

THE USE OF ENGLISH IN DAILY LIFE IN INTEGRATED ISLAMIC ELEMENTARY SCHOOLS TO IMPROVE STUDENTS' SPEAKING SKILLS

Nazla Azzuhra^{1*}

Muhammad Rafi'i²

^{1,2} Universitas Muhammadiyah Sumatera Utara

*Email: nazlaazzuhra43@gmail.com

Abstract: *At the elementary school level, speaking skill development in English as a Foreign Language (EFL) contexts continues to be a major concern. Academic training is interwoven with Islamic beliefs and character education at integrated Islamic elementary schools, which offer a unique educational environment. This study investigates how students' speaking abilities in Integrated Islamic Elementary Schools are enhanced by the use of English in everyday classroom activities. Data were gathered using a qualitative descriptive research approach using document analysis, teacher and student interviews, and classroom observations. The results show that regular exposure to English through everyday activities—like salutations, classroom exchanges, and basic communicative exchanges—significantly improves students' fluency, vocabulary usage, confidence, and pronunciation. Additionally, combining English with Islamic principles fosters a relevant and encouraging learning atmosphere that promotes involvement. According to the study's findings, young students at Integrated Islamic Elementary Schools can develop their speaking abilities by regularly using English in classroom activities.*

Keywords: *exposure to the language, daily usage of English, speaking abilities, Islamic elementary school, and young EFL learners*

INTRODUCTION

It is often acknowledged that speaking fluency is an essential part of being proficient in the English language, especially for young students who are in a crucial stage of language and cognitive development. Speaking acts as a basis for the development of other language abilities at the elementary school level in addition to being a way of communication. However, improving speaking proficiency in English as a foreign language (EFL) is frequently quite difficult for pupils. These difficulties include low confidence in utilizing the target language, little exposure to the language, and a dearth of possibilities for real-world interaction circumstances. English instruction is mostly limited to formal classroom classes in many elementary school settings, where language use is usually concentrated on textbook-based

exercises rather than meaningful communication. As a result, rather than seeing English as a useful tool for everyday communication, students often view it as an academic subject. Particularly for younger students who gain the most from frequent exposure and contextualized language use, this condition may impede the natural development of speaking abilities. Integrated Islamic Elementary Schools offer a unique educational setting where character education and Islamic beliefs are blended with academic instruction. Teaching and learning procedures in these schools are supposed to foster social and moral development in addition to intellectual advancement. As a result, the design of English language training should take into account the religious beliefs, school culture, and everyday experiences of the pupils. Students are more likely to participate actively and form favorable attitudes toward speaking when learning English is integrated into comfortable routines and significant contexts. The employment of English in regular school activities is one teaching strategy that has drawn more and more attention. This method entails introducing basic English phrases into everyday exchanges like salutations, classroom directions, courteous requests, and brief chats. Students are encouraged to use English frequently without the stress that comes with formal speaking assignments through constant and organic exposure. Such regular routines could promote steady improvement, boost confidence, and lessen anxiety. There is still few empirical research on the use of English in Integrated Islamic Elementary Schools, despite its possible advantages. The majority of the research that has been done on speaking development has been done in conventional primary school settings; culturally and religiously integrated educational settings have received less attention. Research on how everyday English use in Integrated Islamic Elementary Schools works and how it advances children's speaking development is therefore necessary. The purpose of this study is to look into how regular usage of English can help kids in an Integrated Islamic Elementary School become more proficient speakers. The study aims to offer insights into how frequent English conversation helps speaking development in a setting that integrates language instruction with Islamic beliefs by looking at classroom practices, instructor viewpoints, and students' experiences. It is anticipated that the results would advance the field of teaching EFL to young students and provide useful guidance for teachers operating in comparable educational settings.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Speaking Techniques in EFL Primary Schools :Speaking proficiency is the capacity to use language correctly, responsibly, and fluently in social contexts. Speaking development in young learners is strongly associated with exposure, engagement, and activities that boost confidence. Frequent opportunities to use English verbally can greatly improve learners' communicative ability and lessen speaking fear, according to research.

English Language Exposure on a Daily Basis :The principle of language exposure, which contends that frequent interaction with the target language speeds up acquisition, is the foundation of the idea of everyday English use. Learners progressively absorb vocabulary, sentence structures, and pronunciation when English is used regularly in classroom activities and casual conversations. For primary school students who naturally pick up language through interaction and repetition, this method works very well.

Learning English in Integrated Islamic Schools:Integrated Islamic schools emphasize moral principles and religious observances while fusing Islamic education with national curricula. Islamic contexts, such as daily prayers, moral expressions, and courteous conversation, can be included into English lessons to generate relevant learning opportunities.

Students' motivation is boosted by this integration, which enables them to study English without feeling cut off from their cultural and religious identities.

Enhancing Speaking Capabilities with Contextual Education: The relationship between language training and students' everyday experiences is emphasized by contextual learning. Research indicates that pupils exhibit more participation and engagement when English is taught and practiced within familiar everyday routines. Speaking abilities can be developed by regular use of English in relevant and comfortable contexts, especially in Islamic primary school settings where routine-based activities are prevalent.

METHODS

Research Design: This study used a qualitative descriptive research approach to investigate how students' speaking abilities in Integrated Islamic Elementary Schools are enhanced by the regular usage of English in classroom activities. Since the study's goal was to gain a comprehensive knowledge of participants' experiences, views, and classroom practices rather than to quantify outcomes quantitatively, a qualitative method was deemed appropriate. The researcher was able to record realistic language use in its actual educational setting by concentrating on natural classroom interactions.

Research Setting and Participants: The study was carried out at an Indonesian Integrated Islamic Elementary School, where English is taught as a foreign language and integrated into regular classroom activities. English teachers and upper-grade elementary students who actively participated in everyday English communication during school events made up the participants. Because they had received more English teaching and were better able to communicate their experiences during interviews, upper-grade students were chosen. In order to offer pedagogical viewpoints on the application of everyday English use and its impact on students' speaking development, teachers were included. Purposive sampling was used to choose participants because they satisfied certain requirements pertinent to the study's goals, such as consistent use of English in class. This sample strategy made sure that the information gathered represented significant experiences connected to the subject of the study.

Data Collection: A variety of qualitative methods, such as document analysis, semi-structured interviews, and classroom observations, were used to gather data. The usage of English in everyday interactions, including greetings, classroom directions, courteous expressions, and quick talks, was observed in the classroom. Through these observations, the researcher was able to pinpoint language usage patterns and spoken replies from students in authentic learning environments.

Both teachers and students participated in semi-structured interviews to learn more about their perspectives and experiences with the use of English in regular classroom activities. The purpose of the interview questions was to get participants to explain how students' confidence, vocabulary growth, pronunciation, and readiness to speak were impacted by their everyday usage of English. To supplement the observational and interview data, document analysis was also carried out. Lesson plans, instructional materials, and school language regulations pertaining to the use of English were among the pertinent papers.

Data Analysis: Thematic analysis was used to examine the gathered data. The first step in the analytic process was data familiarization, which involved reading papers, interview transcripts, and observation notes several times in order to fully comprehend the data. After

that, preliminary coding was done to find significant units pertaining to the pupils' speaking progress. These codes were categorized under more general topics including speaking confidence, vocabulary use, and improved pronunciation. The themes that were found were then examined and analyzed to see how students' speaking abilities were impacted by their everyday use of English. To guarantee the validity and reliability of the results, great effort was taken throughout the analysis process to ensure consistency between the research objectives, data sources, and interpretations.

RESULT

The results of this study show that kids' speaking abilities in Integrated Islamic Elementary Schools are positively impacted by the regular usage of English in classroom interactions. According to observations made in the classroom, children showed growing familiarity with fundamental English expressions used in everyday situations including saying hello, requesting permission, following directions, and engaging in brief class discussions. Over time, children were able to communicate orally more naturally as a result of this regular exposure. Students' ability to produce brief utterances with fewer pauses and hesitations improved noticeably in terms of fluency. Students demonstrated functional communicative skills by efficiently conveying meaning despite inconsistent grammatical precision.

Instructors noted that even outside of organized speaking exercises, pupils' willingness to speak English freely increased. Another important result was the evolution of vocabulary. Students were able to internalize key terminology linked to classroom management, social interaction, and moral expressions through daily repetition of frequently used phrases and expressions. Additionally, as students benefited from ongoing teacher modeling and peer engagement, pronunciation gradually improved, especially for frequently repeated words. Additionally, a positive learning atmosphere was produced by fusing Islamic principles with English usage. English was used to develop moral behavior, civility, and respect, which made language use more contextually relevant and meaningful. This method seemed to boost pupils' confidence and lessen their fear when speaking English.

Overall, the findings show that using English on a daily basis serves as a useful informal speaking practice that enhances formal English training and helps students' speaking skills gradually improve, as seen by their improved capacity to start basic discussions, react correctly to classroom activities, and confidently communicate ideas. Students' speech flow and articulation improved over time, showing a decrease in hesitation and reliance on pauses. Learners were able to successfully communicate meaning even when grammatical precision was still uneven in the early stages, indicating that communicative competence evolved concurrently with linguistic awareness.

Additionally, frequent use of functional language in everyday classroom activities and ongoing exposure to well-known terms helped the steady increase in speaking abilities. Students were able to apply their language skills from guided activities to impromptu communication thanks to this regular practice. As a result, learners' usage of English became less daunting and more natural, highlighting the importance of regular classroom engagement as a solid basis for long-term speaking growth in elementary EFL contexts.

DISCUSSION

The study's findings provide credence to the idea that young EFL learners' speaking abilities are greatly enhanced by regular exposure to the target language. Students' increased confidence and fluency are consistent with communicative language education approaches, which prioritize meaningful engagement over isolated language drills. Students view English as a

practical communication tool rather than just an academic subject when it is incorporated into everyday activities. The improvements in vocabulary and pronunciation imply that oral production and language retention are improved by repetition in real-world situations. Frequent exposure to basic and well-known terms enables language acquisition to happen organically through usage and imitation for elementary school students. This result supports the notion that contextualized and repeated language input is most beneficial to young learners. An essential educational component is added when English is combined with Islamic principles. Students were able to learn English without encountering ideological or cultural conflict by connecting language use to moral and religious principles. Students' motivation and involvement rose as a result of this contextual relevance, which is crucial for the development of speaking. The results show that when language learning aligns with students' real-world experiences and institutional principles, it becomes more successful. Additionally, students' affective obstacles, such their dread of making mistakes, were lessened by the informal style of everyday English use. Decreased anxiety promoted verbal engagement and risk-taking, both of which are essential for the development of oral language. This bolsters the claim that students are more inclined to communicate in a familiar and encouraging setting.

In conclusion, the conversation emphasizes how regular usage of English in Integrated Islamic Elementary Schools not only enhances children's speaking abilities but also creates a supportive learning environment that strikes a balance between language growth and character education. In comparable educational settings, this method can be used as a useful model for EFL training, especially in elementary schools that seek to foster communication skills while upholding solid religious and cultural underpinnings. This model shows that regular language exposure incorporated into regular classroom activities is just as important to effective EFL training as formal teaching methods. This method promotes the development of speaking abilities in a way that is both pedagogically sound and developmentally suitable for young learners by placing an emphasis on natural interaction, repetition, and contextual application.

This paradigm also emphasizes how crucial teacher readiness is to conducting contextual and culturally sensitive language training. Therefore, EFL training programs ought to provide teachers with useful methods for incorporating English into regular social contacts, classroom management, and communication. With this kind of instruction, educators may foster a language-rich classroom where students feel free to use English meaningfully and confidently without worrying about making mistakes.

Adopting this model in EFL training can also assist educational institutions in transitioning from exam-oriented instruction to more learner-centered and communicative methods. Students are more likely to exhibit persistent involvement in speaking activities and acquire good attitudes about the language when English is regularly utilized as a functional communication tool. As a result, this approach provides a workable framework for EFL instruction that promotes long-term speaking growth, especially in educational settings that place equal emphasis on character development and language competency, while simultaneously boosting students' self-assurance, independence, and preparedness for communication. Students eventually gain the capacity to articulate ideas effectively, react appropriately in social situations, and actively participate in classroom conversation through consistent and meaningful language use. Learners can develop speaking abilities in a nurturing and values-based learning environment because to this balanced emphasis on character development and language mastery.

Additionally, by promoting regular exposure and interaction, incorporating everyday English use into standard classroom procedures supports long-term language development. With this method, students can continue to be motivated and have positive attitudes toward learning English while advancing at a developmentally appropriate rate. This paradigm is therefore especially appropriate for primary-level EFL training in culturally and religiously grounded educational environments since it promotes both short-term gains in speaking performance and long-term communicative competence.

CONCLUSION

This study shows that young students' speaking growth in Integrated Islamic Elementary Schools is significantly and favorably impacted by the methodical incorporation of English into regular classroom activities. By integrating English into everyday encounters, students can improve their speaking abilities in a more organic and long-lasting way than by restricting it to official instructional times. Frequent exposure through routine classroom activities helps students gradually improve their vocabulary, pronunciation, sentence structure, and general fluency while also boosting their oral communication confidence

The responsibility of educators in establishing intentional and encouraging language settings is one of the study's main conclusions. Students are more likely to use the language on their own when teachers regularly demonstrate how to use it for real-world classroom tasks, such giving directions, planning activities, and having quick conversations. This ongoing exposure helps students focus on meaning rather than grammatical precision by lowering their anxiety and dread of making mistakes. Over time, these circumstances encourage more engagement, increased self-assurance while speaking, and more fluid communication—all crucial elements of communicative competence

The results also emphasize how crucial it is to match English training to the cultural and religious backgrounds of students. Linking English instruction to Islamic principles and everyday routines improves relevance and comprehension in integrated Islamic educational environments. Speaking exercises become more significant and interesting when students are able to connect new language input to their prior knowledge, convictions, and life experiences. Presenting English as a language that happily coexists with Islamic beliefs promotes good attitudes toward language learning and establishes English as a useful tool for social interactions, values, and ideas in the classroom.

Additionally, this study highlights how contextualized and experience-based learning can help elementary school students become more proficient speakers. When language acquisition is integrated into everyday classroom activities, social interactions, and real-world scenarios, it becomes more durable. Context-based speaking exercises encourage students to engage in conversation and practice using language in familiar and pertinent contexts. Long-term language development in young learners is especially dependent on regular and repeated exposure in relevant circumstances.

From a pragmatic standpoint, the findings imply that educational establishments ought to consider English as a living language incorporated into daily interactions rather than just an

academic subject. Frequent, low-stress exposure fosters favorable attitudes toward speaking English and promotes consistent advancement over time. In order to maintain the purposeful and acceptable use of English in the school setting, teachers are urged to adopt instructional practices that place a high priority on emotional comfort, meaningful communication, and cultural sensitivity.

Lastly, this study suggests that future studies look more closely at the long-term impacts of constant exposure to English on general language proficiency and its relevance in various educational contexts. It would also be beneficial to look into how these methods might be formally included into curriculum without sacrificing their communicative nature. All things considered, this study provides a flexible and contextually grounded approach for teaching English to young learners, showing that regular practice, meaningful exposure, and encouraging learning contexts are essential for producing competent and self-assured English speakers.

REFERENCES

- Brown, H. D. (2007). *Principles of language learning and teaching* (5th ed.). Pearson Education.
- Cameron, L. (2001). *Teaching languages to young learners*. Cambridge University Press.
- Ellis, R. (2008). *The study of second language acquisition* (2nd ed.). Oxford University Press.
- Goh, C. C. M., & Burns, A. (2012). *Teaching speaking: A holistic approach*. Cambridge University Press.
- Harmer, J. (2007). *How to teach English* (2nd ed.). Longman.
- Krashen, S. D. (1985). *The input hypothesis: Issues and implications*. Longman.
- Lightbown, P. M., & Spada, N. (2013). *How languages are learned* (4th ed.). Oxford University Press.
- Nation, I. S. P., & Newton, J. (2009). *Teaching ESL/EFL listening and speaking*. Routledge.
- Richards, J. C. (2008). *Teaching listening and speaking: From theory to practice*. Cambridge University Press.
- Savignon, S. J. (2002). *Interpreting communicative language teaching*. Yale University Press.
- Slavin, R. E. (2015). *Educational psychology: Theory and practice* (11th ed.). Pearson Education.
- Tomlinson, B. (2011). *Materials development in language teaching* (2nd ed.). Cambridge University Press.

- Widodo, H. P., & Sudirman, S. (2019). Contextual teaching and learning in EFL classrooms: A study of primary education. *Journal of Language Teaching and Research*, 10(6), 1231–1239.
- Yusuf, M., & Rahman, F. (2018). Integrating Islamic values in English language teaching: Challenges and opportunities. *International Journal of Instruction*, 11(4), 597–612.
- Zainuddin, Z., & Perera, C. J. (2019). Exploring speaking anxiety among young EFL learners. *Asian EFL Journal*, 21(2), 86–104.