

English Camp Program to Improve Students' English Skill at SMP IT Qurrata Ayyun Batusangkar

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ABSTRACT

This study aims to describe the importance of the implementation of the English Camp program to improve the English language skills of students who take part in this program at SMP Islam Terpadu Qurrata Ayyun Batusangkar. The method used in this research is a descriptive method using a qualitative approach. The subjects of this research were the principal, English teachers, and students of SMP IT Qurrata Ayyun Batusangkar who participated in the English Camp program. The data collection technique in this research is observation and interview techniques. Data analysis techniques were carried out in stages including data collection, data reduction, data presentation, and conclusion drawing or verification. The results showed the importance of the English Camp program in improving students' English skills, as seen from the results of observations and interviews with research subjects. The results of this study were supported by document data on English Camp program activities. From the results of this study, researchers also found that the English Camp program was used as a superior program at SMP IT Qurrata Ayyun Batusangkar because this program was able to improve students' English skills.

Keywords: *English skill, English camp, program*

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INTRODUCTION

In Indonesia, English is taught as a second language, starting in primary school. Secondary school students still struggle to practice speaking English, even if they have been exposed to it since early childhood (Milania, T. et al., 2022). According to Malik et al. (2021), the students exhibit a lack of motivation for learning and possess minimal proficiency in learning English as a foreign language. These backgrounds require teachers to use engaging teaching methods that have the potential to improve their pupils' English proficiency. The English Camp program is one of the entertaining techniques. Enhancing students' interest in and proficiency in speaking English as a second language is advised for all English teachers (Aswad, M. 2017). According to the results of the second study, elementary school curriculum designers in Indonesia may find it worthwhile to incorporate the enjoyable English camp into their designs (Rachmawati et al. 2020). As shown in an additional study, students who attend English camps improve their English competence (Adi, S. S. et al., 2022).

Fun English Learning In countries where English is used as a foreign language or as a second language, English methods like English Camp are not new (Rahayu, D. et al., 2021). It is well known that children pick up languages far more quickly than adults do and that learning a foreign language in its original tongue is the best way to acquire it (Aswad, M. 2017). English language learners can live together and sustain regular social ties in an environment that is different from home at English language camps. Campers must communicate in English at all times while they are there (A Fawazien, R. 2021). According to Canosa in Adi, S. S., & Wijaya, R. A. (2022), learning results are improved by English camps. Compared to other learning activities that are conducted throughout the academic year, these advantages are more extensive. According to the program's results, every participant had acquired both language proficiency and cultural awareness (Rugasken, K., & Harris, J. A. 2009).

The goals of the English language camp are to encourage students to use the English language; teach them the ability to think logically and make critical decisions through the activities they engage in; provide students with opportunities to participate in the dynamic relationship among the curriculum setting and real-life situations; foster an understanding of English language lessons like games and creative writing as forms of art with intrinsic values that appeal to one's feelings; and foster a positive sense of motivation among the campers (Kleren, Lorenza, 2017). The camp's objectives are to equip the students with the skills they need to: (1) effectively communicate in English; (2) collaborate and develop leadership qualities; (3) take on responsibility; (4) develop a sense of belonging; and (5) develop critical and creative thinking abilities (Salina in Mustakim, M., & Ismail, I. 2018).

So, it is clear from the descriptions above that the English camp program is by the purpose of learning English as a foreign language, which is of making the students motivated to learn English in an interesting and fun way. At the end, after joining the English camp program, the students can use English to communicate with others.

It is clear from the previous research that the English camp program has been widely implemented in the teaching and learning process, especially at elementary schools, as a method to increase the students' motivation to learn English. The studies focused mostly on the effectiveness of English camp programs. However, there was still a limited study about the extent of the importance of the English camp program at junior high school, especially at SMP IT Qurrata Ayyun Batusangkar.

Therefore, the main objective of this paper is to find out the importance of the implementation of an English camp program to improve students' English skills at SMP IT Qurrata Ayyun Batusangkar. Even though many researchers were working on the implementation of the English camp program, very few researchers reported the importance of applying this program at junior high school, especially at SMP IT Qurrata Ayyun Batusangkar. This data is

very useful in helping the headmaster, teachers, students, parents, and other stakeholders choose the best methods to be applied at schools.

METHOD

Qualitative descriptive research is the research methodology employed in this study. This refers to a research methodology that aims to thoroughly and accurately explain all social phenomena that occur in society and that are the focus of the study to characterize the types, nature, and models of the phenomena. The purpose of the qualitative descriptive research is to describe the importance of the implementation of the English camp program as a way to improve students' English skills and to describe the feedback of this program on the teaching and learning process in the English classroom.

The informants who report data sources relevant to the research focus are utilized as research subjects. The description outlines the information you hope to gather, who you would like to interview or use as a research subject, and how the information will be found and recorded to ensure its accuracy. Participants in this research included the headmaster, an English instructor, and the camp members.

The following are some techniques that researchers employ to obtain data:

1. An observation

The technique of collecting unstructured, first-hand information through observation of individuals and locations at a study site is known as observation. Since the activities of the English camp were over, the researchers observed the subjects of the study as nonparticipant observers. The researchers observed the activities done in an English regular classroom.

2. Interview

Researchers ask general, open-ended questions to one or more participants during a qualitative interview and document their responses. After that, the data is transcribed and entered into a field note by the researchers for analysis. One-on-one interviews were used by the researchers. In a one-on-one interview, a single study participant is interviewed one at a time by the researcher, who records their responses to questions. This was done to the headmaster, the English teacher, and the students of the camp's members.

The data was analyzed with Miles and Huberman qualitative data analysis. They used three steps, which are;

1. Condensation of Data

The process of choosing, concentrating, streamlining, abstracting, and changing the data that shows up in recorded field notes or transcriptions is known as "data condensation." Reports that are put together using the collected data are condensed, summed up, highlighted, and prioritized. The data from the findings is compiled and arranged according to the conceptual themes of the

unit. Specific categories will offer a clearer picture of the observations and facilitate the retrieval of further data for researchers if necessary.

2. Information Display

A display is a condensed, well-organized compilation of data that enables inference and action. Data can be shown in many ways, including tables, graphs, and similar visual aids. Furthermore, the data can be presented using additional formats such as charts, correlations between categories, and succinct descriptions. Analysis and display are intertwined processes. Analytical tasks include creating a display, choosing the rows and columns of a matrix for qualitative data, and determining which data, in which format, should be inserted in the cells.

3. Drawing and Verifying the Conclusion

The preliminary findings are provisional and subject to modification if substantial evidence is not discovered to bolster the subsequent round of data collection. The results presented are believable because they are backed up by reliable and consistent evidence.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

On Wednesday, December 6, 2023, the researchers went to SMP IT Qurrata Ayyun. The researchers interviewed the headmaster, the English teacher at SMP IT Qurrata Ayyun, and three students from Classes 7, 8, and 9 at SMP IT Qurrata Ayyun Batusangkar. The first information that the researchers got was from the principal of SMP IT Qurrata Ayyun Batusangkar. There were around eleven questions asked by the researchers to the principal of SMP IT Qurrata Ayyun Batusangkar in connection with the research focus on the English camp program in improving students' English language skills. The first query was, "What is the history behind this school's English Camp implementation?" The school's principal explained how the goals of our institution informed the decision to hold this English camp. There are three goals of our school: the first is language, the second is memorizing the Quran, and the third is character. So language is the first goal. He hoped that the children at school would be able to speak English and Arabic actively. From that point on, the school and foundation search for connections to accomplish this goal. Is there any collaboration between the English Camp Program and other institutions? This is the second question. The foundation and school were the first to look for connections to make this happen, which is the correct response. Then they met with Kipo Pare, Mr. Tata." "How many times has Qurrata Ayyun Junior High School hosted English Camp?" is the third query. The information was that they were started in 2018 by inviting Mr. Tata to Batusangkar. When COVID-19 emerged, the plan went wrong. It therefore happened once more to extend an invitation in August 2023. It implied that they had collaborated with Kipo Pare twice. "What is the length of this English camp?" is the fourth question. The response to this query was that it spanned one month, from August 2 to August 30. It began in the morning and ended at 10:00 that

same day. The fifth question was about who the instructors of this English Camp activity are. The headmaster told us that the instructors of this program were all from KIPO Pare. One instructor is for one class. Six instructors were present because there were six classes. Because all teachers received specialized instruction, school teachers were not involved as instructors. The sixth question was about the activities carried out during the English Camp program. The answer to this question was that the activities from the morning until Zuhrr studied in class with the instructor. After Zuhrr, the students practiced English outside the classroom. Dormitory activities continued, as tahfiz. The study of English took the place of other academic pursuits. The seventh question was about the materials taught by the instructors in the English Camp program. To this question, the response was that KIPO Pare prepared all of the materials. In response to the question about whether or not the students' interest in learning English increased after participating in this program, the headmaster said that after participating in English camp activities, students' interest in English increased. There were even students who told their parents that English was easy. Next, was the question of whether or not the students' English skills had improved as a result of participating in this program. The researchers' data indicates that there has been an increase in the use of English in schools following this activity. At the very least, pupils already possessed the fundamental knowledge needed to speak English. At the end of the English camp, there was a farewell party where students' interests and talents were displayed using English. The final question was about the next plan for the continuation of the program at this school. The principal wished that the English camp would be given priority status by the foundation. It is possible that, with the full support of the parents, we will extend an invitation to them in early August of 2024.

The next piece of information came from the English teacher of SMP IT Qurrata Ayyun. There were eight questions related to the importance of the English camp implemented at this school. Here are the details of the interview. The English camp program's instructors base their lesson plans on the students' proficiency levels, the teacher clarified. At first, the children were tested for their English skills. From the results of the test, it turned out that they had abilities that were not much different from the others. Students are placed in classes 7, 8, and 9 based on the test results, which correspond to their regular classes. It remained fundamental in the seventh grade and was modified based on the students' skill level. Take ordinary present-day conversation as an example. Grade 8 students studied simple past tense and conversation. Vocabulary was also by the student's ability. All the materials were well-prepared by Kipo Pare. Then, the researchers asked about the students' interest after joining the camp. Whether it increased or not. The teacher informed us that because the English camp program was a full-month program, students felt this program was special for them. It was the thing they had been waiting for. The result of this English camp was that they were more confident in speaking English. They like and love English more

and more. Moreover, the tutors were loving and friendly with the students, so they felt that Ms. Tutors were indeed a brother and a friend. They were happy after learning. The teacher told the researchers that she no longer repeated the lessons too often after they inquired about how the English camp had affected the students' English proficiency. When teaching vocabulary, for example, about the days of the week in grade 7, they have it easy. They no longer have to make extraordinary efforts. The strategies from the instructors are amazing for helping teachers in the classroom. She added that for children's abilities, it depends on their interests. Some are good, and some are still like that. If the students' interest was high, English became easy to learn. Teachers were greatly helped by the existence of English camps since she was the only teacher who taught in grades 7, 8, and 9. They are also given knowledge on how to teach English so that students can quickly understand, especially learning tenses. At grade 9, there were so many tenses that they had to understand. Previously, in the English camp, they had been taught practical ways of memorizing tenses, such as by singing. The teacher gave the additional explanation that English Day is held once a week on Tuesday as part of the effort to keep this program unforgettable. When asked about the sustainability of the English Camp program at school after the English Camp was over, the teacher provided information that they were equipped with 2 weeks of training as tutor assistants. So that all materials from tutors could be obtained by teachers. It is different from the previous camp, which was focused on students. For teachers, in one day there is only one session. For English teachers, they already know the material, but for other teachers, they are very enthusiastic to learn from the tutors. The teacher applied the methods of teaching English that the tutor taught in the classroom. On the question of whether or not the English camp should be held again, teachers gave two views. On the one hand, the foundation's target was to invite Kipo Pare so that teachers could apply the knowledge they gained in the classroom. They provided all the materials and methods. Even though the collaboration with Kipo Pare was already over, the knowledge remained. But on the other hand, the children were waiting for the program because they felt pleased. They hope that next year there will be this activity again. Hopefully, if possible, this activity will be held at the beginning of each new school year. So children could be more enthusiastic about learning English because it was also the goal of IT Junior High School Qurrata Ayyun.

All the information provided by the principal and teachers above was corroborated by interviewing three students of SMP IT Qurrata Ayyun Batusangkar. All of the informants informed us that they had only once taken part in the English camp program since coming to this school. The program runs from dawn to dusk for a full month. All participants in this program must speak in English. Students who speak languages other than English, such as Indonesian, would face academic work punishments, such as having to learn new terminology or even being grounded for speaking to walls or trees in English in their crazy talks. When we asked about the

description of activities carried out throughout the day, these informants shared that after the morning prayer, there was a morning class. The instructors gave assignments to be completed that day and submitted in the evening. Followed by learning about the material in class in fun ways, such as singing and playing games. There was also an exploration class where the instructors gave the class a mission to complete by using English. Every week, there was an inter-class competition. The competition was like a quiz on TV, for example, connecting song lyrics or filling in missing lyrics. What was taught at the camp? The students answered that there were many things, such as tenses, expressions, vocabulary, pronunciation, listening, speech, storytelling, and writing. The most common were vocabulary, expression, and pronunciation. Writing was rare, but available. According to these informants, the English camp was a lot of fun, especially for him or her and their friends. However, some friends had difficulty memorizing vocabulary. It all depended on each person's interest. Furthermore, they shared that they felt an improvement in mastering age-appropriate English because they had learned vocabulary that they did not know before. Their English exam was completed recently, and everything went quite well. All this time, they only knew basic vocabulary like "eat" and "drink.". Now, they knew about the words "eats," "drinks," and verbs 1 and 2. There was already some basic knowledge to learn in class. Regarding the informant's level of confidence in using English after joining the camp, they said that until now they often spoke English with teachers and friends. Some time ago, one of the informants also participated in the English Olympics, and the results, although not yet champions, were not too bad. The other informant said that she joined the language committee as a part of OSIS after she joined the camp. In the first year she was in school, she tried to join this committee, but she was rejected because her ability to speak English was not good. When the camp organized a one-day trip to the city of Bukittinggi, the instructor required participants to speak with tourists. Unfortunately, the time was too short, and the tourists didn't want to linger. So we only got a chance to talk to them a little bit. But it didn't matter. As the follow-up activity of the camp program, the school arranges an English day once a week. The informants informed us that it was their chance to practice English with teachers and friends. For the first time, many students felt ashamed to speak English. But after joining the English camp, they became better. As a closing question, we asked them about their feelings during the English camp program. They replied that they were very happy and hoped that there would be another English camp next year.

The amount of data the researchers were able to gather from the informants indicated that the English camp program was one means by which SMP IT Qurrata Ayyun Batusangkar could accomplish its objectives. The headmaster and the foundation took great effort in creating an activity that would improve the students' English proficiency. One of their efforts was in collaboration with external institutions. They chose Kipo Pare for several reasons. From the headmaster's point of view, the researchers ensured that he felt satisfied with the results of the

English camp. The students' motivation and ability to speak English increased because the tutors used many interactive and interesting media to encourage the students' attention. Based on the data provided by the English teacher, the researchers discovered that she benefited greatly from the English camp program in the classroom. The resources and approaches used to teach English were successful in drawing students' interest and boosting their motivation. Because the students were highly motivated and eager to learn English, their academic performance also improved. The researchers also obtained the information from the students as well as the headmaster and the English teacher. It was a really useful English program. Both the methods and the materials were appropriate for the students. The students received the benefits of the program. The English lesson became engaging as they gained confidence in their ability to communicate in the language.

Based on the results of this study, the English camp program proved to be able to contribute to improving the English language skills of Qurrata Ayyun Batusangkar Junior High School students. This is reinforced by the theory of second language learning proposed by Chomsky, which states that second language learning can be developed through various types of language experiences, including interactive conversational experiences in the target language and the use of varied learning programs. Thus, an English camp program that combines innovative program development with an interactive and varied approach to using learning media will be effective in improving students' abilities. The results of previous research conducted in educational settings have also shown positive results related to the use of English camp programs to improve English language skills. In this context, this study indicates that a structured, intensive, and English-focused English camp program is very beneficial for learners to improve their English language skills.

Therefore, the implementation of the English Camp is urgent enough to optimize students' English skills. With this program, students have a stimulus to use English in class. In addition, with the English Camp program, students have the confidence to be active in communicating in English, both with friends and with teachers.

CONCLUSION

The English language proficiency of the students at SMP IT Qurrata Ayyun Batusangkar can be enhanced by the English camp program. Information from informants indicates that students' English proficiency has increased as a result of this English camp program. Consequently, the researcher recommends that, to meet the needs of students in terms of their overall development of English language skills, the SMP IT Qurrata Ayyun Batusangkar Foundation designate this program as a flagship program and maintain it that way. It is anticipated that this research will offer a more thorough description of the program, its implementation, and the anticipated outcomes, which can serve as a recommendation for organizations and interested

parties. As a result, the research is limited to the information provided by informants because there was not enough time to conduct observations in English classes. Furthermore, this study is constrained by a time constraint that may pose a challenge to the gathering and processing of data or the execution of programs, potentially interfering with the research process and influencing the study's outcomes.

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