# PESANTREN READINESS TO IMPLEMENT ENGLISH PROGRAMS

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ABSTRACT: In Indonesia, English is not officially guaranteed as a foreign language, but many schools, including pesantren, offer English language instruction. Historically, pesantren are Islamic educational institutions that focus on classical Islamic texts. Recently, however, these institutions have begun integrating modern subjects, including foreign languages such as English. This study aims to assess the readiness of pesantren for implementing English language programs. Data was gathered through interviews, observations, and document analysis. Two English language coordinators were interviewed to provide insights into the readiness of pesantren for these programs. Additionally, observations and document reviews were conducted to collect supplementary data. The findings indicate that pesantren demonstrate a high level of readiness for English language programs. This readiness is evident in several areas: the diversity of English programs offered, the contributions of teachers, the availability of supporting facilities, and the overall environment of the pesantren.

Keywords: English Programs, Pesantren, Readiness

### INTRODUCTION

In today's globalized world, English serves as a crucial tool for international communication, making it a highly sought-after skill. As a member of ASEAN under the Bangkok Declaration of 1967 (Kirkpatrick, 2012, p. 124), Indonesia emphasizes the importance of English education. Despite this, English programs in Indonesia often face challenges, including inadequate preparation in schools and insufficient proficiency among students and teachers (Tahir, 2015, p. 45).

indicates Research that English education programs in Indonesia are not running optimally due to a lack of teacher preparedness and inadequate learning facilities (Musthafa, 2010). Such constraints can significantly impact students at various educational levels, including junior high school, high school, and university. According to Syahfutra and Wibowo (2019), issues such as limited teacher competence, insufficient educational facilities, and inadequate preparation can hinder students' language Their research revealed students often struggle with speaking English due to anxiety, lack of confidence, and fear of making mistakes. Referring to Muslem et al. (2019), speaking is a demanding cognitive processing skill that EFL learners find challenging to complete.

P-ISSN: 2829 - 9000

E-ISSN: 2829 - 3622

In response to these challenges, many parents opt for private (nongovernment) schools with strong English Pesantren. programs, such as Traditionally, pesantren Islamic are educational institutions. Before the 1960s. they were known as "pondok," referring to bamboo boarding houses. In Java, these institutions are commonly called "pondok," while in Madura, they are known as "pesantren." In West Sumatra, they are referred to as "surau," and in Aceh and North Sumatra, they are called "Rangkang Meunasah." with some in Aceh being termed "dayah" (Ritonga, Ananda, Lanin, & Hasan, 2019).

Among the numerous pesantren in Indonesia, Pesantren Almuslimun in North Aceh stands out for its foreign language education, including English and Arabic. This pesantren is renowned for its participation in English competitions at district, provincial, national, and international levels and has garnered numerous achievements.

In the latest competition, a student from Pesantren Almuslimun was awarded second place in the English speech category at the Aceh Provincial PORSENI (Sports and Arts Competition) in 2018. Additionally, in 2019, the pesantren achieved international recognition when one of its students was selected as Indonesia's representative for a free course in the United States. Last, in 2023, there were three students from this pesantren were selected as Indonesia's representative for the International Scout Event in South Korea.

Given these positive outcomes and the results of previous research, the authors believe that Pesantren Almuslimun is well-prepared for English language programs. This belief underscores the importance of conducting further research on the pesantren's readiness for such programs. Consequently, the researchers undertook a study to evaluate Pesantren Almuslimun's preparedness for implementing and advancing its English language program.

## LITERATURE REVIEW English Programs

An English program is a structured initiative designed by an institution to enhance the quality of English education. Previous research has identified several types of English programs aimed at improving language skills in private institutions (Insan, 2019; Setiawati, 2018; Yulistiva, 2020).

According to Insan (2019), effective English language programs include *Mufrodat* (vocabulary), which focuses on expanding students' word knowledge. *Muhadasah* (conversation), which emphasizes speaking skills. *Muhadoroh* (speech), which develops students' public speaking abilities.

Yulistiya (2020)highlights critical components of successful English language programs: Vocabulary programs, Speech programs, Conversation programs, and Additional learning programs, such supplementary as courses.

Setiawati (2018) notes that institutions often offer a range of foreign language programs, typically including English and Arabic. These programs are often scheduled at different times throughout the day, such as; *Mufradat* in the morning, *Muhadasah* in the afternoon.

Muhadharah (lecture) in the evening. Supporting activities for these programs may include English language clubs, placing mufrodat placards in strategic locations, and enforcing foreign language discipline.

P-ISSN: 2829 - 9000

E-ISSN: 2829 - 3622

Based on the findings from previous research, three predominant programs have been identified for enhancing students' English proficiency: *Mufradat* for vocabulary mastery, *Muhadasah* for improving speaking skills, *Muhadharah* for developing communication skills. These programs collectively contribute to a well-rounded approach to English language education.

#### Readiness

The concept of readiness refers to a state of being fully prepared to undertake or facilitate a particular task or activity. In the context of research, readiness encompasses various dimensions, each of which contributes to the overall success of an initiative or program. Below are some key aspects of readiness as they pertain to the scope of research:

Pesantren's Readiness refers to the preparedness of the Islamic boarding schools (pesantren) to engage in or support a specific program or activity. It includes the institution's capacity to provide the necessary infrastructure, administrative support, and alignment with the objectives of the program.

Teachers' Readiness, teachers' readiness involves their preparedness to implement, participate in, or support the research or program. This includes their knowledge, skills, attitude, and willingness to adopt new methodologies or technologies as required by the program.

Readiness of Supporting Facilities, this aspect covers the availability and adequacy of physical and technological resources needed to carry out the program. It includes facilities like classrooms, laboratories, equipment, and access to relevant digital resources or platforms.

Each of these components is crucial in ensuring the smooth execution and success of the research or program. When all aspects of readiness are addressed, it increases the likelihood of achieving the

desired outcomes efficiently and effectively.

## **Pesantren Readiness**

Historically, pesantren is an Islamic educational institution that has traditionally focused on teaching students through classical Islamic texts, commonly referred to as *Kitab Kuning* (Pohl, 2006). Pesantren has an important function in teaching and directing society. Pesantren, as an educational institution, may contribute to modern Islamic concerns and help to fill the need in society for Islamic law (Zulkhairi et al., 2024).

The origins of pesantren were rooted in providing purely Islamic education, without the inclusion of subjects like English language instruction. However, in recent years, the landscape has changed significantly, particularly in pesantren, where English education and have multilingualism become prevalent (Tahir, 2015). Despite this evolution, the readiness of pesantren to effectively integrate English language education remains a crucial area for research.

In various regions of Indonesia, pesantren are known by different names: in Aceh, they are called dayah or rangkang; in Minangkabau, they are referred to as surau; and the Javanese people call them pondok pesantren. Despite the regional differences terminology, the fundamental components of pesantren are consistent across the country. These elements include Kyai (The religious teacher or leader of pesantren), Santri (The students who study at the pesantren), Pondok (The term derived from the Arabic word "funduk," meaning a place or house where the students reside), Mosque (A place of worship and also a center for studying Kitab Kuning), Kitab Kuning (The classical Islamic texts that form the core of the curriculum), (Fadhilah, 2011).

Today, pesantren in Indonesia can be broadly categorized into two types, first is Traditional Pesantren (Salafi Pesantren): These institutions are focused solely on providing Islamic religious education. The curriculum centers around the *Kitab Kuning* and the teachings of

classical Islamic knowledge, with little to no inclusion of modern subjects (Fadhilah, 2011).

P-ISSN: 2829 - 9000

E-ISSN: 2829 - 3622

The second is Modern Pesantren: These institutions offer a blend of Islamic education and contemporary subjects, including the teaching of foreign languages such as Arabic and English. approach dual reflects This the pesantren's adaptation to modern educational demands and their role in preparing students for a globalized world (Tahir, 2015).

Understanding the readiness of pesantren, particularly traditional ones, to embrace and effectively deliver English language education, is essential. This readiness involves assessing the infrastructure, teacher capabilities, curriculum integration, and the overall institutional support for such programs.

## **Teachers' Readiness**

Teachers play a pivotal role in the success of educational programs, particularly in the context of foreign language instruction. According to Insan (2019), four key factors contribute to the successful improvement of students' foreign language skills, one of which is the quality and readiness of teachers. Foreign language advisors and administrators are crucial in enhancing students' language proficiency, as they directly influence the quality of instruction and the learning environment.

Teachers are central figures in the educational process, with the success of a learning outcome heavily dependent on their ability to effectively implement teaching methods (Hanushek & Rivkin, 2006). In classroom settings, a teacher's professionalism is demonstrated through competence in subject matter, mastery of teaching methodologies, and effective classroom management is critical. Teacher readiness includes their maturity and preparedness to manage a classroom, guiding students through the learning process in alignment with a well-structured lesson plan. This involves preparing appropriate learning experiences. selecting and using relevant teaching materials and media, employing various teaching approaches and methods, and

conducting assessments (Harden & Crosby, 2002).

To be fully effective, teachers must possess three main competencies; 1) Personal Competence, which involves the practice of religious teachings, ethical behavior, respect for others, adherence to rules, and the ability to act democratically. Teachers must embody these values to serve as role models for their students. 2) Social Competence, refers to the ability to interact positively with colleagues and students, understanding social functions, and fostering both individual and group cooperation. Α teacher's social competence enables them to build a supportive and collaborative learning environment. 3) Professional Competence, Professional competence is critical and includes mastery of educational principles, subject matter expertise, and the ability to apply various teaching methodologies and strategies. It also involves developing and utilizing different media and learning resources, carrying out effective learning evaluations, creating and refining learning programs, and engaging in research and scientific thinking to improve educational performance (Pantić & Wubbels, 2010).

Overall, teachers' readiness is essential for the effective delivery of foreign language education. It ensures that teachers are not only knowledgeable and skilled but also capable of creating an environment that fosters student engagement and success in learning new languages.

## **Facilities' Readiness**

The readiness of facilities plays a crucial role in supporting effective teaching and learning processes. Essential educational facilities include physical structures such as schools, classrooms, sports fields, prayer rooms, and other related buildings that provide the necessary environment for educational activities (Clark, Additionally, learning facilities extend to textbooks. stationery, laboratory equipment, and various other learning media that are essential for educational (Ramli, process Zain, Campus, Chepa, & Bharu, 2018).

The availability and quality of these learning facilities have a direct impact on

student success. In general, educational facilities encompass all resources required for the teaching and learning process to proceed smoothly, efficiently, effectively, ultimately contributing to the achievement of educational (Mokaya, 2013). The importance of these facilities is further emphasized in the context of language learning, where tools, props, media, classrooms, and libraries specifically tailored for English learning are crucial for optimal outcomes.

P-ISSN: 2829 - 9000

E-ISSN: 2829 - 3622

Well-designed learning facilities are fundamental to the success of educational programs. The principles of effective learning emphasize the availability of appropriate facilities, media, and learning resources, all of which contribute to the quality of education provided (Pujolà, 2002).

### **Environment Readiness**

The environment is another critical achieving element in educational objectives, particularly in the context of foreian language education. environment influences not only the development of language skills but also the overall learning experience (Elder, Bengtsson, & Akenji, 2016). Two primary types of environments can impact learning: the formal environment and the informal environment (Hall, 2009).

A formal Environment is a consciously designed setting, usually guided by teachers or tutors, where structured learning occurs. In the context of foreign language education, the formal environment is typically the classroom or educational institution where systematic instruction is provided.

Informal Environment forms naturally and includes settings such as family, offices, markets, and other public places. In foreign language learning, the informal environment can be crucial as it provides students with real-life contexts and opportunities to practice and reinforce language skills outside the classroom.

The significance of a foreign language environment lies in its ability to immerse learners in the language, thereby enhancing their communicative abilities. A well-structured language environment promotes continuous interaction through

conversational practice, discussions, seminars, lectures, and writing exercises, all of which are vital for improving both spoken and written language skills (Brooks & Wilson, 2014).

According to Insan (2019), several support the development of students' language skills; 1) Role Models: Figures such as the leaders of the pesantren, who serve as role models for students. 2) Qualified Teachers: The presence of skilled foreign language teachers. 3) Supportive Environment: A environment within conducive pesantren that encourages language learning. 4) Student Enthusiasm: The active participation and enthusiasm of students in the learning process.

Language environments are shaped by the interactions between students and teachers, as well as the presence of language-related materials and signage in public spaces. Students who engage in daily interactions using English tend to achieve greater fluency compared to those who do not (Amiruddin & Jannah, 2019).

Efforts to create an English-speaking environment can include placing language-related materials, such as vocabulary placards (*mufrodath*), in strategic locations within the pesantren. This approach aims to reinforce language learning by embedding the target language into the daily lives of students, thus creating a more immersive learning experience (Setiawati, 2018).

## Research Methodology Research Instrument

This study employed three main research instruments: interviews, observations, and documentation. The researchers used ingather detailed interviews to information from participants. An in-depth interview is a method of obtaining information through direct questions and answers between the interviewer and the informants, guided by a set of interview questions (Milena, Dainora, & Alin, 2008). In this study, sixteen questions were posed to each participant, focusing on various aspects of the English programs in pesantren, including the implementation process, the role of the coordinator, the resources used, and the readiness of facilities and the environment. The purpose of these in-depth questions was to obtain comprehensive and nuanced data.

P-ISSN: 2829 - 9000

E-ISSN: 2829 - 3622

The researchers utilized observation checklist to collect relevant data through direct observation of the activities related to the research. The observations were conducted from the beginning to the end of the process, with detailed notes and recordings made of activities closely related to the research scope (Mulhall, 2003). Key observation points included the types of English programs in the pesantren, implementation mechanisms, schedules, the enthusiasm of coordinators and participants, and other related activities. All observations were documented using recording devices such as camcorders and smartphones, as well as the observation checklist.

The researchers also gathered data through documentation, which included regulations, job descriptions, program details, photos, electronic archives. magazines, newspapers, scientific journals, and school curricula (Wulf, 2000). This stage was conducted after interviews and observations to ensure the accuracy and consistency of the data obtained. The documentation process focused examining the vision and mission of the number pesantren, the of English teachers, the role of English coordinators, the English language programs offered, and the achievements related to these programs. The purpose of this stage was to deepen and corroborate the data gathered from other research the instruments.

### **Technique of Data Collection**

The data collection process was carried out in natural conditions, with primary data sources being interviews, observations, and documentation. The researchers participants for selected two interviews, both of whom were English coordinators at the pesantren. These coordinators were chosen because of their central role in the English programs. Each interview was divided into two sessions, with each participant allotted thirty to sixty minutes.

interview questions The were designed to cover a range of topics. beginning with basic information such as the participants' identities, educational backgrounds. teaching experience. training attended, and the sources used for the English program. The questions then moved on to more specific topics related to the English pesantren program, such as structure of the program, implementation, scheduling, involvement of key personnel, facilities readiness, and the achievements and challenges faced by the program. The interviews aimed to provide in-depth insights into the situation and phenomena surrounding English language education in the pesantren. The researchers meticulously recorded the interview responses to ensure data accuracy.

addition to interviews. In the researchers used an observation checklist to gather relevant data through direct observation. This method was intended to complement the data obtained from the interviews by providing a visual and contextual understanding of the English programs and the overall environment of the pesantren. The observations included various aspects of the program, such as the condition of the pesantren, the implementation of the English language program, the involvement of key figures, and the readiness of facilities.

Finally, the researchers conducted a thorough review of relevant documents to validate and strengthen the data collected through interviews and observations. The documentation review focused on the vision and mission of the pesantren, the number of English teachers, learning resources, curriculum details, and the facilities used for the English program. The researchers also examined documents related to the management administration of the English program, ensuring that the information gathered was consistent with the actual practices and regulations of the pesantren. comprehensive approach to data collection was designed to provide a robust and accurate understanding of the readiness of implementing pesantren in language education programs.

## **Technique of Data Analysis**

In this study, the researchers utilized a systematic approach to data analysis, consisting of four key stages: data collection, data reduction, data display, and drawing conclusions or verification (Miles & Huberman, 1994). This structured process ensured that the analysis was thorough and methodical, leading to credible and reliable conclusions.

P-ISSN: 2829 - 9000

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#### Data Collection

The initial stage involved gathering data using interviews, observations, and documentation. This comprehensive data collection provided a rich source of information regarding the readiness of pesantren for implementing English programs.

### Data Reduction

Once data was collected, the researchers engaged in data reduction, a crucial step in which they sifted through the gathered information to identify what was relevant to the study. The researchers carefully sorted out significant data that directly pertained to the readiness of pesantren for the English program, while discarding any information that was irrelevant to the scope of the research. This step was essential for simplifying and focusing the data, making it more manageable for subsequent analysis.

## Data Display

After reducing the data, the researchers proceeded to the data display stage. Here, they organized and presented the reduced data coherently, often in the form of brief descriptions or summaries. This stage allowed the researchers to critically evaluate the readiness of pesantren for the English program by visualizing the key findings. The purpose of displaying the was to facilitate а deeper understanding of the results and to prepare for the final stage of analysis.

## Drawing Conclusions or Data Verification

The final stage involved drawing conclusions based on the data that had been collected, reduced, and displayed. The researchers synthesized the findings

to determine the overall readiness of pesantren for the English programs. They ensured that the conclusions were drawn accurately and were based on the evidence provided by the previous stages. In cases where the data was unclear or consideration, required further researchers revisited the earlier stages of data collection, reduction, and display to verify the findings before reaching a final conclusion. This iterative process helped to ensure the credibility and validity of the conclusions. which research supported by a combination of interview data, observational evidence, documentation.

By following this systematic approach to data analysis, the researchers were able to effectively assess and present the readiness of pesantren for implementing English language education programs, leading to well-founded and trustworthy research outcomes.

## Results and Discussion Result

This section presents the research findings based on interviews, observations, and documentation within the context of the English language programs at the pesantren. The research identified several key areas, including the types of English language programs offered, the involvement of educators, the readiness of facilities, and the environmental factors that support English language education.

The pesantren has implemented three main English language programs: the vocabulary program, the conversation program, and the speech program. These programs are central to enhancing students' English proficiency. Participant One (P1) noted: "Pesantren has three main programs for the English language education program; vocabulary program, conversation program, and speech program."

Participant Two (P2) reinforced this by mentioning additional initiatives aimed at further enhancing students' language skills: "Apart from these three programs, pesantren also provides other programs such as a foreign language competition, by expecting that students' talents in foreign languages can increase."

These programs are complemented by the active contribution of educators, particularly those with proficiency in English. Their involvement is critical to the success of the programs. P1 stated: "Teachers contribute a lot to the development of English programs, for example in daily activities the teacher also controls and supervises students to keep speaking in English."

P-ISSN: 2829 - 9000

E-ISSN: 2829 - 3622

The pesantren environment is also supportive of English language education, with many buildings named in English, such as classrooms, dormitories, and laboratories. This environment plays a significant role in promoting the use of English and fostering a conducive atmosphere for language learning.

While the facilities for English language education at the pesantren are generally good, there is room for improvement. P1 acknowledged this, saying: "The facilities we use for language programs are still good but need additional quantity."

A notable limitation is the absence of an English language laboratory. However, P2 noted that this has not hindered the effectiveness of the English programs: "We do not have an English language laboratory, but that is not an obstacle for the pesantren's English programs. The English programs could run well without it."

Despite the lack of a laboratory, the pesantren has effectively utilized other areas, such as public spaces, sports fields, and communal areas, to carry out English language activities.

### Discussion

Pesantren Almuslimun is a modern Islamic boarding school that provides comprehensive education, including English language instruction. This aligns with Tahir's (2015) assertion that modern Islamic boarding schools offer not only Islamic education but also other subjects, such as English, to meet contemporary needs.

The Almuslimun pesantren has developed several English language programs aimed at improving students' written and spoken English skills. The vocabulary program (mufradat),

conversation program (muhadasah), and speech program (muhadharah) are central to these efforts. These programs are consistent with the findings of Insan (2019), Yulistiya (2020), and Setiawati (2018), who highlighted similar programs as effective in enhancing students' foreign language abilities.

The vocabulary program is conducted five times a week, focusing on expanding students' vocabulary and grammar understanding. This program, typically held for 5-10 minutes after Fajr (dawn) prayers, is crucial for laying a strong foundation in English language learning.

The conversation program, held four times a week, provides students with the opportunity to practice speaking English in pairs on predetermined topics. This program is instrumental in improving students' conversational skills.

The speech program, conducted once a week, allows students to deliver speeches in English, fostering their confidence and public speaking abilities. This program has been particularly successful in encouraging students to use English in a formal setting.

These programs have been successful due to several factors, including the readiness of teachers, facilities, and the supportive environment at the pesantren. The teachers play a crucial role in guiding students and ensuring the success of the programs, consistent with previous research that emphasizes the importance of teacher readiness in language education (Insan, 2019; Harden & Crosby, 2002; Pantić & Wubbels, 2010).

The environment at Pesantren Almuslimun, both formal (classroom) and informal (pengasuhan), supports the learning of English. This aligns with Hall's (2009) theory that both formal and informal environments influence language learning.

The pesantren has also created an environment conducive to English language learning by naming buildings in English and using English in public signage. This approach is similar to the methods used in other successful pesantren, as noted by Setiawati (2018).

Despite the absence of an English language laboratory, the pesantren has

managed to run its English programs effectively by utilizing open spaces and other available facilities. This adaptability has not hindered the progress of the programs.

P-ISSN: 2829 - 9000

E-ISSN: 2829 - 3622

conclusion. the Almuslimun In pesantren has successfully implemented its English language programs due to the interrelated readiness of teachers. facilities, and the environment. The pesantren's achievements in external competitions and its overall development recent vears underscore in effectiveness of these programs. Despite challenges, such as the absence of a language laboratory and the impact of the Covid-19 pandemic. the pesantren continues to advance its educational goals, particularly in English language education.

## Conclusion and Suggestion Conclusion

The Almuslimun Islamic boarding school has successfully established and implemented various programs aimed at enhancing English language education. The three core programs—mufradath (vocabulary), muhadasah (conversation), and muhadharah (speech)—have been instrumental in improving students' written and spoken English skills. These programs have thrived due to several key factors: the readiness and dedication of teachers, the availability of adequate facilities, and the creation of a conducive learning environment.

The English learning environment at Almuslimun is supported by both formal settings, such as classrooms, and informal settings within the broader school community. The school's strategic use of English in naming buildings and posting English slogans throughout the campus has created an immersive atmosphere that reinforces language acquisition. As a result, students frequently use English in their daily interactions with peers and teachers.

Almuslimun is a prominent educational institution in North Aceh, equipped with various facilities that support teaching and learning, including well-maintained classrooms, sports fields, and a large library. The school's provision

of learning resources such as textbooks, writing tools, and internet access ensures that educational programs run efficiently.

The effectiveness of the English language programs at Almuslimun is reflected in the school's numerous external achievements at the provincial, national, and international levels over the past three years. However, the school faced challenges in 2020 due to the Covid-19 pandemic, which limited its participation in external competitions.

## Suggestion

To further enhance the success of English language education at Pesantren Almuslimun, the following suggestions are recommended; Facility Enhancement is adequate, but there is a need to expand and improve them, particularly by adding an English language laboratory. This would provide students with a dedicated space for language practice and further support the language programs.

Teacher Development is an essential part. Offering more training and workshops focused on modern English teaching methodologies will further enhance their ability to deliver effective language instruction.

Building on the existing English environment, the pesantren could introduce more interactive and technologically advanced tools, such as digital language boards and audio-visual aids, to further immerse students in the language.

Program Expansion could be considered more by expanding the existing programs by introducing new activities or advanced levels for students who have already mastered the basics. This could include debate clubs, English drama productions, or partnerships with international schools for cultural exchange programs.

By addressing these areas, Almuslimun Islamic Boarding School can continue to build on its successes and further strengthen its reputation as a leading institution for English language education in North Aceh.

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