

Analysis of Immersion-Based English Learning on Improving the Language Skills of Students at the Darussalam Gontor Modern Islamic Institution

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Abstract

*This study analyzes the implementation of immersion-based English learning at the Darussalam Gontor Modern Islamic Institution and its role in improving students' language skills, particularly speaking proficiency. The research employed a qualitative case study approach. Data analysis was conducted using the Miles and Huberman model, including data collection, data reduction, data presentation, and the drawing and verification of conclusions. The findings indicate that immersion-based learning at Darussalam Gontor Modern Islamic Institution is systematically integrated into both formal and informal educational activities through a strong *bi'ah lughawiyah* (language environment), high disciplinary standards, and the consistent application of the direct method. Programs such as English Week, daily vocabulary reinforcement, conversation practice, public speaking, and language-based extracurricular activities provide continuous, context-rich exposure to the English language. This immersive environment encourages active language use, reduces students' speaking anxiety, and fosters self-confidence. Although challenges such as grammatical inaccuracy and avoidance strategies were observed, these issues function as transitional stages in the development of communicative competence. Overall, immersion-based English learning at Darussalam Gontor Modern Islamic Institution effectively enhances students' language skills and positions the institution as a distinctive and successful model of English language education in Indonesia.*

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INTRODUCTION

Speaking ability is an essential component of communicative competence for foreign language learners, particularly in the context of *English as a Foreign Language* (EFL) (Akhter 2021). Numerous studies have shown that EFL students consistently experience a specific type of anxiety when engaging in speaking activities in the classroom, a phenomenon conceptually referred to as foreign language speaking anxiety or as part of *foreign language classroom anxiety* (FLCA) (Kasbi and Elahi Shirvan 2017). Horwitz, Horwitz, and Cope argue that anxiety in the foreign language classroom represents a combination of emotional and behavioral reactions that typically arise in language-learning contexts, especially when students are required to express their thoughts orally in front of others (Horwitz, Horwitz, and Cope 1986). Subsequent studies

reaffirm that speaking anxiety significantly contributes to low self-confidence, limited classroom participation, decreased fluency, and suboptimal academic achievement (Dörnyei 2009, 75).

In terms of measurement, the most frequently used instrument on this phenomenon is the *Foreign Language Classroom Anxiety Scale* (FLCAS), developed by Horwitz, Horwitz, and Cope (1986). The FLCAS identifies several dimensions of anxiety, including embarrassment, fear of making mistakes, and concerns about social evaluation during oral communication. This instrument has undergone various revisions and cross-cultural validations to align with evolving learning contexts, including the use of technology and communication-based learning environments. Selecting a valid and reliable instrument is crucial not only for quantitatively measuring speaking anxiety but also for analyzing the relationship between speaking anxiety and students' learning performance (Nguyen 2023).

The *pesantren* (Islamic boarding school) education context presents dynamics that differ from those of mainstream schools, including communal living structures, language-use regulations, and the integration of religious and general curricula. In several modern *pesantren*, including Darussalam Gontor Modern Islamic Institution, foreign language development, especially English, is promoted through immersion programs and intensive communication practices designed to create a conducive speech community (Abrora, Haikalb, and Hariri 2024; Ulufah et al. 2024). Nevertheless, academic studies that specifically examine speaking anxiety in the *pesantren* context remain limited and are mostly small-scale local studies. Preliminary findings indicate variations in anxiety levels influenced by psychological factors (such as fear of making mistakes), social factors (peer pressure), and institutional factors (teaching style, academic expectations, and disciplinary culture) (Islam, Qodari, and Marjany 2024).

The practical implications of speaking anxiety in *pesantren* are highly significant. First, high levels of anxiety can hinder students' opportunities to practice speaking and receive feedback, thereby slowing the development of communicative competence. Second, in modern *pesantren* where English is considered a strategic skill for academic and professional advancement, such affective barriers may reduce the overall effectiveness of language-teaching programs (Altun 2023). Therefore, systematic diagnostic efforts and evidence-based interventions are needed to enhance the quality of speaking instruction.

Various international studies reveal that language immersion environments can reduce speaking anxiety by increasing linguistic exposure, fostering habitual communication, and promoting the internalization of the target language. Young notes that language anxiety is primarily caused by concerns over negative evaluation and communication apprehension (Horwitz and Young 1991). Furthermore, MacIntyre and Gardner emphasize that immersion programs can reduce anxiety by providing consistent and

meaningful opportunities for language use (Macintyre and Gardner 2006; MacIntyre and Gardner 1991). Xie and several contemporary researchers also report that language immersion programs have the potential to lower speaking anxiety. However, most of these studies were conducted in mainstream schools or urban settings and thus do not fully account for the unique socio-religious dynamics of pesantren (Ding 2024). This indicates a research gap regarding the effectiveness of language immersion programs in reducing speaking anxiety in modern pesantren settings such as Gontor.

To address this gap, this study aims to analyze the effect of the English immersion program on speaking anxiety levels at Darussalam Gontor Modern Islamic Institution using a case study approach (Creswell 1994, 62). The research findings are expected to provide theoretical contributions to the development of studies on language immersion and affective dimensions in foreign language learning, while also offering practical implications for teachers, curriculum developers, and educational institutions implementing immersion models. Therefore, the study not only enriches the academic literature but also enhances the effectiveness of language-learning programs in pesantren environments.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

This study employed a qualitative research design to understand the meanings, processes, and contextual dynamics underlying immersion-based English learning. Qualitative inquiry was chosen to capture participants' experiences, perceptions, and institutional practices in their natural settings, emphasizing depth of analysis rather than numerical measurement (Sukmadinata 2009, 34). A case study approach was adopted to obtain an in-depth, contextually grounded understanding of the formulation, implementation, and evaluation of immersion-based English learning at the Darussalam Gontor Modern Islamic Institution. This approach enabled the exploration of real-life educational practices and the interaction of various institutional and pedagogical factors shaping students' language skill development (Musfiqon 2012, 56; Qomar 2022, 78).

Data sources were classified into human and non-human sources. Human sources consisted of key informants, including the Director of *Kulliyatu-l-Mu'allimin Al-Islamiyah*, the Vice Director for Curriculum, members of the Language Advisory Council (LAC), English teachers, and students. In addition, primary data were collected through in-depth interviews, participant observation, and focus group discussions (FGDs) to obtain rich and contextual insights into the immersion-based learning process (Sugiyono 2007). Non-human sources included institutional documents such as internal policies and regulations, curriculum guidelines, learning activity reports, photographs, and archival records, which provided stable, verifiable data to support and triangulate the primary findings (Nasution 2003, 55). Primary documents

included internal policy directives issued by the boarding school leadership, the implemented curriculum, and records of English language learning activities. Secondary documents, such as annual reports, accreditation files, and instructional materials, complemented and strengthened the primary data.

Data collection techniques included in-depth interviews, participant observation, and documentation (Mundir 2013). Interviews were conducted flexibly to explore the planning, implementation, and evaluation stages of the immersion-based English learning program while minimizing researcher bias (Mulyana 2003). Participant observation allowed direct examination of classroom practices and language environments within the boarding school (Widi 2018). Documentation served as complementary data to strengthen the validity of findings obtained through interviews and observations (Sugiyono 2020). Data analysis involved the systematic organization, classification, and interpretation of interview transcripts, field notes, and documents to identify patterns, themes, and meanings relevant to the research focus (Creswell and Creswell 2018). Given the multisite design, data analysis was conducted in two stages: single-site and cross-site analysis (Yin 2018, 114–15). Single-site analysis followed the interactive model of Miles and Huberman, encompassing data reduction, data display, and conclusion drawing/verification, to generate site-specific findings (Miles and Huberman 1992, 16; Miles, Huberman, and Saldana 2014). Subsequently, cross-site analysis was conducted by comparing and integrating findings across sites to formulate theoretical propositions and comprehensive conclusions.

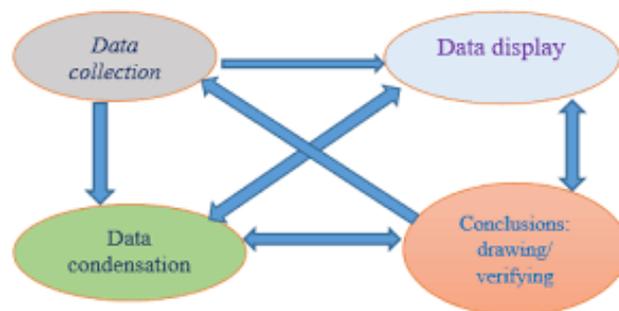


Figure 1. Single-Site Data Analysis According to Matthew B. Miles and A. Michael Huberman.

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

The English Week Program (EWP)

The *English Week Program* (EWP) is a structured, intensive language exposure initiative commonly used in educational settings, especially in Islamic boarding schools in Indonesia, to help improve students' speaking skills (Monib and Hadi 2025). The EWP program aims to encourage students to use English in daily conversations, activities, and interactions, creating an immersive English-speaking environment. The English Week Program (EWP) is an intensive, immersive initiative designed to enhance students' English language skills,

particularly speaking proficiency. It is typically structured as a week-long event where students are encouraged or required to engage in English communication through various activities such as presentations, conversations, role plays, and debates (Goldman 2018). The main objective is to create an environment that fosters daily and practical use of the English language in both formal and informal contexts, thereby reducing students' speaking anxiety.

Several studies indicate that EWP can significantly improve students' speaking skills by providing a structured setting where they are constantly exposed to English. By integrating both social and academic contexts, students can practice speaking English in a more relaxed yet supportive environment (Shange 2021). Furthermore, frequent interaction and the need to use English across various tasks help diminish the fear or discomfort typically associated with speaking in front of others. Additionally, theories of language acquisition, such as Stephen Krashen's Input Hypothesis, support the notion that language learners acquire new linguistic structures through comprehensible Input (Young 1988).

In the case of EWP, students are exposed to comprehensible, context-rich English, which supports their language development. This approach not only enhances fluency but also promotes self-confidence as students become more comfortable in their language use (Baker 2001). According to Baker in *Foundations of Bilingual Education and Bilingualism*, the indicators of EWP are as follows:

First, *Exposure to Target Language*: The frequency of students' exposure to the target language (English). Second, *Language Use in Context*: Students' ability to use English in real-life situations. Third, *Development of Bilingual Competence*: Improvement in bilingual skills, including listening, speaking, reading, and writing. Fourth, *Motivation and Attitudes Toward the Language*: The level of students' motivation and attitudes toward learning English. Fifth, *Supportive Learning Environment*: The availability of a supportive learning environment, such as encouragement from teachers and peers. Moreover, participation in EWP often leads to reduced anxiety levels due to its structured exposure, where students gradually overcome their fears of making mistakes. It fosters an atmosphere of peer support, which is critical in overcoming speaking anxiety.

English Language Immersion

English immersion, as a language-learning approach, is widely recognized for its effectiveness in enhancing language acquisition, especially among second-language learners. This approach integrates language learning with subject-matter content, in which students learn through a language (in this case, English) that is not their first language. The immersion experience is structured to provide continuous exposure to English, thus facilitating natural language acquisition. Research indicates that immersion promotes language

proficiency by immersing learners in real-life language use and interaction (Swain and Lapkin 1998). For instance, in an experimental study comparing immersion and traditional teaching methods, students in the immersion group showed significant improvement in their language abilities, particularly in oral communication and practical language use. The immersion model not only enhanced linguistic skills but also boosted students' self-confidence and motivation to use English outside the classroom, which led to improved language performance (Cummins 2001).

Additionally, Stephen Krashen's Input Hypothesis supports immersion by emphasizing the importance of providing comprehensible Input for language learners. The hypothesis suggests that learners acquire language more effectively when they are exposed to language that is just beyond their current level of proficiency but still understandable. This theory emphasizes that language acquisition occurs when learners are exposed to comprehensible Input slightly beyond their current level of proficiency ($i+1$). Based on this theory, the following indicators can be identified:

Comprehensible Input: The language provided to learners is slightly more advanced than their current level ($i+1$). Learners can understand the Input comprehensively through context, visual aids, or prior knowledge. *Frequent and Varied Exposure:* Learners are regularly exposed to diverse and meaningful Input in the target language. Input is delivered through multiple sources, such as conversations, stories, videos, or authentic materials. *Low Affective Filter:* Learners feel relaxed and motivated during the learning process. The environment minimizes anxiety, fear of making mistakes, or negative emotional responses that could block language acquisition. *Natural and Authentic Contexts:* Input is presented in real-life or authentic situations where the language is naturally used. Activities promote meaningful communication, rather than mechanical drills. *No Explicit Grammar Focus:* Language acquisition occurs through understanding Input, not through direct grammar instruction. Grammar is learned implicitly as learners interact with comprehensible Input. *Opportunities for Active Listening:* Learners are actively engaged in listening to language that is relevant and interesting to them. Input encourages them to focus on meaning rather than form (Krashen 1982).

Immersion settings naturally provide such an environment, promoting language development through exposure to both academic content and daily communication (Swain and Lapkin 1998, 323). Immersion has also been linked to improved cognitive skills. Exposure to English across varied contexts helps students not only learn language structures but also develop critical thinking skills as they process information in a second language (Thomas and Collier 2002). This method aimed to contribute significantly to bilingualism, cultural understanding, and cognitive flexibility.

In summary, immersion programs are beneficial for language learning, as they provide a rich, contextual environment for acquiring language skills while simultaneously fostering learners' confidence and motivation.

Students' Speaking Anxiety

Speaking anxiety, particularly in the context of foreign language learning, is a significant psychological phenomenon that affects learners' ability to communicate effectively (Ikamah et al. 2025). According to Horwitz and Cope, speaking anxiety can be categorized into three components: communication apprehension, fear of negative evaluation, and test anxiety. Communication apprehension refers to the discomfort and fear experienced during interactions, often stemming from a lack of confidence in language skills. Meanwhile, fear of negative evaluation arises when learners are overly concerned about being judged by their peers or teachers. Lastly, test anxiety pertains to the nervousness associated with formal assessments of speaking ability, which can hinder performance and learning outcomes (Horwitz, Horwitz, and Cope 1986, 127).

Furthermore, McCroskey's theory of communication apprehension emphasizes that such anxiety may be either a trait (an inherent personality tendency) or a state (a situation-specific phenomenon), suggesting that some individuals are naturally predisposed to feel anxious. In contrast, others may experience it only in specific contexts (McCroskey 1977, 78). From a cognitive-behavioral perspective, speaking anxiety often results from negative self-talk and cognitive distortions, where individuals magnify the likelihood of failure or embarrassment. Additionally, Krashen's affective filter hypothesis highlights how heightened anxiety can block language input, preventing learners from acquiring and using the language effectively (Krashen 1982, 31).

Understanding these theoretical frameworks provides valuable insights into addressing and reducing speaking anxiety among learners. Speaking anxiety, also known as speech anxiety or communication apprehension, refers to the fear or uneasiness individuals feel when required to speak, particularly in front of others. This psychological phenomenon can hinder verbal communication and significantly affect a learner's ability to express themselves effectively in a second language, such as English (Horwitz, Horwitz, and Cope 1986, 130). In language learning contexts, speaking anxiety can be caused by a range of factors, including fear of making mistakes, judgment from peers, and self-doubt about language proficiency.

One of the most influential theories in understanding speaking anxiety is *Cognitive-Behavioral Theory* (CBT), which suggests that anxiety stems from negative thought patterns. In the context of speaking, learners may fear that others will judge their speaking abilities, which can lead to avoidance behaviors or reluctance to participate in speaking activities (McCroskey 1970). According to this theory, addressing the negative thoughts through various therapeutic

methods, such as cognitive restructuring or positive reinforcement, can help reduce anxiety levels.

Moreover, another key theory is Self-Efficacy Theory, proposed by Albert Bandura, which posits that individuals' beliefs about their abilities influence their behavior and anxiety levels (McCroskey 1970). When students lack confidence in their speaking abilities, they may experience heightened anxiety. Improving self-efficacy through practice, mastery experiences, and encouragement is significantly suggested as a means of reducing anxiety and boosting speaking confidence.

The *Affect-Behavior-Cognition* (ABC) model also plays a significant role in explaining speaking anxiety. According to this model, anxiety is the result of an emotional response (fear), behavioral tendencies (avoidance of speaking), and cognitive factors (negative thoughts about speaking ability). This interaction leads to the intensity of anxiety during speaking tasks, and intervention strategies often involve modifying these emotional, behavioral, and cognitive components.

Lastly, Social Anxiety Theory focuses on the fear of negative evaluation from others. Language learners may feel judged by peers or teachers, which can contribute to their reluctance to speak (Horwitz, Horwitz, and Cope 1986, 131). This fear can be particularly intense in social and academic settings, where students are aware of their language mistakes.

Hence, overcoming speaking anxiety during English learning is crucial for improving fluency. Several strategies, such as creating a supportive learning environment, incorporating relaxation techniques, and encouraging incremental speaking practice, can help students build confidence and reduce their anxiety over time.

English Language Learning at Darussalam Gontor Modern Islamic Boarding School (PMDG)

Educational activities at Darussalam Gontor Modern Islamic Boarding School (PMDG) are characterized by intense student activity throughout the day. The Gontor leadership's adage, "*al-ma'had la yanamu abadan*" (the boarding school never sleeps), reflects this dynamic. Through a series of intracurricular and extracurricular activities, the boarding school fosters a culture of comprehensive and continuous learning discipline (Budi and Apud 2019). This intense activity demonstrates that PMDG is an institution with an integrated educational system that demands students' full involvement in every aspect of learning.

Structurally, intracurricular activities are coordinated by *Kulliyatul Mu'allimin Al-Islamiyah* (KMI). Classes take place from 7:00 a.m. to 12:50 p.m. Western Indonesian Time, followed by evening study from 8:00 p.m. to 10:00 p.m., except on Mondays and Fridays (Muhajir and Budi 2018). Learning evaluations are conducted twice a year, from mid-Safar to early Rabi'ul Awwal and from Rajab to mid-Sha'ban (Karimah, Putri, and Ridho 2024). The

assessment system is divided into five categories: *Mumtaz*, *Jayyid Jiddan*, *Jayyid*, *Maqbul*, and *Rasib*. Students are required to take two types of exams: an oral exam (*imtihān syafāhī*) and a written exam (*imtihān taḥrīrī*) (Syamsu 2018). The oral exam is conducted by students every six months, with four examiners: three teachers and one student from the final year of KMI or sixth grade. The material tested is divided into three categories. The first category includes *Fiqh* material, which covers the Qur'an, *tajwid*, *qowliyah* worship, and *amaliyah*. Meanwhile, the second category covers Arabic language materials, including *muhādatsah* (translation), *qirā'ah* (recitation), *tarjamah* (translation), *nahwu* (grammar), *sharaf* (syntax), *mahfūzhāt* (translation), *mufradāt* (translation), and *uslūb* (idioms). Lastly, the final category covers English language materials, including conversation, reading, translation, grammar, vocabulary, and idioms (Syamsu 2018). The written exam (*imtihān taḥriri*) is administered by three examiners: one teacher and two sixth-grade students (Muhajir and Budi 2018).

In addition to intracurricular activities, PMDG offers various extracurricular activities under the auspices of the Student Care Institution. These activities include the *Jam'iyyatul Qurra' wa al-Tahfiz* (Quran Recitation Group), scientific discussions, organizational training, scouting, marching bands, skills courses, student media publications, and various arts activities (Muhajir and Budi 2018). Through this series of activities, PMDG integrates academic, spiritual, social, and skills development in a holistic manner as part of students' character formation.

Indeed, the distinctive features of PMDG among the extracurricular programs are characterized by language reinforcement through the delivery of *al-mufradāt* (Arabic) and vocabulary (English) every morning, *muhādatsah* (religious study) and conversation activities twice a week, and language competitions such as speech, drama, debate, and quiz (Wekke and Andriansyah 2016). Language reinforcement is also carried out through public speaking in three languages (Indonesian, Arabic, and English) and seminars with native speakers. These various programs demonstrate that the Islamic boarding school environment is systematically shaped as a *bi'ah lughawiyah* (language environment) that demands the use of Arabic and English in both formal and informal activities (Muhajir and Budi 2018).

Historically, Gontor's language orientation did not emerge overnight. This commitment grew after KH. Abdullah Sahal witnessed the scarcity of Indonesian Muslim figures who simultaneously mastered both Arabic and English at the 1926 Indonesian Muslim Congress in Surabaya. This event gave rise to a vision of producing Muslim cadres capable of mastering both languages equally. Thus, the integration of Arabic and English into Gontor's educational system is both a result of historical reflection and a strategic response to the needs of the Muslim community (Ihsan and Hakim 2004, 13).

To achieve this target, the PMDG added one language competency to the four basic skills: listening (*istimā'*), speaking (*muhādatsah*), reading (*qirā'ah*), and writing (*kitābah*), namely teaching (*ta'līm*). This addition is not only oriented

towards language mastery that goes beyond merely speaking, but also includes language teaching. This competency is applied to an integrated system that combines the theory of an all-in-one system (*naẓariyat al-wihdah*) and the polysystemic approach (*naẓariyat al-furū'*), and expressly considers that all language skill branches are interconnected and need to be taught in an integrated manner (Thaimah 1989).

One of the key techniques in language teaching at PMDG is the direct method (*at-ṭarīqah al-mubāsyrāh*), which emphasizes active language use without translation. The stages of these methods begin with providing relevant examples of words and sentences, student imitation, stimulating oral, written, and listening exercises, and gradually delivering material on basic vocabulary (Zaid 2012). This approach places repeated practice as the key to language acquisition. Based on these practices, the teaching strategy at PMDG significantly prioritizes practical habits over theoretical memorization.

Notably, the principal of the KH. Hasan Abdullah Sahal Islamic Boarding School emphasized that Gontor students' language skills were not solely derived from the result of linguistic intelligence but were also obtained from self-confidence instilled through the boarding school's mental education. Leadership training, responsible tasks, *muhāḍarah* (religious study), *muhādatsah* (students' study), scouting, language drama, and even practical teaching exams foster students' mental courage in using a foreign language. These findings are reinforced by several figures' statements, including Prof. Dr. H.M. Rasyidi, Karel A. Steenbrink, and Lance Castles, who assessed that Gontor had linguistic excellence that surpassed other Islamic educational institutions (Syamsu 2018).

Hence, the success of Arabic and English language learning at Pondok Modern Darussalam Gontor (PMDG) were accumulatively obtained from the results of several important factors, namely (1) an integrated educational system with high discipline; (2) the simultaneous integration of formal and informal learning; (3) the strong culture of *bi'ah lughawiyah* (Islamic teaching); (4) the implementation of direct teaching methods; and (5) mental education accompanied by the development of students' self-confidence (Zarkasyi 2005, 153–54). Furthermore, language learning at PMDG not only aims to shape students' Arabic and English proficiency but also intends to develop competent cadres in teaching, with a strong mentality, and able to face global challenges. This holistic approach makes PMDG a unique and effective model of language education in Indonesia.

The Gontor curriculum incorporates Language Week, divided into Arabic Week (*Al Usbu'ul 'Araby*) and English Week (*Al Usbu'ul Injilizi*). This program is implemented monthly with a rotating pattern: the first week is Arabic, followed by English on the next week. Students respond differently to English Week than they do to Arabic Week (Amalia et al. 2024). One phenomenon that emerges is the practice of "talking fast" during the transition to the language week. This occurs because the discipline of using English as one of the official languages of the Islamic boarding school is strictly enforced,

leaving students with almost no room to deviate from it. All students, except first-graders, are required to use English in all communications during this period (Wahab 2014).

English Week begins every two weeks after the evening prayer, when the Information Department shares information on student organizations and activities. During this period, all conversations must be in English, and any violations will result in sanctions, including language violations. Violators must appear before the Language Disciplinary Office to receive sanctions commensurate with the severity of the offense. Due to the strict enforcement of this rule, some students choose to minimize conversation in public (speech restriction) or use Arabic in specific locations, such as classrooms and the field, to avoid sanctions. Sign language is even frequently used in interactions within the dormitory. However, this strategy often leads to difficulties in understanding English-language course material due to the lack of hands-on practice (Rais 2021, 10–11).

Furthermore, the second phenomenon is the use of English without regard for grammatical rules. For some students, the concept of grammar is understood simply as expressions or sentences that others can understand; thus, correct structure is not a priority. During the 24-hour English Week, students are still required to speak English, even when they do not follow the correct rules. It can be proved in daily conversations, for instance, the phrase "Do not like that you", which is understood as a prohibition on specific behavior, or the question "You go to Gontor what", which arises due to unfamiliar vocabulary and poor dictionary skills. These errors are also influenced by the rayon administrators' limited mastery of grammar, which means they are not always corrected. Although the students can avoid disciplinary language sanctions, their limited mastery of grammar limits their ability to understand English-language learning materials in depth (Wahab 2014).

Third, there is an informal agreement among dormitory roommates to maintain internal solidarity. This agreement encourages them not to report their roommates' violations, thus avoiding prosecution by the language court or the security court. Internal sanctions are imposed if any roommate violates this agreement, such as social exclusion (Islam, Marjany, and Azwary 2023). While this solidarity strengthens social cohesion among students, it also has the potential to undermine the effectiveness of language discipline and hinder its continuous improvement in English language skills (Wahab 2014).

Overall, the phenomenon of attitudes towards English Week can be understood as an initial phase for students to develop speaking skills, overcome shyness, and become accustomed to using a foreign language, even with an imprecise structure. The Language Week policy, for both Arabic and English, essentially aims to create an active, communicative, and competitive learning environment, thereby supporting the growth of consistent *bi'ah lughawiyah* (literary language) at PMDG.

CONCLUSION

In short, the English Week Program (EWP) and the immersion system implemented at Darussalam Gontor Modern Islamic Institution are effective strategies for improving students' language skills, particularly in speaking skills. Research indicates that EWP and immersion provide intensive, contextual, and continuous language exposure, thereby supporting language acquisition through comprehensible input, reducing speaking anxiety, and increasing student confidence. The success of language learning at Gontor is not only determined by formal methods in the classroom, but also by the formation of a *bi'ah lughawiyah* (language environment) through the integration of intra- and extracurricular activities, high discipline, the habituation of daily communication, and a direct approach (direct method). Language is actively used in various activities, ranging from vocabulary reinforcement, conversations, speeches, debates, and teaching practices. Although the English Week program has several phenomena, such as students speaking quickly to avoid sanctions, the use of language without proper grammar, and internal solidarity that sometimes weakens discipline enforcement, overall, this program still serves as an initial stage in building foreign-language habits. English Week encourages students to speak boldly, reduce shyness, and practice using English in real-life contexts. Therefore, successful language learning at Darussalam Gontor Modern Islamic Institution results from an integrated education system, strong discipline, a consistent language environment, the application of hands-on methods, and mental education that fosters courage. This holistic approach makes Darussalam Gontor Modern Islamic Institution a model for effective language education in Indonesia.

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