

A Portrayal of The English-Speaking Environment at the Dynamic English-Arabic Memorization Boarding School (D- BEATS)

Syifa Aulia^{1*}, M. Syaichul Muchyidin²,
Ayu Fatmawati³

Universitas Islam Kadiri

Keywords:

English-speaking
environment, bilingual
boarding school, language
learning

*Correspondence Address:

syifa020705@gmail.com

Abstract: This research is motivated by the importance of creating a conducive environment for mastering foreign languages, particularly English, in bilingual *tahfidz* Islamic boarding schools. The study aims to describe the use of English and identify the supporting and inhibiting factors in its practice at a bilingual *tahfidz* pesantren in Pare, Kediri. The research subjects included the curriculum coordinator, teachers, and students selected through purposive sampling. Data were collected through interviews, observations, and document analysis, then analyzed using an interactive model consisting of data reduction, data display, and conclusion drawing. The findings indicate that English implementation is carried out through structured programs such as designated language areas, a point system, morning conversations, and teacher modeling. Supporting factors include institutional regulations, student motivation, and social support, while inhibiting factors involve a lack of self-confidence, limited vocabulary, and peer pressure. The study concludes that the implementation of English is systematic and relatively effective; however, it requires further reinforcement of the language environment to optimize language habituation processes and ensure sustainable improvement in students' communicative competence.

INTRODUCTION

In the era of globalization, English has become not only a means of international communication but also an important medium for accessing knowledge, technology, and global networks (Ilyosovna, 2024). On the other hand, Islamic boarding schools as traditional educational institutions have historically emphasized Arabic and classical Islamic texts. However, changing global demands have given rise to bilingual Islamic boarding schools that integrate English and Arabic into daily learning activities and interactions (Riana, 2023). This change reflects a significant transformation in Islamic education, which requires students to adapt to global needs while maintaining religious and academic traditions.

Bilingual tahfidz boarding schools offer a unique advantage because students are not only trained to memorize the Qur'an but are also equipped with critical thinking and international communication skills. Previous studies highlight that the language environment and institutional support are crucial for improving students' motivation and foreign language skills (Mahardiana, Herminingsih, & Setiyoningtyas, 2024). However, internal reports indicate that productive skills such as speaking and writing are still weaker than receptive skills such as reading (Rahmasari & Siregar, 2024). This imbalance highlights the urgency to investigate not only academic achievement but also the actual practice of foreign language use in Islamic boarding schools.

Several studies have discussed the need for English in tahfidz pesantren (Habibah, 2021), strategies in bilingual programs (Riana, 2023), and teacher motivation factors (Mahardiana et al., 2024). However, these works are still limited to quantitative results or narrow perspectives, without delving into everyday sociolinguistic practices. To address this gap, this study specifically investigates (1) how English is implemented in the bilingual tahfidz pesantren environment at the Dynamic Boarding English Arabic Tahfidz School (D-BEATS), (2) the supporting and inhibiting factors that influence the implementation of English use in the bilingual tahfidz pesantren environment.

Using a qualitative approach through in-depth interviews, natural observation, and document analysis, this study focuses on exploring sociolinguistic practices rather than simply evaluating skill outcomes. This approach provides a deeper understanding of how bilingualism functions in the religious and academic lives of students. The contributions of this study cover three aspects. First, theoretically, this study enriches the study of translanguaging and the maintenance of bilingualism in Islamic education. Second, practically, this study offers recommendations that can be applied by pesantren administrators in designing communicative and sustainable language programs. Third, from a policy perspective, this research provides evidence-based insights for the Ministry of Religious Affairs and certification agencies in formulating more holistic regulations for bilingual Islamic boarding schools in Indonesia.

RESEARCH METHODS

This study uses a qualitative approach with a descriptive case study design to explore the application of English in a bilingual tahfidz boarding school environment. This method was chosen because it provides an in-depth understanding of language practices in a real context and the factors that influence them (Creswell & Poth, 2024). The research focused on only one location, namely the Dynamic Boarding English Arabic Tahfidz School (D-BEATS) in Pare, Kediri, which implements an English-Arabic bilingual policy in both formal and non-formal activities.

The research subjects included the curriculum chair, four teachers, and eleven students from various grade levels. Participants were selected purposively, considering their relevance to the research focus. In qualitative research, the researcher acts as the main instrument, assisted by semi-structured interview guidelines, field notes, audio recordings, and visual documentation to maintain data completeness (Subagyo & Kristian, 2023). Data collection techniques were carried out in three ways, namely semi-structured interviews, participatory observation, and document analysis. Interviews were used to explore participants' experiences and perceptions, participatory observation allowed researchers to capture language practices that occurred naturally in daily activities, while document analysis included curricula, language regulations, activity schedules, and evaluation archives that supported contextual understanding (Rifa'i, 2023).

To ensure the credibility of the findings, source and method triangulation was used, namely by comparing data from interviews, observations, and documents. The data was then analyzed using an interactive model (Subagyo & Kristian, 2023) through three stages: data reduction, data presentation, and conclusion drawing and verification. The validation process was carried out by checking with participants to ensure that the researchers' interpretations were consistent with their experiences.

This research was conducted at the D-BEATS Islamic Boarding School in Pare, Kediri, in June 2025, with the researchers directly involved in the activities of

the boarding school to obtain a complete picture of bilingual practices, supporting and inhibiting factors, and the strategies applied.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

1. The implementation of the use of English in the bilingual tahfidz pesantren

The study found that the implementation of English at Dynamic Boarding English Arabic Tahfidz School (D-BEATS) was carried out in a structured manner and integrated with the institution's vision and mission. English was not only treated as a formal subject, but also integrated into everyday life. To achieve this, the boarding school implements several programs, such as morning conversations, muhadhoroh, and the creation of special language areas. These programs are carried out daily, weekly, and monthly, supported by regular monitoring and evaluation.

In addition, a reward and punishment system based on point deductions is implemented to foster discipline in language use. This approach emphasizes educational discipline rather than punishment, encouraging students to communicate without fear of making mistakes. This practice is in line with Second Language Acquisition Theory, which emphasizes the importance of comprehensible input and low affective filters (Krashen & States, 1977). Furthermore, the role of musyrifah in the dormitory reinforces language practice through direct supervision, correction, and encouragement when students encounter difficulties. These practices reflect the principles of Communicative Language Teaching (Ashila, Sya, & Dalilah, 2024), in which language is acquired naturally through real interactions.

2. Supporting and inhibiting factors in the implementation of the English Language

Several factors support the successful implementation of English. Supporting factors include a mandatory language policy that regulates daily communication, consistent role modeling by teachers, systematic evaluation mechanisms, and the presence of musyrifah who ensure that the rules are

enforced in the dormitory context. Additionally, student motivation, both intrinsic and extrinsic, plays a crucial role in maintaining the use of English.

However, the study also identified inhibiting factors that limit the effectiveness of implementation. Internal challenges faced by students include lack of confidence, limited vocabulary, low motivation, and fear of making mistakes. Externally, peer pressure, the tendency to switch between Arabic, English, and Indonesian, and weaknesses in monitoring undermine consistency. These obstacles are related to the practice of translanguaging (Garcia & Wei, 2015), which can facilitate understanding but also risks causing confusion if not managed properly.

Overall, this study confirms that the implementation of English in D-BEATS is not merely a formal regulation, but a living practice shaped by structured programs, institutional policies, and teacher-student interactions. Although supporting factors strengthen the sustainability of the program, inhibiting factors both internal and external remain challenges that require sustainable solutions to optimize the role of English in the pesantren environment.

CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The results of the study show that the implementation of English at the D-BEATS Bilingual Tahfidz Islamic Boarding School has been carried out in a structured manner and is integrated with the vision and mission of the institution. English is not only taught in the classroom, but also integrated into daily activities through morning conversation programs, muhadhoroh, language areas, and a point-based reward and punishment system. This policy has proven to be effective in creating a conducive language environment, encouraging students to communicate in English.

The main supporting factors include mandatory language regulations, consistent supervision, the exemplary behavior of teachers and musyrifah, as well as the intrinsic and extrinsic motivation of students. Meanwhile, the inhibiting factors found include limited vocabulary, fear of making mistakes, low self-confidence, peer pressure, and the dominance of Arabic in religious activities. Thus,

the implementation of the bilingual policy based on tahfidz at D-BEATS is considered effective in shaping students who are Qur'anic and have global communication skills, although there are still challenges that need to be overcome.

Based on these findings, several recommendations can be made. For Islamic boarding schools, it is important to strengthen the continuous monitoring and evaluation system to maintain consistency in the use of English, including outside the supervision of teachers or musyrifah. In terms of learning, teaching strategies should emphasize vocabulary enrichment and speaking skills improvement to build confidence and reduce psychological barriers for students. Educators and caregivers need to maintain their role as role models by consistently using English in daily interactions, thereby creating a natural language atmosphere and encouraging students to imitate them.

In addition, students also need to develop self-awareness of the importance of language discipline, so that English practice does not only depend on rules, but also grows as a personal motivation. For further research, it is recommended to explore translanguaging practices in Islamic boarding schools in greater depth, in order to understand the extent to which language mixing supports or hinders learning.

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