



Enhancing Students' Speaking Skills through the El Yasir Method at an Islamic Boarding School

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Abstract. This study investigates the impact of the El Yasir Method on improving the English-speaking skills of students at the El Yasir English Club in Roudlotul 'Ulum Islamic Boarding School, Kebumen, Indonesia. Despite the recognized importance of English-speaking skills for global communication, there is a paucity of research investigating contextually appropriate and integrated methods tailored to Islamic boarding schools, where authentic English exposure is limited. Employing a descriptive qualitative approach complemented by quantitative assessments, the study involved 14 active student participants. Data were collected through semi-structured interviews, observations, and repeated speaking tests over four phases. Results indicate significant improvements in fluency, vocabulary acquisition, pronunciation, and speaking confidence. The method's holistic design—combining phonetic instruction, vocabulary memorization, immersive English-only environments, and authentic communicative activities such as public speaking and interaction with foreign tourists—addresses both linguistic and affective learning domains. Despite social and environmental challenges limiting English use beyond the club, the program fostered substantial gains in oral proficiency. This study contributes valuable insights into English language education within Islamic boarding schools and proposes the El Yasir Method as a replicable model for similar contexts. Future research should explore longitudinal impacts and strategies to overcome sociocultural barriers.

Keywords: English speaking skills, Islamic boarding school, Language learning method, Speaking fluency, Vocabulary development

1. INTRODUCTION

Speaking proficiency remains a critical yet challenging skill for many students learning English as a foreign language, particularly within Islamic boarding schools where exposure to authentic language environments is limited. Despite various language programs, Students at Roudlotul 'Ulum Islamic Boarding School initially faced significant difficulties with pronunciation, grammar, and general speaking confidence. Additionally, many lacked awareness of the growing global importance of English, which further hindered their motivation and progress [1].

Speaking proficiency is widely recognized as one of the most challenging yet essential skills for learners of English as a foreign language, particularly in school where authentic English exposure is severely limited [2]-[4]. In the Indonesian boarding school or *pesantren* context, students face unique cultural and institutional constraints, such as strict adherence to religious routines and limited access to native speakers, which further complicate efforts to develop oral language skills effectively [5], [6]. Consequently, students often struggle with pronunciation, vocabulary acquisition, fluency, and confidence due to the predominance of traditional teaching methods that emphasize grammar and reading over communicative competence, as well as a lack of immersive and interactive learning environments conducive to meaningful oral practice [7]-[10].

In recent years, second language acquisition research has increasingly emphasized holistic and communicative pedagogies that integrate phonetic instruction, vocabulary development, immersive language environments, and authentic communicative tasks to enhance speaking proficiency [11]-[13]. Notably, La Scotte and Tarone highlight the critical role of social context and interaction in improving L2 pronunciation and intelligibility [14], while Yates advocates embedding pronunciation and pragmatic skills into curricula to better prepare learners for real-world communication [15]. Pawlak further underscores the importance of aligning speaking strategies with communicative goals to foster learner engagement and oral accuracy [16]. Innovative instructional methods such as task-based and game-based learning have also

demonstrated positive effects on learners' speaking competence across various educational settings [17] [18].

Despite these advances, there remains a significant gap in research specifically investigating integrated, contextually tailored methods within Indonesian Islamic boarding schools, where exposure to authentic English remains minimal and socio-cultural factors often inhibit language use outside formal learning settings [8] [19]. Furthermore, previous studies have predominantly adopted quantitative approaches, leaving the affective experiences, motivation, and social dynamics influencing speaking skill development underexplored. This lack of qualitative insight into *pesantren* learners' lived experiences highlights a pressing need for research that holistically examines both linguistic and psychosocial dimensions in this unique educational context [19] [20].

To address these gaps, the present study explores the implementation and impact of the El Yasir Method—a comprehensive approach combining phonetic training, vocabulary memorization, immersive English-only environments, and authentic communicative activities such as public speaking and interaction with foreign tourists—on the speaking proficiency of students at the El Yasir English Club in Roudlotul 'Ulum Islamic Boarding School, Kebumen, Indonesia. This study aims not only to assess measurable improvements in fluency, vocabulary, pronunciation, and confidence but also to understand how the method fosters active student engagement within the cultural and institutional realities of the *pesantren*.

Therefore, this research is guided by the following questions:

1. How does the El Yasir Method encourage students to actively participate in speaking activities within the English Club?
2. What measurable improvements in speaking skills are observed following participation in the El Yasir English Club program?

By addressing these questions, the study aims to fill a critical theoretical gap concerning language learning in *pesantren* settings and offer practical recommendations for educators seeking to enhance English-speaking instruction tailored to similar cultural and institutional contexts.

2. METHOD

This study employs a descriptive qualitative research design to explore the implementation and impact of the El Yasir Method on enhancing the speaking skills of students at the El Yasir English Club [21]. The descriptive qualitative approach was chosen due to its suitability for providing an in-depth understanding of participants' experiences and the contextual factors influencing language learning within the Islamic boarding school environment [22]. This method facilitates a comprehensive description of the processes and outcomes associated with the El Yasir Method, allowing for rich, detailed insights into how the intervention supports speaking proficiency development.

Participant

The participants of this study consisted of 14 male students who were actively involved in the El Yasir English Club at Pondok *Pesantren* Roudlotul 'Ulum, located in Karangtanjung, Alian, Kebumen. These students were selected based on their consistent participation in the club's activities, ensuring they had sufficient exposure to the El Yasir Method throughout the study period. The group represented a focused sample suitable for qualitative inquiry, enabling an in-depth exploration of their experiences and progress in speaking English within the unique Islamic boarding school context.

Data Collection

The study's mixed-methods approach, utilizing semi-structured interviews and both written and oral tests, aligns with the broader research landscape on language acquisition and communication strategies. The use of semi-structured interviews, as seen in the study by Ekström et al., provides qualitative insights into participants' experiences and challenges, particularly in contexts like developmental language disorder (DLD), where personal narratives reveal the interplay of individual and contextual factors in communication [23]. Similarly, Clarke et al. highlight the importance of qualitative interviews in understanding communication strategies among individuals with partially intelligible speech, emphasizing the role of personal decision-making and contextual influences [24]. The integration of quantitative assessments, such as written and oral tests, complements these qualitative insights by providing objective measures of language proficiency, akin to the approach used by Pan in assessing pragmatic competence through various data collection methods [25]. This triangulation of data enhances the reliability of findings, as it allows for a comprehensive evaluation of language skills, capturing both the strategic use of language

in communicative tasks and the underlying proficiency levels. Furthermore, the study's focus on the El Yasir Method's impact on speaking skills resonates with Pawlak's exploration of speaking strategies, which underscores the significance of communicative goals in shaping language use [16]. Overall, this methodological framework not only enriches the understanding of language development but also ensures a robust analysis by integrating diverse data sources and perspectives.

Data Analysis

Qualitative data from interviews were analysed using a thematic approach to capture detailed insights into the participants' experiences [26] [27]. To complement the qualitative findings, written and oral test scores were quantitatively analysed using descriptive statistics and paired sample t-tests to determine the significance of improvements in speaking skills [28].

Before analysis, the validity of the data collection instruments was assessed. The validity categories applied in this study are summarized in Table 1 below, classifying validity levels by percentage ranges:

Table 1. Validity Categories for Instrument Assessment		
Statement No.	Range (%)	Qualitative Analysis
1	40% – 54%	Invalid
2	55% – 69%	Less Valid
3	70% – 84%	Valid
4	85% – 100%	Very Valid

This classification guided the evaluation of questionnaire statements and test items, ensuring that only those rated as "Valid" or "Very Valid" were used to measure speaking proficiency. Items rated "Invalid" or "Less Valid" were revised to improve clarity and alignment with research goals. The paired sample t-test was calculated using the formula:

$$t = \frac{\overline{D}}{s_D/\sqrt{n}}$$

Where:

- \overline{D} is the average difference between pre-test and post-test scores
- s_D is the standard deviation of the differences
- n is the number of participants

A t-value exceeding the critical threshold at a 5% significance level indicates a statistically significant improvement in speaking skills. Combining validity assessment, quantitative testing, and qualitative analysis ensured a rigorous and trustworthy data analysis process.

3. FINDINGS

This study presents compelling evidence of significant improvements in the English-speaking proficiency of students participating in the El Yasir English Club program, substantiated through both quantitative assessments and qualitative interviews. The speaking test scores, as summarized in Table 1, demonstrate a consistent and marked increase across four evaluation phases, with average gains nearing 37 points from the initial pre-test to the final post-test. Such substantial improvement reflects the program's efficacy in enhancing key linguistic competencies, including fluency, vocabulary breadth, and pronunciation accuracy.

Table 1. Progression of Speaking Test Scores from Pre-Test to Test 3					
Students	Pre-Test	Test 1	Test 2	Test 3	Difference (Test 3 - Pre-Test)
1	40	65	75	85	45
2	50	65	80	90	40
3	45	55	70	80	35
4	55	70	80	90	35
5	55	75	80	85	30
6	55	65	75	85	30
7	50	65	75	90	40
8	40	55	70	85	45
9	45	65	70	80	35
10	55	65	75	90	35

11	55	65	80	90	35
12	45	60	70	80	35
13	35	60	70	75	40
14	45	60	75	85	40

Rich qualitative data extracted from interviews complement these quantitative results by providing insight into the affective and experiential dimensions of language learning [29]. When asked about their feelings toward speaking English in front of their peers, one participant responded:

Researcher: “How do you feel when speaking English in front of your friends?”

Student 6: “At first, I felt very shy and afraid of making mistakes, especially when speaking in public. But after practicing several times in the club, now I feel much more confident. I am often chosen as MC or speaker at *pesantren* events.”

Such reflections underscore the program's role in alleviating speaking anxiety and fostering learner confidence, which are crucial factors in successful language acquisition. Furthermore, photographic evidence supports these findings visually [30]. Figure 1 depicts an outdoor class session where the student engages in naturalistic spoken interaction, enhancing fluency in a low-pressure environment. Figure 2 shows students practicing English through authentic conversations with foreign tourists, promoting vocabulary expansion and intercultural competence. Lastly, Figure 3 captures a student confidently delivering a public speech during the club's weekly sessions, exemplifying the enhanced oral proficiency and self-assurance cultivated through the program.



Figure 1. Outdoor class session at El Yasir English Club, where students practice spoken English in a natural, supportive setting that fosters fluency.



Figure 2. Students engage in conversational practice with foreign tourists, enriching vocabulary and cultural understanding.



Figure 3. A student delivering a public speech during weekly club activities, demonstrating improved confidence and speaking skills.

Development of Speaking Fluency

The improvement in speaking fluency among the students is a prominent outcome of the El Yasir English Club program. Quantitatively, the test scores reflect a steady and significant rise, indicating

growing ease and fluidity in English expression. This progress is supported by qualitative data, where one participant remarked:

Researcher: "How has your fluency in speaking English improved?"

Student 3: "I feel more fluent because I was taught pronunciation and how to read phonetic symbols. The book with phonetic symbols helps me read correctly and speak smoothly."

This testimonial illustrates the pedagogical impact of integrating phonetic instruction with practical speaking opportunities [30]. The focus on phonetic symbols equips learners with the necessary tools to decode and produce English sounds accurately, facilitating more natural and fluent speech production. The outdoor classroom environment, depicted in Figure 1, provides an informal, low-pressure context that encourages spontaneous conversation, which is essential for developing fluency [31]. These combined elements align with language acquisition theories emphasizing the role of explicit phonological training and communicative practice in developing speaking fluency.

Vocabulary Expansion

A substantial increase in vocabulary acquisition among the students was evident throughout the El Yasir English Club program [32]. The quantitative results demonstrated notable gains in lexical knowledge as reflected in the progressively improving test scores. Complementing this, interview data highlighted the structured approach to vocabulary learning that mandates memorization and active use of ten new words daily. As one student shared:

Researcher: "Can you tell me about your vocabulary learning experience in the club?"

Student 9: "My vocabulary has greatly increased because every day we are required to memorize 10 new words. If we don't memorize them, we get a sanction. Also, we have to use those new words in the English-only room, so it sticks."

This rigorous routine aligns with cognitive theories on vocabulary acquisition, which emphasize the importance of frequent exposure and meaningful use in long-term retention [33]. Moreover, the English-only room creates an immersive environment where new lexical items are immediately contextualized through peer interaction and tutor guidance [34]. Such authentic communicative contexts are critical for transitioning vocabulary from passive recognition to active production [35]. The integration of these elements within the El Yasir Method thus effectively supports sustained vocabulary development in the unique sociocultural setting of the Islamic boarding school.

Pronunciation Improvement

Pronunciation skills among students showed marked enhancement as a result of the El Yasir English Club's focused and supportive instructional strategies [36]. Quantitative improvements in oral test scores corroborate the qualitative feedback emphasizing the importance of immediate corrective feedback. One participant noted:

Researcher: "What happens when you mispronounce a word?"

Student 5: "Whenever I make a mistake, the tutor immediately corrects me. My friends also often help me with my pronunciation."

This immediate and consistent corrective feedback plays a critical role in preventing the fossilization of errors and promoting accurate phonological production, which is foundational for effective communication [37]. The program's pedagogical design, which includes tutor-led pronunciation drills and peer-supported correction within an immersive English-only environment, fosters an atmosphere conducive to rapid and sustained improvement. These findings align with best practices in pronunciation teaching that emphasize formative feedback and social interaction as key drivers of learner progress [38].

Increase in Speaking Confidence

The El Yasir English Club program notably enhanced the speaking confidence of the student, a critical affective factor that underpins successful language acquisition. The weekly public speaking sessions, where learners took roles such as MCs and speakers, provided authentic opportunities to practice and refine their oral communication skills in a supportive environment [12]. One student remarked:

Researcher: "How has your confidence changed since joining the club?"

Student 11: "I became more confident because I have been trained to be a public speaker every week. Even though I was shy at first, after joining this program I gained more knowledge and feel braver speaking in front of others."

This growth in confidence aligns with psychological theories on language learning motivation and self-efficacy, suggesting that frequent, structured speaking opportunities in a low-anxiety setting can substantially reduce apprehension and increase willingness to communicate [39]. The presence of an English-only room, coupled with encouragement from tutors and peers, further fostered this positive affective shift, enabling students to engage more actively and meaningfully in English communication.

Factors Supporting the Success of the El Yasir Method

Several critical factors underpin the successful implementation and outcomes of the El Yasir Method as reflected in both the qualitative interviews and observational data. The dedicated support and consistent guidance from experienced tutors fostered a nurturing and motivating learning environment, encouraging sustained engagement and effort among the students [40]. As one participant stated, "I really enjoy the program because I want to talk to tourists, and I am always motivated by the tutors. My friends here are fun, so it feels like a family." Additionally, the establishment of a dedicated English-only room created an immersive linguistic environment where students were encouraged to use English exclusively, thus facilitating habitual practice and natural language acquisition. The diversity of activities, including outdoor classes and practice sessions with tourists, provided authentic communicative contexts that enhanced both linguistic competence and intercultural awareness [41]. The continuous mentoring by dormitory supervisors also ensured that language use extended beyond formal sessions into daily routines [42]. These combined elements created a holistic ecosystem that significantly contributed to the effectiveness of the El Yasir Method within the unique sociocultural context of Islamic boarding schools.

Challenges Encountered by Student

Despite the positive outcomes and progress facilitated by the El Yasir Method, students faced notable challenges that occasionally impeded continuous English language use. A primary social challenge identified in the interviews was the limited use of English beyond the club's controlled environment, largely due to peers outside the program not understanding or supporting English communication. One participant shared, "When I want to talk with members who don't join the program, I don't use English because they don't understand. Sometimes, I get mocked and called 'acting English.'" This social stigma and peer pressure create psychological barriers that discourage learners from practicing English in informal contexts. Additionally, infrastructural limitations, such as the lack of supportive facilities beyond the English-only room, restricted opportunities for immersive language practice throughout the *pesantren* [43]. These obstacles highlight the necessity for expanded institutional support and cultural shifts within the boarding school to nurture a more inclusive and sustained English-speaking community.

4. DISCUSSION

The findings of this study unequivocally demonstrate that the El Yasir Method, as implemented in the El Yasir English Club, significantly enhances the speaking proficiency of students in an Islamic boarding school context. The substantial improvement in quantitative test scores aligns with qualitative evidence highlighting increased fluency, expanded vocabulary, improved pronunciation, and elevated confidence levels. These results are consistent with contemporary second language acquisition theories, which emphasize the critical role of immersive, contextualized practice and timely corrective feedback in language development. The unique integration of phonetic instruction, mandatory daily vocabulary memorization, and authentic speaking opportunities—including public speaking and interaction with foreign tourists—provides a comprehensive learning environment that addresses both linguistic and affective domains. Furthermore, the presence of an English-only room and consistent tutor guidance creates a linguistic enclave that fosters habitual English use, crucial for overcoming common barriers in EFL settings such as limited exposure and lack of motivation. This holistic approach not only facilitates measurable skill gains but also nurtures learners' self-efficacy, a key predictor of sustained language learning engagement. These findings extend and corroborate prior research advocating for community-based, learner-centered language programs in religious educational settings, underscoring the El Yasir Method's potential as a replicable model for similar institutions seeking to improve English-speaking outcomes.

The success of the El Yasir Method can be largely attributed to its multifaceted approach that strategically combines formal instruction with immersive experiential learning. The emphasis on phonetic awareness through systematic teaching of pronunciation and phonetic symbols equips learners with foundational skills necessary for fluent and accurate speech production. This explicit phonological training, reinforced by immediate corrective feedback from tutors and peers, mitigates common pronunciation errors

that often fossilize in EFL learners. Additionally, the structured vocabulary acquisition regimen—mandating daily memorization and practical use within an English-only environment—ensures that new lexical items are both internalized and actively applied, a process supported by cognitive theories of deliberate practice and contextual learning. The program’s inclusion of authentic communicative activities, such as outdoor classes and interactions with foreign tourists, further bridges the gap between classroom learning and real-world language use, enhancing motivation and intercultural competence. Such an integrated framework resonates with sociocultural theories that highlight the importance of social interaction and meaningful engagement for language development. The presence of a dedicated English-only room creates a linguistic microcosm that nurtures sustained language exposure, which is often lacking in traditional *pesantren* settings. Collectively, these elements provide a compelling explanation for the observed gains in speaking proficiency and learner confidence.

Despite the promising outcomes of the El Yasir Method, the study also highlights several contextual challenges that may affect the sustainability and wider application of the program. Social dynamics within the *pesantren* environment, particularly the limited use of English outside the club and occasional peer mockery present psychological barriers that can undermine learners’ motivation and language practice continuity. Such social resistance underscores the critical need for broader institutional support and community sensitization to cultivate a more inclusive and encouraging atmosphere for English use. Moreover, infrastructural constraints, including the limited availability of immersive English environments beyond the dedicated English-only room, restrict learners’ opportunities for consistent language exposure [44]. Addressing these barriers requires strategic interventions at the organizational level, such as expanding English-speaking zones, enhancing peer support systems, and integrating language practice more holistically into daily *pesantren* life. Recognizing and mitigating these challenges is essential for maximizing the long-term impact of the El Yasir Method and ensuring its scalability to other Islamic boarding schools with similar sociocultural contexts [45].

The implications of this study extend beyond the immediate context of the El Yasir English Club, offering valuable insights into language education in Islamic boarding schools and similar institutional settings. The demonstrated effectiveness of the El Yasir Method underscores the importance of integrating structured phonetic training, immersive practice environments, and authentic communicative activities within language programs. Practitioners are encouraged to adopt a holistic approach that simultaneously targets linguistic competence and affective factors, such as learner confidence and motivation, to foster sustainable language development. Moreover, institutional stakeholders should prioritize the creation of supportive infrastructures, including English-only zones and opportunities for intercultural interaction, to enhance language exposure and use. Future research is recommended to explore the longitudinal impacts of such programs and investigate strategies to overcome sociocultural barriers identified in this study. By addressing these dimensions, educational institutions can better equip learners with the speaking proficiency necessary for global communication while preserving the unique cultural and religious values of the *pesantren* environment.

5. CONCLUSION

This study substantiates the effectiveness of the El Yasir Method in significantly enhancing the English-speaking proficiency of students within the Islamic boarding school context. By integrating explicit phonetic instruction, immersive English-only environments, structured vocabulary acquisition, and authentic communicative practice, the method addresses both the linguistic and affective domains critical for successful language acquisition. The findings advance the current understanding of language education in *pesantren* settings by demonstrating that a holistic, community-based approach can overcome traditional barriers such as limited exposure and speaking anxiety. Practically, this model offers a replicable framework for similar institutions aiming to foster sustainable oral English proficiency without compromising cultural and religious values. Future research should focus on longitudinal studies to examine the lasting impacts of this approach and explore scalable adaptations across diverse Islamic educational contexts. Additionally, investigating strategies to mitigate sociocultural constraints on language use outside structured programs remains a vital area for further inquiry, ensuring that learners can maintain and extend their speaking skills in broader social environments.

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