pseudonyms were used to protect the participants' identities. In addition, reflective notes were kept to reduce researcher bias due to the researcher's role as an individual in a similar context.

## Results

There are several common patterns found in this study that describe the daily English conversation program at the Walisongo Islamic boarding school. Data was obtained through interviews and observation. The interview results attempt to describe the students' perspectives on daily English conversation. The data from the interviews will be explained narratively.

### *The Implementation of the Daily English Conversation Program at Walisongo Islamic Boarding School*

The Daily English Conversation (DEC) program at Walisongo Islamic boarding school is implemented as a routine language immersion policy. Students are required to speak English and Arabic alternately, with each language being used for two consecutive weeks. This system is designed to develop students' language skills and prevent them from becoming bored due to prolonged exposure to only one language.

This program involves all students from grades 1 to 6 or grades 7 junior high school to 12 senior high school. The program is organized and supervised by several organizations: LIS (Language Improvement Section) is an organization led by students (grades 4 and 3 intensive or grade 10 high school) who are responsible for the implementation of daily language activities, CLI (Central Language Improvement) is a supervisory board under Oswas-Pi that guides the operations of LIS and NLC (Ngabar Language Center) is a group of teachers who assist and oversee the daily implementation of the program.

This program includes several activities:

First is vocabulary building, this activity is conducted in front of each room after dawn and evening prayers, where LIS students teach vocabulary to other students. The vocabulary taught varies according to grade level and difficulty. First graders learn daily vocabulary, second graders learn verbs, and third and fourth graders learn sentences for each day. In this activity, LIS will provide only one vocabulary word in three languages: English, Arabic, and Indonesian. Examples of vocabulary given for first grade were buku - book - كتاب, for second grade menyelesaikan - wrap up - لف - يلف, for third grade lihat kata tersebut - look at the word - التفت - يلتفت, and fourth grade hatiku berdebar-debar - my heart is pounding - حفقان قلبي. LIS will first read the vocabulary word to the students, who will then repeat it. Not only will they recite the vocabulary word, but after the activity is finished, the students will be asked to write the vocabulary word they have learned in their respective books. On Saturday night, the books must be submitted to LIS. After that, on Friday morning, the students must memorize the vocabulary words written in their books and submit their memorization to LIS.

Students said that their vocabulary improved after participating in the DEC program.

> As one student explained, *"Before I entered the Islamic boarding school, my vocabulary was limited. But now, after entering the boarding school and participating in the DEC program, I am very happy because I have learned new vocabulary and I can understand a wide range of English, and I can also use it in our daily lives"* (Student A, Interview 1).

Second, daily English conversation. In their daily activities, students are required to speak with their friends, teachers, and others around them using English. This language use is scheduled every two weeks, alternating between English and Arabic, so that students do not get bored when speaking only one language continuously.

One student said, *"When it's time to use English in conversation, I always try to speak English with my friends. At first it was very difficult, but over time it became easy because it became a habit for me" (Student A, Interview 1).* Another student added*," I really like the system of two weeks of English and two weeks of Arabic because I don't get bored with using English continuously, but it is interspersed with the use of Arabic"* (Student B, Interview 2).

Third, Language for Fun (LFF) is learning outside the classroom (e.g., watching English-language films, reading, and writing). Examples of films shown included Disneyland and content from Gontor in English. This activity is conducted every Saturday at 2:30 PM, with LIS overseeing its implementation. During this activity, LIS will provide materials such as grammar to enhance students' knowledge and help them understand how to use proper sentence structures. In addition to receiving materials, students will also be given games or shown films to prevent them from feeling bored with the materials alone.

One student explained, *"With this language for fun, I can boost my confidence to practice teaching in front of other students"* (Student D, Interview 4). Another student added, *"This activity can really help students easily use English and follow the rules of the language because in this activity, students are taught the rules of English structure, and there are games so that students don't get bored during the activity"* (Student E, Interview 5).

Fourth, English morning. It is a learning session with LIS before classroom learning activities. This activity can be described as conversation practice, as LIS will provide students with a conversation text, and students will practice the dialogue text they have received with their partner. This activity is conducted every Monday morning before class. Examples of conversation practice in this activity were:

*Going to The Store*

*A: Where are you going?*
*B: I am going to the store. I need to buy something*
*A: Really? I need to go to the store too*
*B: Would you like to come with me?*
*A: Yeah, let's go together*
*B: Would you like now or later?*
*A: Now would be better*
*B: Ok. Let's go!*

One student said, "*This activity is very good for improving speaking skills, because by frequently practicing dialogues with friends, it will become a habit, making it easier to speak English*" (Student B, Interview 2).

Fifth, public speaking. This activity is held every Thursday afternoon after class and on Friday evenings. In this activity, students are asked to give a speech in front of their peers using three languages: English, Arabic, and Indonesian. This activity is called muhadlarah. It is not only about delivering a speech; this activity also involves students taking on roles such as MC, reciting verses from the Quran, and taking breaks, like singing, etc. This public speaking activity is useful for building students' confidence in public and improving their language skills.

One student admitted, *"At first, I was very scared and nervous, but after several times of participating in public speaking, I was able to speak in front of my friends boldly without any fear*" (Student C, Interview 3).

The last one, Friday morning tea, where external speakers are invited to motivate the students and provide insights into the English language. This activity is not always held on Fridays but depends on the schedule of the Ngabar Language Center. It is typically held once a month.

One student explained, *"I really enjoy the Morning Tea activities because we get to listen to guest speakers and, of course, gain new knowledge" (Student D, Interview 4).* Another student added, "*When the speakers shared their experiences with English and Arabic, it motivated me to improve my English and Arabic skills*" (Student B, Interview 2).

Teaching language structure and daily vocabulary expansion are also incorporated into this program to help students use English appropriately. The boarding school implements this language program with disciplinary consequences for those who violate the rules, and regular evaluations are conducted by the language department and teachers. One of the penalties for violations is that students are required to find and write down 30-50 vocabulary words and memorize them. The penalties imposed are not burdensome or difficult for the students, but are also beneficial for them.

Challenges Faced by Students

Despite its benefits, the DEC program also faces challenges, especially for new students. Many new students report that they struggle to use English effectively for communication due to their limited vocabulary and weak grammar.

One student explained, *"When I first entered this boarding school, I really wanted to speak English a lot, but my vocabulary was still limited and I still used incorrect grammar."* (Student C, Interview 3).

Disciplinary systems, such as memorizing and writing down thirty to fifty vocabulary words when the established rules are broken, also contribute greatly to language development. Although the sanctions are initially considered a burden, many students eventually realize that they are beneficial.

As one student said, "*At first I thought the punishment was too harsh and a burden, but when I received the sanction, it actually helped me learn new words faster and expand my vocabulary*" (Student E, Interview 5).
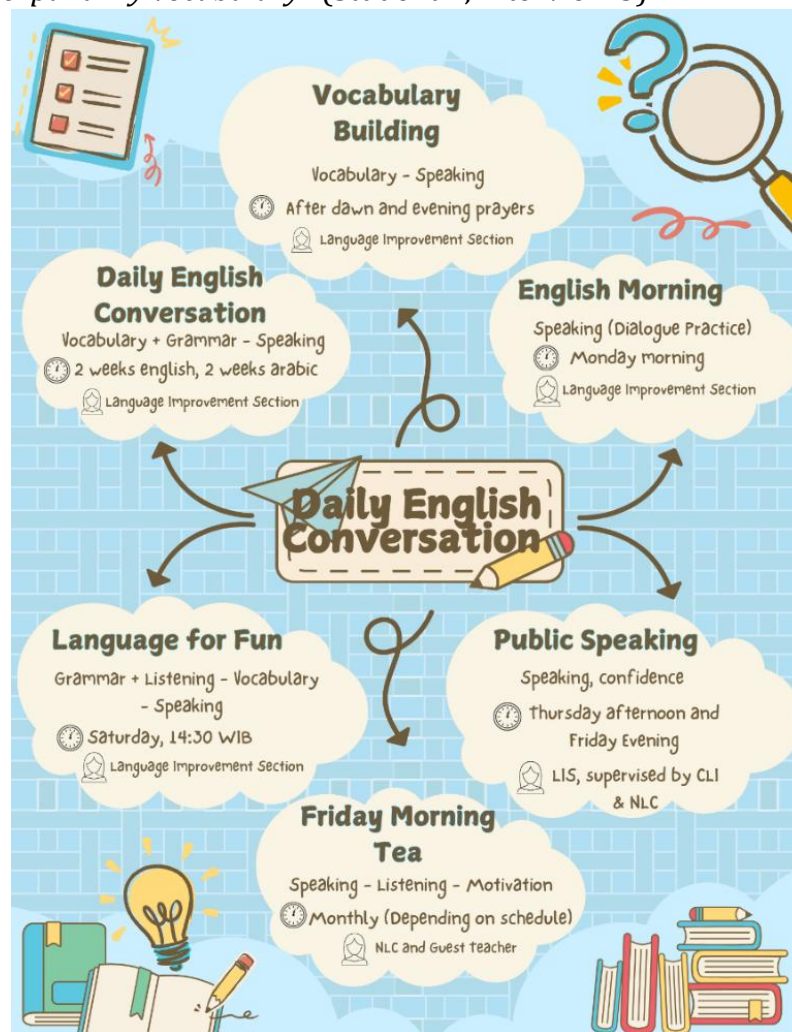


*Figure 1. Framework of the Daily English Conversation (DEC) Program and its Outcomes*

***The Role of the Daily English Conversation Program in Improving Students' Speaking Skills at Walisongo Islamic Boarding School***

Responses in interviews indicate that the Daily English Conversation (DEC) program plays an important role in improving students' speaking skills. By practicing English every day in daily conversation, students feel that their speaking and comprehension skills are improving. Students report that their speaking skills, vocabulary, and confidence in using English have improved significantly since the program was implemented. This program has a big impact on students, where when students are asked to come forward to present their assignments in class, they are very confident because they have often done daily English conversations, so when they are asked to come forward to the class, they are very fluent in speaking and are also able to use appropriate vocabulary and sentence structures.

Some of the respondents said that they are now better able to understand spoken and written English and actively practice their skills through conversation, music, movies, and reading. They do not just watch movies, but after watching the movie, students are asked to evaluate the movie, which can develop students' problem-solving and language skills. Movies are a very versatile and valuable learning resource, both inside and outside the classroom, that can improve students' learning and language skills, so that movies are a valuable source of student learning and offer good benefits. In addition, the environment also plays an important role, because their environment is an English-speaking environment, so their peers and a structured system help motivate them to consistently use English both inside and outside the classroom. Thus, this program has a very important role in developing students' English skills in the Islamic boarding school environment.

**Discussion**

The Daily English Conversation (DEC) program at the Walisongo Islamic boarding school has successfully demonstrated the power of immersive learning in improving students' English language skills. Immersive learning is based on the idea that language mastery is accelerated by exposure to language in meaningful and real contexts (Aisa et al., 2024). The implementation of this daily English conversation program demonstrates a systematic approach through the mandatory use of two languages—English and Arabic—alternating every two weeks. This approach provides a balance in the use of foreign languages and prevents students from becoming bored with using one language continuously.

This aligns with the concept of language exposure, where exposure to English in daily activities can have a positive impact on second language acquisition. With extensive exposure, it enhances the ability to speak and understand the language (Jahrani & Listia, 2023). When students are required to speak English for two full weeks interspersed with Arabic, they not only learn

the language but "live" in it. Students at this boarding school learn to understand and produce speech in everyday situations, such as talking with friends, speaking in class, and even joking around in the boarding school environment. Through this routine, they can improve their English-speaking skills effectively. This aligns with the principles of Communicative Language Teaching (CLT), which emphasizes that the best way to learn a language is through direct interaction with others. The English teaching method known as Communicative Language Teaching (CLT) or the communicative approach (CA) emphasizes communication and conveys the main objectives of language learning in order to achieve language goals (Haliwanda, 2021).

Support from organizations such as LIS (Language Improvement Section), consisting of fourth-year students, is responsible for ensuring the smooth running of this program by establishing English language usage rules, providing guidance to other students, and organizing informal activities such as morning lessons and Language for Fun. One of the activities in Language for Fun is that students are given a movie to watch and asked to evaluate it so that they can learn without getting bored easily. This way, the movie becomes a learning resource for students and has excellent benefits, such as improving their critical thinking and language skills (Lien & Dan, 2024).

CLI (Central Language Improvement) is the committee from the student council that plays a role in guiding and evaluating the performance of LIS and NLC (Ngabar Language Center), composed of teachers as primary mentors in pedagogical and linguistic aspects, who assist and oversee the daily implementation of the program. Thus, these three organizational bodies play a crucial role in maintaining the consistency and effectiveness of the Daily English Conversation (DEC) program. Close collaboration between teachers and students will create a conducive learning environment (Sulla et al., 2023). Teachers who always support and communicate positively with students can enhance student well-being and learning outcomes effectively.

This program not only focuses on daily conversation but also includes other activities such as Language for Fun, morning learning sessions with LIS to practice dialogues and improve English speaking skills, and Friday morning sessions where students memorize vocabulary words and enjoy Morning Tea. Since these activities are diverse and communicative, students can use English in various contexts, such as formal, informal, academic, and social settings, creating an enjoyable learning experience. With these various activities, students not only enjoy a better learning experience, but these diverse activities also help them adapt their language use to different situations, making them better prepared to face communication challenges in real life (Tsatzali & Beazidou, 2023). Additionally, one of the program's strengths is the daily vocabulary addition conducted after morning and evening prayers. However, the vocabulary

added varies by grade level, aligning with the difficulty level of each grade, and includes language structure learning tailored to daily contexts. Learning language structures in the context of everyday life can help students understand how to use language in real-life situations, making it easier for them to apply the vocabulary and structures they have learned in their daily lives. These vocabulary-building activities also motivate students to actively participate in learning and enhance their vocabulary (Fengyu, 2023). This creates a balance between fluency and accuracy, two crucial aspects of speaking skills. Students benefit greatly from this approach.

In the intensive and controlled environment of an Islamic boarding school, students live in an environment saturated with language. In such circumstances, using English becomes a routine and no longer a burden for the students. One of the most important components of this program is creating an environment rich in English, where students are surrounded by peers and educators who actively speak in English. Students are indirectly encouraged to learn in such an environment due to positive social pressure, which motivates them to develop appropriate language habits. Therefore, such an environment can increase students' motivation, confidence, and speaking skills, and there will be positive developments in their English learning (Zhang, 2023). This supports sociocultural learning, which emphasizes that social interaction is crucial for learning (Alkhudiry, 2022). By implementing a daily English conversation program, students will become accustomed to using English, and this habit will enhance their speaking skills and other language abilities.

With the implementation of the DEC program at Walisongo Islamic boarding school, there are students who say that because everyone around them speaks English, they do not feel afraid of making mistakes or feeling embarrassed. As a result, they are very confident in using English to communicate with their friends or people around them. This shows the importance of the affective filter hypothesis, which states that factors such as anxiety, self-confidence, and motivation greatly influence the success of language learning (Liu, 2023). The success of this program depends heavily on a supportive language environment and the absence of fear. The transition from learning to using the language occurs when English becomes a habit rather than an obligation. With this, when language use becomes a habit, students will feel comfortable, happy, and not afraid to use the language when speaking in their daily lives (Ginting, 2021).

In the DEC program at this boarding school, there are also sanctions for students who violate the language usage rules. Although these sanctions may seem severe at first, in the boarding school education culture that emphasizes discipline, responsibility, and compliance with rules, the sanction system is one of the best ways to ensure the program runs smoothly. In the boarding school environment, discipline is part of the character-building process and the habit of

living in an orderly manner (Hidayat & Hidayat, 2023).

Therefore, when students are required to use English during scheduled times and face penalties for violating this rule, it does not immediately create negative pressure. Instead, it is seen as a shared responsibility that must be fulfilled. Students are already accustomed to reward and punishment systems, so sanctions here serve as a reminder for them to adhere to the established rules. Some punishments can be beneficial for students who violate the rules. First is compliance, whereby developing relevant dispositions (e.g., knowledge and attitudes) in the punished party, the punishment can help foster compliance with fair rules. Second is conformity, where it is considered that punishment is useful to ensure that everyone follows fair rules, which is better than violating them. Third, empowering punishment can enforce and facilitate useful activities (such as learning and cooperating) or reduce the general likelihood of harm (Thompson & Tillson, 2023). Students will feel a moral and social responsibility to maintain the language environment that has been established if there are clear rules and consistent enforcement. This indirectly increases student active participation and fosters a culture of discipline in language learning.

This study provides a new perspective on the best way to implement a daily conversation program in Islamic boarding schools. Speaking skills are supported by the intensive boarding school environment, student-based organizational structure, and this activity-based approach, which shows that speaking skills can improve significantly. The scope and number of participants in this study are still limited. By comparing similar programs in various boarding schools or other educational institutions, future research can expand the scope. Additionally, the empirical evidence of this program will be strengthened by quantitative studies that measure students' speaking skills progress more objectively.

## Conclusion

Based on the research findings and discussions, the Daily English Conversation (DEC) program at Walisongo Islamic Boarding School is implemented systematically through an approach involving real-life or daily activities. This program is also strongly supported by student and teacher organizations and implemented through various communicative activities that encourage the use of English in the daily lives of students. The continuous use of language in daily life within the boarding school environment creates a conducive learning atmosphere and fosters sustainable language habits. The boarding school also imposes sanctions on students who violate language usage regulations to maintain discipline and consistency in language use, as education within the boarding school environment emphasizes character development.

Therefore, based on the above explanation, the Daily English Conversation (DEC) program at Walisongo Islamic boarding school is highly effective because it not only improves speaking skills but also enhances all language skills and students' self-confidence. The results indicate that such a program is highly suitable for implementation in other boarding schools. In addition to being suitable for implementation in other Islamic boarding schools, the results of this study can also be used as a reference for public schools, Islamic boarding school-based educational institutions, English teachers, and education policy makers to develop communicative, contextual, and sustainable language learning programs. Thus, the implementation of similar programs in various educational institutions can help improve students' overall English skills while strengthening their discipline and motivation to learn.

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