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## MTs Muhammadiyah Surakarta English Camp: A Step Towards Enhancing Students' English Language Skills

*Sheikh Abu Toha Md Saky*

Faculty of Islamic Education, Universitas Muhammadiyah Surakarta, Indonesia

[g000224224@student.ums.ac.id](mailto:g000224224@student.ums.ac.id)

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### Abstract

**Objective:** The English Camp at MTs Muhammadiyah Surakarta on October 29, 2025, aims to improve students' English language skills, including speaking, listening, reading, and writing, as well as fostering confidence in using English in a real context outside the classroom. **Theoretical framework:** The program is based on the Communicative Language Teaching (CLT) and experiential learning approaches, which emphasize the importance of language learning through authentic communication practices and hands-on experience. **Literature review:** Previous research has shown that extracurricular activities such as English Camp are able to increase students' motivation, confidence, and communicative competence. An interactive learning environment is effective in strengthening speaking and listening skills. **Methods:** Activities are carried out with participatory and communicative methods through group discussions, role plays, language games, and creative writing. The evaluation was carried out based on teacher observations and student feedback. **Results:** Results showed significant improvements in confidence, pronunciation, speaking fluency, and overall language skills. Students rated the activity as enjoyable and rewarding, while teachers noted increased motivation and active participation. **Implications:** The success of this program confirms the importance of interactive extracurricular activities as a support for formal learning and as an effective means of improving students' global communication skills. **Novelty:** The novelty of this activity lies in the application of contextual and fun language learning in the madrasah environment, which is able to combine academic elements, hands-on experience, and collaborative activities in one integrated program.

**Keywords:** english camp, student engagement, language skills, interactive learning, extracurricular activities.

### INTRODUCTION

In today's increasingly interconnected world, the ability to communicate effectively in English has become a crucial skill. As a global lingua franca, English is used in various fields such as business, science, technology, and international diplomacy. In Indonesia, English proficiency has become a significant focus in educational reforms, as students are encouraged to master the language to improve their future opportunities. However, despite its importance, many students still face challenges in mastering English, particularly in speaking and writing, which are often regarded as the most difficult skills to develop [1]-[6].

MTs Muhammadiyah Surakarta, a well-known educational institution in Surakarta, recognized the need to address these challenges and provide students with opportunities to develop their English skills beyond the conventional classroom setting. On October 29, 2025, the school organized a full-day English Camp to help students improve their English proficiency, particularly in speaking and listening. This initiative was designed not only to address the linguistic needs of students but also to provide a creative, engaging, and interactive learning environment that would inspire students to become more confident and motivated learners of the English language [7]–[12].

The importance of extracurricular activities like the English Camp lies in their ability to offer students a break from the routine classroom experience while also providing them with valuable language practice in a relaxed, enjoyable setting. Traditional English lessons often focus on grammar and vocabulary, which are undoubtedly important. However, they may not always provide students with enough opportunities to practice communication in real-life scenarios. The English Camp sought to bridge this gap by incorporating interactive activities, such as role-playing, group discussions, language games, and creative writing, where students could actively participate and use English in contexts that mimic real-life situations [13]–[15].

The role of English in education is multifaceted. In Indonesia, English has been incorporated into the national curriculum as a compulsory subject from junior high school onward. The goal is to prepare students for a globalized world where English is often the primary language used in international communication. However, while the subject is widely taught, there is a significant gap between theoretical knowledge and practical application. Many students struggle to speak confidently, especially in spontaneous or informal settings, and often find it challenging to express themselves without hesitation [16]–[18].

Research on language acquisition emphasizes the importance of immersion and practical use of language. The more opportunities students have to use English in everyday situations, the more likely they are to improve their fluency and gain confidence in their abilities. However, the traditional classroom environment, with its emphasis on reading, writing, and grammar, may not always provide these opportunities. As a result, students often experience limited exposure to real-world English use, which can hinder their progress. This is where initiatives like the English Camp become valuable [19]–[21].

MTs Muhammadiyah Surakarta recognized the need for a more dynamic approach to language learning. The English Camp was designed as an immersive, day-long event that would engage students in various language activities that went beyond the typical classroom exercises. The primary goal was to provide a space where students could develop their speaking and listening skills in a fun and interactive way. The camp featured activities that promoted communication, collaboration, and creative thinking, all within the framework of English language learning [22]–[24].

The decision to organize the camp was motivated by several factors. First, there was a recognized need to improve English proficiency among students at MTs Muhammadiyah Surakarta. Despite the importance of English in their academic and professional futures, many students lacked the confidence to use the language effectively. Second, the school aimed to create a more engaging learning environment where students could build their language skills in an enjoyable and supportive atmosphere. Third, the event was designed to foster greater enthusiasm for learning English by demonstrating its practical applications in everyday life [25]–[27].

The English Camp was structured to ensure that all students, regardless of their current level of proficiency, could participate and benefit from the activities. In the morning session, students were divided into small groups and introduced to a series of interactive

exercises designed to encourage communication. These included group discussions, role-playing activities, and problem-solving games that required the use of English. By working in groups, students were able to practice speaking and listening in a collaborative setting, which helped them to feel more comfortable using English in different contexts [28]–[30].

In the afternoon session, the camp focused on creative writing and language games, giving students the opportunity to use English in more informal, creative ways. Students were asked to write short stories based on a set of prompts, allowing them to practice sentence construction, vocabulary use, and imagination. Language games such as word association, trivia, and vocabulary challenges also helped reinforce their language skills in a fun and engaging manner [31]–[33].

Throughout the camp, the instructors emphasized a supportive, non-judgmental approach to language learning. Students were encouraged to make mistakes and learn from them, fostering a growth mindset that is essential for language acquisition. By removing the fear of making errors, the camp created a safe space for students to explore their language abilities without feeling embarrassed or self-conscious [34]–[36].

Interactive learning methods have long been recognized as effective tools for language acquisition. According to research in second language acquisition, students are more likely to retain and apply what they learn when they are actively engaged in the learning process. Passive learning methods, such as listening to lectures or reading textbooks, often fail to foster the kind of deep, meaningful learning that leads to language proficiency. In contrast, interactive activities that require students to speak, listen, and think critically help reinforce language skills in ways that are more likely to lead to long-term retention [37], [38].

Role-playing, for example, allows students to simulate real-life situations where they might need to use English, such as ordering food at a restaurant or asking for directions. These activities not only provide practice in vocabulary and grammar but also build confidence in using the language in practical contexts. Similarly, group discussions encourage students to listen actively, formulate responses, and engage in conversation, all of which are critical skills for language proficiency [39], [40].

By incorporating such interactive activities into the English Camp, MTs Muhammadiyah Surakarta provided students with a unique opportunity to practice English in a low-pressure environment. This approach helped to break down the barriers that many students face when speaking English, such as fear of making mistakes or feeling self-conscious [41], [42].

The English Camp at MTs Muhammadiyah Surakarta represents an important step towards improving English proficiency among students. By providing an interactive, immersive environment for language learning, the camp helped students to develop their speaking, listening, and writing skills in a fun and engaging way. The success of the event highlights the need for such initiatives in Indonesian schools to complement traditional classroom learning and foster a more dynamic approach to language acquisition [43], [44].

As the world becomes more interconnected, the ability to communicate in English will continue to be an essential skill for students. Initiatives like the English Camp not only help students improve their language abilities but also inspire them to embrace learning more creatively and enjoyably. Moving forward, MTs Muhammadiyah Surakarta plans to continue organizing such events, ensuring that their students are equipped with the language skills necessary to succeed in an increasingly globalized world [45], [46].

By creating opportunities for students to engage with English outside of the traditional classroom setting, schools can foster a love for the language and encourage lifelong learning. The English Camp is just one example of how interactive, hands-on language learning can have a positive impact on student outcomes, and it serves as a model for other

schools looking to improve their students' English proficiency in creative and meaningful ways.



**Figure 1. School of MTs Muhammadiyah Surakarta**

## LITERATURE REVIEW

Language education plays a vital role in shaping students' communication competence, global awareness, and cognitive development. In the context of English language learning, interactive and experiential programs such as English camps have proven to be effective in enhancing students' proficiency through immersive exposure. These programs provide learners with opportunities to practice real-life communication beyond the classroom, fostering confidence, collaboration, and motivation. Unlike traditional instruction, which often focuses on grammar and written exercises, English camps emphasize practical language use, encouraging students to engage in listening, speaking, reading, and writing activities in authentic contexts [45], [46].

In Indonesia, where English is taught as a foreign language, many students face challenges such as limited vocabulary, lack of confidence, and minimal opportunities for speaking practice. The implementation of community-based programs like the MTs Muhammadiyah Surakarta English Camp aims to address these issues by creating a supportive and engaging environment for language learning. The camp combines formal learning sessions with interactive games, group projects, storytelling, and performance-based tasks that motivate students to use English actively. This method not only strengthens linguistic skills but also nurtures essential soft skills such as teamwork, leadership, and self-expression [45], [46].

From an educational development perspective, English camps align with the principles of experiential learning, where students learn through active participation and reflection. The integration of fun, creative, and student-centered approaches enhances engagement and retention, making language learning more meaningful. Moreover, these camps promote cross-cultural understanding and global citizenship, preparing students to participate in international communication effectively. In the framework of community service, such programs contribute significantly to school and community empowerment. They serve as a bridge between academic theory and real-world practice, allowing teachers and facilitators to apply innovative pedagogical strategies while supporting student development. Overall, English camps represent a sustainable educational model that enhances linguistic competence, builds confidence, and fosters positive attitudes toward lifelong learning in foreign language education [47], [48].

## METHODOLOGY

The English Camp at MTs Muhammadiyah Surakarta was conducted in a day-long session. The event was structured into several segments, each focusing on different aspects of English language learning, including speaking, listening, reading, and writing. The camp employed an interactive approach, where students actively participated in group discussions, role-playing exercises, and language games [47], [48].

Key activities included:

1. **Group Discussions:** Students were divided into small groups and given topics to discuss, fostering communication in English.
2. **Role-Playing:** This activity allowed students to simulate real-life situations, encouraging them to use English in a practical context.
3. **Language Games:** Fun games were incorporated to reinforce vocabulary and grammar skills.
4. **Creative Writing Exercises:** Students were asked to write short stories, promoting their writing skills and imagination.

Throughout the day, students were guided and supported by their instructors, who provided feedback and encouragement to help them improve their language skills. Here's a summary of the methodology for the English Camp in table format:

**Table 1. Summary of Method**

Method	Description
Activity Structure	Full-day camp divided into multiple interactive sessions, each focusing on different language skills (speaking, listening, writing).
Group Discussions	Students are divided into small groups to discuss assigned topics, encouraging verbal communication, active listening, and teamwork.
Role-Playing	Students engaged in simulated real-life scenarios (e.g., ordering food, asking for directions), practicing English in practical, conversational contexts.
Language Games	Activities such as word association, vocabulary challenges, and trivia to reinforce language skills in a fun and engaging manner.
Creative Writing	Students wrote short stories based on prompts, practicing sentence construction, vocabulary use, and grammar in a creative context.
Feedback & Reflection	Students received feedback from teachers during and after activities, encouraging learning from mistakes and improvement in language skills.
Teacher Guidance	Teachers provided continuous support and encouragement, creating a safe environment where students could practice without fear of judgment.

## RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The English Camp at MTs Muhammadiyah Surakarta on October 29, 2025, achieved significant outcomes in terms of enhancing students' engagement with the English language. By the end of the day, students demonstrated noticeable improvements in their language skills, particularly in speaking, listening, and writing. The camp's interactive and immersive approach to language learning provided students with an opportunity to practice

English in real-world contexts, resulting in both tangible improvements and increased motivation to continue learning.

### **Student Engagement and Participation**

One of the most significant outcomes of the English Camp was the high level of student engagement throughout the day. Participation in all activities, from group discussions to language games, was strong, and students actively took part in every session. The shift from a traditional classroom setting to a more informal, interactive environment allowed students to step out of their comfort zones and engage more confidently in English communication.

In group discussions, students were divided into small teams, each tasked with a specific topic. These discussions allowed students to practice speaking in English while learning to express their ideas, listen actively to others, and collaborate as a team. Many students who typically struggled to speak up in class were seen participating eagerly in these discussions, illustrating the positive impact of a less formal, more engaging setting. Teachers reported that students who had previously been shy or reluctant to speak in English showed considerable improvement in their verbal interactions, with some even taking on leadership roles in group discussions [\[49\]](#), [\[50\]](#).

Additionally, role-playing activities were another major factor in fostering student participation. By simulating real-life situations such as ordering food at a restaurant, asking for directions, or negotiating prices, students were able to practice their English skills in a practical, context-driven way. This hands-on experience allowed students to understand how language functions in everyday interactions, rather than just in theoretical or textbook scenarios. The role-playing exercises were particularly beneficial in helping students overcome the fear of speaking in front of others, as the emphasis was placed on enjoying the process of learning, rather than focusing solely on correctness [\[51\]](#), [\[52\]](#).

### **Improvement in Speaking and Listening Skills**

One of the main goals of the camp was to improve students' speaking and listening skills. These two areas are often challenging for students learning English, as they require not only a solid understanding of vocabulary and grammar but also the ability to respond quickly and appropriately in conversations. The camp's focus on interactive communication played a critical role in addressing these challenges [\[53\]](#).

Feedback from students indicated that they felt more confident speaking English after participating in the activities. Many reported that they had learned new vocabulary and phrases, and felt more comfortable using English in different contexts. In particular, students who had previously been hesitant to engage in English conversations during class showed a marked improvement in their speaking abilities. This was evident not only during the camp activities but also in subsequent class discussions, where students displayed more confidence in expressing themselves in English [\[54\]](#).

Teachers noted improvements in students' listening skills as well. The group discussions and role-playing exercises required students to listen actively to their peers in English, which provided valuable practice in understanding spoken English. Students were not only required to listen but also to respond appropriately, fostering a deeper level of engagement with the language. This interactive approach helped students become more attuned to different accents, tones, and speech patterns, ultimately enhancing their ability to comprehend spoken English in real-life contexts [\[55\]](#), [\[56\]](#).

### **Writing and Creativity Enhancement**

In addition to speaking and listening, the camp also focused on improving students' writing skills through creative exercises. Students were asked to write short stories based

on a set of prompts, which allowed them to practice structuring sentences, using new vocabulary, and applying grammar rules more flexibly and creatively. The creative writing session was particularly well-received by students, as it provided an opportunity to express their thoughts and imaginations in English [57]–[59].

Many students reported that they enjoyed the freedom of the creative writing activity, which allowed them to experiment with their language skills in a less restrictive environment. The prompts encouraged students to think critically and creatively, which helped them move beyond the mechanical aspects of writing and focus more on conveying ideas and emotions effectively in English. Teachers observed that students who were initially hesitant to write in English became more willing to participate and take risks with their language use, leading to an improvement in their writing fluency [60]. By the end of the camp, students demonstrated a better grasp of sentence construction, vocabulary, and punctuation. Teachers were impressed with the creativity displayed in the students' stories and noted that students were more confident in their ability to write coherent English paragraphs. The experience of writing creatively in English helped students see the language as a tool for personal expression rather than just a set of rules to be memorized [61], [62].

### Language Games as Reinforcement Tools

Language games played a central role in reinforcing students' language skills throughout the camp. These games, which included activities such as word association, vocabulary challenges, and trivia, allowed students to practice vocabulary, grammar, and language comprehension in a fun and engaging way. The interactive nature of these games ensured that students were actively participating and learning without feeling the pressure of traditional assessments [63], [64].

For example, the word association game challenged students to come up with words that were related to a given topic or word, which helped them expand their vocabulary and think quickly in English. Similarly, vocabulary challenges required students to recall words they had recently learned and use them in sentences. Teachers observed that these games created a competitive yet supportive environment that encouraged students to push their language abilities while also enjoying the process of learning. The use of games also helped maintain student motivation throughout the day. Rather than relying solely on traditional methods, such as rote memorization or written exercises, the camp incorporated activities that students found enjoyable and engaging. This approach made learning English feel less like a chore and more like an exciting challenge, leading to increased student participation and retention of language skills [65]–[68].



Figure 2. Language Games as Reinforcement Tools

### Student Feedback and Satisfaction

After the camp, students provided feedback on their experience, and the results were overwhelmingly positive. A majority of students reported that they felt more confident speaking English and were excited about continuing to learn the language. They expressed appreciation for the interactive nature of the camp and the opportunity to use English in practical, real-world contexts. Many students noted that they had enjoyed the variety of activities, with several highlighting the role-playing exercises and language games as their favorite parts of the camp.

One of the key takeaways from the feedback was that students felt they had made tangible progress in their language skills, particularly in speaking and listening. Many students also mentioned that they had developed a greater interest in improving their English and hoped that future camps would offer similar opportunities for learning and practice.



Figure 3. Get together in the English camp at MTs Muhammadiyah Surakarta

### Teacher Observations

Teachers who participated in the camp also provided valuable insights into the effectiveness of the event. They observed significant improvements in students' speaking and listening abilities and noted that students seemed more eager to participate in class discussions afterward. Teachers highlighted that the camp provided them with an opportunity to see students engage with English in a way that was not possible in the traditional classroom environment.

Teachers also appreciated the positive atmosphere created during the camp. By focusing on fun, interactive activities, the camp fostered an environment where students felt comfortable making mistakes and learning from them. This approach helped reduce the anxiety often associated with speaking a foreign language, allowing students to focus on improving their skills without the fear of judgment.

The community service program “MTs Muhammadiyah Surakarta English Camp: A Step Towards Enhancing Students’ English Language Skills” represents a practical and innovative approach to language learning that bridges classroom instruction with real-world application. The initiative effectively responds to the challenges faced by Indonesian students in mastering English as a foreign language, such as limited exposure, lack of confidence, and dependence on traditional learning methods. By creating an immersive and interactive learning environment, the English Camp successfully transformed students’

attitudes toward language learning, making it more engaging, collaborative, and meaningful.

### **Analysis**

The analysis reveals that the camp's greatest strength lies in its experiential learning framework. Instead of focusing solely on theoretical grammar and vocabulary, the activities encouraged students to use English naturally in communication. Through games, storytelling, discussions, and team-based challenges, participants were motivated to express themselves freely. This approach reduced anxiety and built self-confidence, allowing students to overcome their fear of making mistakes—a common obstacle in second-language acquisition. The element of fun, combined with structured guidance from facilitators, created a balanced atmosphere that fostered both learning and enjoyment.

Another key aspect of the program is its contribution to developing soft skills alongside linguistic competence. Teamwork, leadership, critical thinking, and creativity were embedded in each activity, reflecting the holistic nature of the camp. For instance, group projects and performance-based tasks required students to collaborate, plan, and present ideas in English. These experiences not only improved communication skills but also nurtured character values such as cooperation, discipline, and responsibility. The program thus achieved dual objectives: strengthening English proficiency and cultivating personal growth.

The English Camp also served as an effective community engagement model. It strengthened collaboration among teachers, students, and facilitators while promoting an inclusive educational atmosphere. Teachers benefited from observing new teaching techniques and interactive strategies that could be incorporated into their regular classes. Meanwhile, students experienced a dynamic learning setting that complemented formal education. This synergy between formal and informal learning contexts demonstrates the value of community-based educational innovation in enhancing school quality.

However, the analysis also identifies areas for improvement. Limited duration and resources constrained the depth of learning outcomes. Future programs could benefit from extended sessions focusing on pronunciation, creative writing, and digital communication skills. Partnerships with local universities and English language institutions could further enrich content delivery and sustainability. Overall, the MTs Muhammadiyah Surakarta English Camp proved to be a transformative educational initiative. It not only enhanced students' English communication abilities but also inspired a renewed enthusiasm for learning. The program's success highlights the importance of interactive, student-centered language education as a means to empower youth with confidence, competence, and global awareness.

### **CONCLUSION**

The English Camp at MTs Muhammadiyah Surakarta proved to be a highly successful initiative for improving students' English proficiency. The interactive activities, such as group discussions, role-playing, and language games, provided students with valuable practice in speaking, listening, and writing. The camp's approach to language learning focused on engagement, creativity, and real-world applications, helped students overcome language barriers and gain confidence in using English. Overall, the English Camp demonstrated that when students are provided with opportunities to practice English in a supportive, enjoyable environment, they are more likely to engage with the language and develop their skills. The success of this event emphasizes the importance of integrating interactive, extracurricular activities into the curriculum to enhance students' language learning experiences. Moving forward, MTs Muhammadiyah Surakarta plans to continue

organizing similar events to ensure that their students continue to develop the English skills needed for success in an increasingly globalized world.

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### Author Contribution

The author conceptualized the English Camp program, designed the activities, supervised the implementation, and conducted the data analysis. He also prepared the manuscript, ensuring that the study accurately reflected the educational outcomes, community engagement process, and overall impact of the English Camp on improving students' English language proficiency and confidence.

### Conflicts of Interest

The author declares no conflicts of interest regarding this study. This community service program was conducted independently, without external funding or institutional pressure. All findings and conclusions presented are based solely on objective analysis and the genuine educational outcomes observed during the English Camp implementation.

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