



Enhancing English Proficiency Through the 'One Day in English' Program: A Case Study at SMAN 1 Sidrap

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Abstract

English proficiency is a crucial skill in the era of globalization, yet high school students often face challenges in actively practicing the language. This study examines the implementation and effectiveness of the "One Day in English" program at SMAN 1 Sidrap. The program adopts an immersive learning approach where students are required to use English throughout the day in various interactive activities. These activities include group discussions, presentations, daily conversations, and games aimed at enhancing both oral and written communication skills. Using observational methods and pre-and post-program assessments, the study evaluates improvements in students' English language abilities. The findings reveal significant progress in speaking fluency, vocabulary comprehension, and overall confidence in using English. Moreover, the interactive nature of the program fostered active student participation and created a supportive learning environment. This research highlights the potential of immersive learning strategies in addressing barriers to effective English learning. It offers a practical framework for schools to adopt similar programs to enrich language learning experiences and build students' confidence in real-world communication.

Keywords: "One Day in English," immersive learning, English proficiency, interactive education, high school students

Abstrak

Kemampuan berbahasa Inggris merupakan keterampilan penting di era globalisasi, namun siswa sekolah menengah atas sering menghadapi kendala dalam praktik penggunaan bahasa secara aktif. Penelitian ini mengkaji pelaksanaan dan efektivitas program "One Day in English" di SMAN 1 Sidrap. Program ini menggunakan pendekatan pembelajaran imersif, di mana siswa diwajibkan menggunakan bahasa Inggris sepanjang hari dalam berbagai aktivitas interaktif. Aktivitas tersebut meliputi diskusi kelompok, presentasi, percakapan sehari-hari, dan permainan edukatif yang bertujuan untuk meningkatkan keterampilan komunikasi lisan dan tulisan. Dengan menggunakan metode observasi dan evaluasi hasil belajar sebelum dan sesudah program, penelitian ini mengevaluasi peningkatan kemampuan berbahasa Inggris siswa. Hasil penelitian menunjukkan adanya peningkatan signifikan dalam kelancaran berbicara, pemahaman kosakata, dan kepercayaan diri siswa dalam menggunakan bahasa Inggris. Selain itu, sifat interaktif program ini mendorong partisipasi aktif siswa dan menciptakan lingkungan belajar yang mendukung. Penelitian ini menyoroti potensi strategi pembelajaran imersif dalam mengatasi hambatan pembelajaran bahasa Inggris. Temuan ini menawarkan kerangka praktis bagi sekolah untuk mengadopsi program serupa guna memperkaya pengalaman belajar bahasa dan meningkatkan kepercayaan diri siswa dalam komunikasi nyata.

Kata Kunci: "One Day in English," pembelajaran imersif, keterampilan bahasa Inggris, pendidikan interaktif, siswa sekolah menengah

INTRODUCTION

English has become a vital tool in the era of globalization, serving as the primary means of communication across education, technology, and business sectors. In Indonesia, English proficiency is highly valued as it provides access to a wealth of information, international education opportunities, and promising career prospects. However, teaching and learning English in schools continue to face numerous challenges, particularly in rural areas like Sidenreng Rappang (Sidrap), where access to effective English education is limited.

At SMAN 1 Sidrap, the teaching of English often focuses heavily on grammar and tenses, leaving little room for the practical application of daily conversational skills. Students lack opportunities to practice speaking in an engaging and supportive environment, which significantly affects their confidence and ability to communicate in English. These barriers, coupled with conventional teaching methods, hinder students from achieving communicative competence, a crucial aspect of language learning. To address these challenges, the "One Day in English" program was introduced as an innovative learning initiative. This program, conducted as part of the Teaching Assistance Program at SMAN 1 Sidrap, aims to enhance students' English skills by creating a fully immersive environment where English is the sole language used throughout the day. Collaborating with the English Meeting Club (EMC), the program incorporates interactive activities such as group discussions, role-playing, games, and presentations, designed to make learning enjoyable and effective.

Grounded in the principles of Communicative Language Teaching (CLT), the program emphasizes real-world language use and focuses on developing communicative competence rather than merely mastering linguistic rules. By providing students with authentic contexts for language practice, the program seeks to improve their speaking,

listening, reading, and writing skills while building their confidence in using English.

This study evaluates the effectiveness of the "One Day in English" program in improving English proficiency among tenth-grade students at SMAN 1 Sidrap. By examining pre-and post-program assessments and observing students' participation, this research highlights the potential of immersive learning strategies in overcoming language learning challenges and fostering a supportive environment for skill development. Through this program, it is hoped that students will not only gain practical language skills but also develop a lifelong interest in learning English.

METHOD

The "One Day in English" event at SMA Negeri 1 Sidrap was implemented through a structured four-phase process to enhance the students' English language skills. This methodical approach aimed at providing a comprehensive, engaging, and effective learning experience for all participants. Below is a detailed description of each phase of the program. The first phase involved extensive preparation and coordination between the event team and the school administration. This step included discussions with the English subject teachers and the school principal to align on the event's objectives, schedule, and responsibilities. The Teaching Assistance Team organized a meeting to present the program's goals and clarify the roles of all involved, ensuring everyone understood their tasks for a smooth execution. The goal of this phase was to establish a clear understanding between the team and the school staff, fostering collaboration and support.

The second phase focused on developing the materials that would be used during the event. Together with the English teachers of SMA Negeri 1 Sidrap, the event team designed engaging and educational content to make the learning experience more enjoyable for the students. The materials covered essential English language topics such as the alphabet, numbers (both ordinal and cardinal), verbs,

adjectives, and daily conversational phrases. To maintain student interest and prevent boredom, the material was supplemented with interactive games and activities that allowed students to apply their knowledge in a fun and engaging way.

Once the materials were finalized, the next step was to prepare for the actual event. This phase involved distributing the teaching materials to the mentors, ensuring that all participants were familiar with their roles and responsibilities. Additionally, classrooms were set up and organized to create a conducive learning environment. A meeting with the event organizing committee and the Liaison Officers (LOs) was held to review the event schedule and clarify logistics. The LOs played an important role in guiding students throughout the event, ensuring that each session ran smoothly and that students received the necessary support during the day.

The event took place on Saturday, September 7, 2024, and began with a formal opening ceremony. The Chairperson of the English Meeting Club at SMA Negeri 1 Sidrap gave a welcome speech, followed by an official opening by the school principal, Mr. H. Syamsu Yunus, S.Pd., M.Si. After the opening, students were divided into four groups, and each group was assigned a classroom where they would participate in different language-learning sessions. This division helped maintain a manageable class size and ensured that students could receive more personalized attention from the mentors.

Throughout the event, students participated in a series of rotating sessions, each led by a different mentor. This approach allowed students to engage with various teaching styles and avoid the monotony of having the same instructor for the entire day. Each session focused on a specific aspect of the English language, from vocabulary building to practical conversations. To enhance student engagement and ensure that they stayed motivated, interactive activities and games were integrated into each session. Ice-breaking activities were also included to create a relaxed and supportive learning

atmosphere, helping students feel more comfortable and excited about using English.

The event concluded at 4:00 PM with a group photo session, capturing the moment to commemorate the successful completion of the program. This closing activity was symbolic of the teamwork and collaboration that had been evident throughout the day. The participants, mentors, and organizing team came together for a final photo as a memento of their shared experience. By the end of the program, students had not only improved their English language skills but also gained more confidence in using English in everyday situations. The overall success of the "One Day in English" program demonstrated the effectiveness of interactive and well-structured educational activities in enhancing language proficiency.

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

The "One Day in English" program successfully improved students' English proficiency across multiple skill areas through an immersive and interactive learning approach. One of the key findings was a significant enhancement in speaking skills. Students demonstrated noticeable progress in fluency and pronunciation, especially during group discussions and role-playing sessions. They became more confident in expressing their thoughts and ideas in English, reducing their reliance on their native language during communication. In listening comprehension, students showed increased ability to understand spoken English, particularly when exposed to audio materials featuring native speakers. They became better at grasping the context, key ideas, and nuances of conversations. This improvement was largely attributed to consistent exposure to diverse accents and varied speech speeds throughout the program.

The program also brought notable improvements in reading proficiency. By engaging with articles, short stories, and other reading materials, students expanded their vocabulary and demonstrated better text comprehension. Post-program evaluations revealed that students could analyze reading passages more effectively and answer comprehension questions with greater

accuracy. Writing skills also saw significant progress as students participated in structured writing exercises, including essays, journals, and reports. These tasks helped them develop better grammar, sentence structure, and coherence in their writing. Feedback provided by mentors further guided students in refining their writing techniques, allowing them to express their ideas more clearly and confidently. Another notable finding was the program's impact on students' confidence and engagement. Through interactive activities such as games, outdoor exercises, and group tasks, students became more enthusiastic about learning English. These activities broke the monotony of traditional classroom methods, encouraging active participation and fostering a positive attitude toward using English. The immersive nature of the program also helped students overcome their fear of making mistakes. By creating a supportive and encouraging environment, students were able to practice English without hesitation. This consistent practice gradually increased their comfort level with the language, enabling them to communicate more effectively.

Despite its success, the program encountered some challenges. Initially, students showed hesitation in participating actively, particularly those with lower proficiency levels. However, this was mitigated through ice-breaking sessions and group strategies that encouraged peer learning and support. Additionally, constructive feedback from mentors played a critical role in boosting students' motivation and confidence. Overall, the program had a long-lasting impact, as evidenced by students' increased willingness to participate in English-related activities beyond the designated day. Teachers also observed a shift in classroom dynamics, with students showing greater interest and enthusiasm in English lessons. These findings highlight the potential of immersive and interactive approaches to improve English proficiency and foster a culture of active learning.

Discussion

The "One Day in English" program at SMAN 1 Sidrap successfully demonstrated the power of immersive learning in improving English proficiency among students. Immersive learning is based on the concept that exposure to a language in meaningful, real-world contexts accelerates language acquisition. By requiring students to use English throughout the day, the program created a unique opportunity for them to practice and improve their skills in speaking, listening, reading, and writing in a natural, engaging environment. This approach helped students move beyond passive knowledge of grammar rules and vocabulary, enabling them to actively apply their language skills in practical situations. A notable result of the program was the significant improvement in students' speaking and listening skills. Activities such as group discussions, presentations, and role-playing were designed to create opportunities for students to use English in a variety of interactive settings. These activities directly contributed to increased fluency, as students gained more confidence in their ability to speak English without relying on their native language. The real-time practice provided by these activities was crucial in helping students overcome their initial reluctance and hesitation to speak, which is a common challenge in traditional language classrooms.

In addition to speaking, the program also enhanced listening comprehension, an area that often poses difficulties for language learners. By incorporating audio materials from native speakers and creating interactive listening exercises, students were exposed to different accents and speech patterns. This exposure helped them improve their ability to understand spoken English in real-world contexts. The results showed that students became more adept at identifying key ideas, understanding context, and responding to spoken English, which is essential for effective communication in both academic and everyday settings.

The program's focus on reading and writing skills also yielded positive results. By engaging with a range of reading materials, including articles and stories, students were able to expand their vocabulary and improve their reading comprehension. Post-program

assessments revealed that students were better equipped to analyze texts and answer questions accurately, demonstrating improved critical thinking skills. Writing tasks, such as essays and journals, allowed students to express their thoughts and ideas more clearly, which also contributed to better sentence structure and grammar usage. These improvements indicate that the program helped students develop not only communicative competence but also academic language skills that are essential for success in school. One of the key aspects of the program was its ability to foster a supportive and interactive learning environment. Traditional language classrooms often focus on individual learning, which can lead to disengagement or lack of motivation. However, by incorporating group activities, games, and collaborative tasks, the program encouraged students to interact with each other and learn from their peers. This collaborative approach helped create a sense of community within the classroom, where students felt comfortable practicing their English skills without fear of judgment or failure.

Despite its successes, the program faced challenges that were important to address in order to ensure its effectiveness. One of the primary challenges was the varying levels of proficiency among students, which initially caused some students to feel intimidated or unwilling to participate. However, this was mitigated through the use of ice-breaker activities that helped relax students and encourage participation. Additionally, grouping students with different proficiency levels enabled peer learning, where stronger students could assist others. This peer-support model proved to be highly effective in creating a collaborative learning environment where every student could benefit. The program's alignment with the principles of Communicative Language Teaching (CLT) further enhanced its effectiveness. CLT emphasizes the use of language in authentic communication rather than focusing solely on grammar and vocabulary drills. By providing opportunities for students to engage in real-world language use, the program embodied the core principles of CLT. Students practiced

not only the mechanics of the language but also the ability to use it effectively in real-life situations, which is the ultimate goal of language learning. This approach has been shown to produce better long-term language retention and greater student motivation. "One Day in English" program at SMAN 1 Sidrap provided a highly effective model for immersive language learning. The program's focus on active engagement, real-world language use, and peer collaboration helped students significantly improve their English skills across speaking, listening, reading, and writing. By creating a dynamic and supportive learning environment, the program successfully addressed many of the challenges typically encountered in language learning, including lack of confidence and limited speaking practice. The positive outcomes of this program suggest that similar immersive learning initiatives could be implemented in other schools to enhance students' language proficiency and foster a lifelong interest in learning English.

CONCLUSION

The "One Day in English" program at SMAN 1 Sidrap has proven to be an effective and innovative approach in improving students' English language skills. By immersing students in a full day of interactive and engaging activities that required the exclusive use of English, the program significantly enhanced students' speaking, listening, reading, and writing abilities. The positive outcomes, such as increased fluency, better pronunciation, improved comprehension, and more confident writing, highlight the effectiveness of immersive learning techniques in addressing the common challenges faced by language learners.

Moreover, the program fostered an environment of active participation and peer collaboration, which helped build students' confidence and reduced their fear of making mistakes. This approach encouraged students to engage with English in a real-world context, reinforcing their learning and making the language more accessible and practical. The use of games, group discussions, and role-playing helped students not only develop their language

skills but also gain greater confidence in using English for communication. Despite challenges such as varying proficiency levels, the program successfully addressed these through strategic planning, including ice-breaking activities and grouping students to encourage peer support. The program's design aligned closely with the principles of Communicative Language Teaching (CLT), which emphasizes authentic communication, and proved to be an effective strategy for enhancing students' overall language proficiency.

In conclusion, the "One Day in English" program demonstrated that immersive, interactive learning can significantly improve English skills in students, providing them with a more practical and enjoyable language learning experience. The success of this program suggests that similar initiatives can be adopted by other schools to improve English language learning, especially in environments where traditional methods may not fully address the needs of students. By creating engaging, communicative, and supportive learning environments, educators can foster a more effective and motivating language learning experience for students.

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