

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

This chapter focuses on the research background, research questions, research purposes, research significance, conceptual framework and previous studies.

A. Research Background

In this global era, the ability to communicate effectively in English has become essential for students. Mastery of English was essential not only for academic success but also for participation in the global employment and digital economy. Graddol (2006) stated that as English had taken over as the primary language in industries like science, technology, and international commerce, knowing the language was essential for students looking for possibilities around the world. According to Rao (2019), English was widely used all over the world, creating a need for learners to acquire communication skills to achieve success in their respective fields.

Furthermore, the school was the ideal setting for developing effective communication skills, particularly speaking skills. Schools, as formal educational institutions, had been recognized for their important role in developing students' language skills. Schools provided students with important opportunities to actively engage in English conversation with their peers and teachers by creating a structured atmosphere. This interactive environment supported students' development of English competence in a meaningful and sustainable way by encouraging them to apply the language skills they had learned in the classroom to real-life situations.

Madrasah acted as a center of Islamic religious education, providing education and guidance to develop students' understanding of religion, morality, and Islamic values (Sunarto, 2022). Syahid and Solicha (2017) stated that *Madrasah* had become part of inclusive education, encouraging a conducive atmosphere and learning environment. In addition, according to data from GIS *Madrasah*, there were five hundred and forty-six *Madrasah* in Indonesia, consisting

of MI (Islamic Elementary School), MTs (Islamic Junior High School), and MA (Islamic Senior High School) in the Tasikmalaya district. *Madrasah* were urged to innovate to support learning in all its forms, foster student creativity, and improve the standard of instruction.

Madrasah Aliyah (Islamic Senior High Schools), where the research was conducted, was located in a rural area. This school did not provide many opportunities for their students to use English outside the class due to the socio-cultural environment, which tended to use regional languages. Consequently, English was rarely used by the students in *Madrasah*. Students found it hard to have the chance to speak English in daily conversation. Thus, this made them not fluent and self-confident in speaking English.

Supported by Yusuf (2021), *Madrasah* students were often left behind in mastering foreign languages, especially English. *Madrasah* faced unique challenges in language education, including limited exposure to English in daily activities. Research conducted by Nashruddin (2015) indicated that *Madrasah* students were more familiar with using Arabic than English. In addition to *Madrasah* having additional subjects on Islamic religion, Arabic was also used as a communication tool in *Madrasah*. However, English needed to be learned to communicate Islam to people around the world. Therefore, English language teaching had become an increasingly important element in Islamic schools such as *Madrasah*.

Although *Madrasah* students were often seen as behind in English, preliminary observations showed otherwise. Many were eager to improve and, with the right support, could develop strong speaking skills. This challenged the stereotype and highlighted the need for programs that empower students in English proficiency.

Several previous studies on English Day programs had been conducted by previous researchers. First, a study by Tathahira and Nahrissa (2020) focused on how the English Day program at Insan Madani SMAS in South Aceh was perceived by teachers and students. Second, Sinaga (2018) investigated how students viewed the English Day Program's contribution to the improvement of their speaking

abilities. Third, a study by Wati (2022) focused on enhancing English language teaching at a *Madrasah* in Aceh through an English-Speaking Day program. Lastly, a study by Stenly et al. (2023) evaluated the implementation of the English Day Program at SMA 18 Makassar.

To overcome the above problems, this study tried to provide a solution by doing research on the English-Speaking Day program at *Madrasah*. The English-Speaking Day program was designed to create an immersive English-speaking atmosphere in which students had to communicate in English throughout the day. According to Liyanni (2015), English Day was a program implemented by schools to give students more time to practice English than the time they had in English classes. The *Madrasah* where this research was conducted had a program designed to engage students in learning English as a foreign language called the English-Speaking Day Program. During the English-Speaking Day Program, students had to use English in all daily activities. Daily activities here included opening and preparing classrooms, greeting teachers and friends, and visiting or doing activities at public facilities in the *Madrasah*. Thus, this program was given to students to facilitate an English learning environment and habit formation.

This research investigated how the English-Speaking Day Program empowered *Madrasah* students by enhancing their English-speaking abilities. Encouraging *Madrasah* students to speak English gave them real-world experience in speaking English in daily life, not only inside the class but also outside the classroom context. This English-Speaking Day program provided an opportunity for students to practice English with more self-confidence, since a greater comprehension of the program motivated them in speaking skills as well as gave benefits to the *Madrasah* as the research setting

B. Research Questions

The following questions are extracted from the concerns in this research:

1. How is the implementation of English-Speaking Day program at *Madrasah* to empower students' speaking skills?
2. What are students' responses towards the English-Speaking Day program at *Madrasah*?

C. Research Purposes

This research seeks to obtain the following objectives from the research questions above :

1. To explore the implementation of the English-Speaking Day program at *Madrasah* in empowering students' speaking skills.
2. To know students' responses towards the English-Speaking Day program at *Madrasah*.

D. Research Significance

This research contributed to theoretical frameworks of language education by exploring the effectiveness of language programs, such as the English-Speaking Day Program, within the *Madrasah* context. Practically, this study provided significance to the following:

1. Educators

The findings of this research supported educators by offering insights into effective strategies for language teaching in *Madrasahs*. Educators could utilize these research findings to refine their teaching methodologies and strategies to increase student engagement, and create supportive learning environments for language development.

2. Students

The practical significance of the research lies in its potential to empower students' learning outcomes. By equipping students with improved language skills, confidence, and communicative abilities, the English-Speaking Day Program provided them with the necessary activities for academic success, career advancement, and active participation to improve communicative competence in a globalized world.

E. Conceptual Framework

The concept of empowerment was rooted in the idea of having the capability and authority to take action. When someone was 'empowered,' it signified that they possessed the necessary skills and resources to effectively address tasks or challenges. This process of empowerment involves the development of skills and capacities to enable individuals to act (Jiang, et all 2019).

Empowerment was a process that allowed students to take control of their learning and improve their speaking skills through the English-Speaking Day Program. According to Page and Czuba (1999), empowerment could be described as a “process that fosters power in people for use in their own lives, their communities, and their society, by acting on issues they define as important.” From this definition, it could be concluded that empowerment was the process of enabling students to take control of their learning and develop their speaking skills.

Theories of empowerment included both processes and outcomes, suggesting that actions, activities, or structures might be empowering and that the outcomes of such processes resulted in a state of being empowered (Swift & Levin, 1987). To define empowerment theory precisely, it was necessary to distinguish between empowering processes and outcomes. Joining community organizations might have been one of the strategies that empowered individuals. Empowering processes at the community level might have included collective action to access government and other community resources (e.g., media). Empowered outcomes referred to operationalizations of empowerment that allowed the study of the consequences of empowering processes (Douglas D. Perkins & Marc A. Zimmerman, 1995).

The English-Speaking Day Program has been implemented as another strategy to help students develop their speaking skills. The purpose of this program was to encourage students in *Madrasah* to speak English well. Bygate (1987) defined speaking skill as the capacity to utilize oral organs for expressing ideas, intentions, thoughts, and feelings to communicate messages clearly and ensure understanding by the listener. From this definition, it could be inferred that speaking involves the skill of articulating ideas through spoken language. Thornbury (2005) claimed that speaking was so much a part of daily life that it was taken for granted. Thus, it was imperative that students practiced and strengthened their speaking skills on a daily basis, particularly on English-Speaking Day.

According to Hasanah and Syafri (2015), the English Day Program was based on two approaches to teaching language: Firstly, Communicative Language Teaching (CLT), which emphasized the use of the language rather than just knowing the language. Secondly, Community Language Learning (CLL), which

aimed primarily to reduce students' anxiety about communicating in a foreign language, with teachers acting as counsellors. Therefore, English was used for all communication in the *Madrasah*, including in the classroom, between educators and students. According to Syahid and Solicha (2017), *Madrasah* was part of inclusive education, promoting an environment free from dominance or discrimination. They also functioned as centers for Islamic education, guiding students to understand religion, morality, and Islamic values in their daily lives, as stated by Sunarto (2022).

F. Previous Study

Several studies have been conducted related to the English-Speaking Day Program. Sinaga (2018) conducted a study to find out how students felt the English Day Program helped them become more proficient speakers. The purpose of the study was to learn more about the students' perceptions of the program's efficacy in improving their English communication skills. The study specifically aimed to determine if students believed that the English Day Program gave them worthwhile opportunity to practice and advance their spoken English. Sinaga used a descriptive analytic technique to accomplish these goals, allowing for a detailed investigation of both qualitative and quantitative data. The quantitative data were obtained by a standardized questionnaire, while the qualitative data were gained through in-depth interviews, ensuring a well-rounded picture of student attitudes. The study's findings showed that students' fluency in English had improved, and they also had high hopes that the English Day Program would continue to be essential in helping them develop into self-assured English speakers. Furthermore, the results indicated that students saw the program as a helpful resource for enhancing their ability to communicate effectively both within and outside of the classroom.

Tathahira and Nahrissy (2020) investigate the perceptions of students and teacher toward the implementation of English Day program. The study took place at SMAS Insan Madani, Meukek Sub-district, South Aceh, Indonesia. English Day is a program commonly conducted in most integrated schools in Indonesia which aims to promote students' English speaking activities. The study used qualitative research methods by collecting data from interviews. Participants of the study

included four students and one teacher involved in the English Day program. The results of the study showed that English Day was quite an enjoyable learning environment for the students to practice English. The teacher was supportive of the program by providing necessary feedback to the students.

Similar to Tathahira and Nahrissa, Wati (2022) used observations and interviews as their main data-collecting techniques while researching the implementation of a one-day English program. After dividing the material into two segments emic, or the insider perspective, and etic, or the outer perspective carefully analyzed, coded, summarized, and synthesized into insightful findings. Wati's research produced a number of encouraging results for the program. It helped uncover students who had latent linguistic skill that had not previously been noticed, in addition to increasing pupils' interest for learning foreign languages. Additionally, the program provided continual assistance for students' language development and training, supporting a more systematic approach to language learning. The program also promoted a more structured approach to language acquisition by offering ongoing support for students' language training and development. Moreover, the study emphasized how the program effectively facilitated communication between home environments and academic institutions, such as universities, and encouraged long-term cooperation between these groups to assist language learning endeavors.

Meanwhile, Stenly et al.'s (2023) study on the "Implementation of the English Day Program on Classroom Speaking Skills" used a qualitative research approach to investigate the program's effects on students' English-speaking abilities. The study used a variety of data collection methods, including observations, interviews, and documentation, to achieve a thorough knowledge of the program's impact. Through the combination of these techniques, the researchers were able to obtain a broad range of insights from different viewpoints in the classroom setting. In order to improve the quality of the responses and facilitate the interviews, the researchers created and employed a structured interview guide. Participants were able to provide more thorough and targeted answers thanks to this guide's assurance of consistency throughout all interviews, which enhanced the data analysis. The

study's conclusions showed that the English Day Program usually had a favorable impact on the growth of students' speaking abilities, especially in terms of enhancing their fluency and self-assurance when speaking the language. Students were given organized chances to practice speaking English in a friendly setting through the program, which helped them to release their initial nervousness and gain more fluency in the language. The program's constant use of English encouraged students to actively participate in conversations, which improved not only their speaking skills but also their general language development. The increased fluency and confidence were viewed as critical program results. It shows that it is important to assist students' language advancement in the English language.

This research differs from prior studies in several important respects, resulting in a distinct research gap that it seeks to fill. This study specifically investigates the function of the English-speaking Day Program within the setting of *Madrasahs*. Previous research has mostly concentrated on the general effects of English language programs on students' speaking abilities in various educational contexts, including schools and universities. This research focuses on how the program empowers *Madrasah* students, who tend to use their mother tongue and Arabic language in daily conversation. This may have sociocultural barriers in contrast to previous studies that frequently examined language acquisition in more traditional educational environments.

One of the primary differences is that, in addition to focusing on speaking ability development, this study also highlights how the program helps students feel confident and like they have agency while using English, especially in settings where Arabic and other regional languages are frequently spoken. The sociocultural elements that influence language learning in *madrasahs* such as the prevalence of regional and religious languages and how these elements may affect students' willingness and capacity to interact with English have received little attention in previous research.

Furthermore, this research takes a step further by attempting to identify the precise elements of the English-speaking Day Program that affect the growth of speaking abilities in a *Madrasah* setting. It tries to discover both the internal and

environmental elements that either assist or hinder students' success in speaking English. This method closes the gap left by earlier research, which frequently concentrated more on results, such as increased vocabulary or fluency, rather than examining the underlying dynamics that lead to these outcomes. This research fills in these gaps by offering a more nuanced understanding of the ways in which immersive language programs like English-Speaking Day can be implemented successfully to promote language development and student empowerment in Islamic educational contexts, including *madrasahs*.

