

English Day as a Medium for Introducing Contextual Vocabulary: Teacher Perspective at SMPN 19 Surabaya

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Abstract

This study aims to analyze the implementation of the English Day program at SMPN 19 Surabaya as a medium for introducing English vocabulary in context. This study uses a qualitative descriptive approach with data collection techniques through interviews with one English teacher directly involved in this program. The results show that the English Day program is conducted regularly from Tuesday to Thursday and contributes positively to the development of students' English language skills, especially in terms of vocabulary mastery and speaking skills. Teacher observed that students became more confident when the material presented was relevant to their daily lives. However, obstacles encountered included low students' participation, lack of motivation, and limited confidence. To optimize this program, teachers suggested increasing the frequency and variety of activities, rewarding students who play an active role, and involving students in planning the English Day program so that it can develop well and become a sustainable school culture. This study also provides input for schools and teachers in the process of optimizing contextual English language learning program. The findings of this study also state that contextual and student-centered learning activities are very important to support the teaching of learning, especially vocabulary.

Keywords: English Day Program; Secondary School; Vocabulary Learning

INTRODUCTION

Vocabulary learning requires appropriate media. Learning must be tailored to the age, characteristics, needs, and interests of students. Students will easily understand what the teacher teaches if they know the meaning of the vocabulary itself. However, many students still feel confused when learning English vocabulary. Based on the author's experience, students have difficulty understanding what the teacher says in class due to their limited vocabulary. They do not know the context of the words used in the text. They cannot understand the meaning of each word, cannot compose words or sentences properly, and also have difficulty communicating in English. This statement is in line with research conducted by Tiabarte et al., which states that students tend to experience difficulties in learning English due to the lack of vocabulary they have, so they often feel confused about organizing it (Tiabarte et al., 2020). In this situation, students become uninterested in learning English vocabulary because it only confuses them. Therefore, a medium is needed to motivate students to learn English vocabulary so that they can enjoy the lessons and eventually become interested in learning vocabulary.

Vocabulary mastery is fundamental in the language learning process, including English as an international language which is one of the compulsory subjects in primary to secondary education. Vocabulary is the most important aspect of English language proficiency and forms the basis of how well students speak, read, write, and listen (Eventdy & Hamer, 2016). As emphasized by Anggriani et al. vocabulary is an important component in English communication and learning, and is the basis of other English language skills (Anggriani et al.,

2023). This means that vocabulary is generally very important, both in the learning process and in the development of students' English language skills. However, even though vocabulary is very important, there is one other thing that needs to be considered, namely knowing how to use it. In Indonesian education, the main challenge in teaching English is not only in vocabulary and language structure, but also the lack of English usage in daily interactions at school (Jon et al., 2021).

In response to this challenge, many schools have initiated English Day programs as a form of learning innovation. This program is designed to create an immersive atmosphere in the use of English, where students are invited to use English in various communication activities at school. One of the schools that implement this program is SMPN 19 Surabaya. The English Day program at this school aims to introduce and expand students' vocabulary contextually, as well as increase their confidence in speaking English. The English Day program also reflects the principles of Contextual Teaching Learning (CTL), which emphasizes the importance of connecting learning materials with students' real lives or experiences (O'Brien et al., 2023). In addition, this approach is also supported by Ausubel's Meaningful Learning Theory, which states that new knowledge will be absorbed well when it is related to students' experiences (Nurhasanah et al., 2022). Meanwhile, from another perspective, Skinner's behaviorism theory highlights that repetition and reinforcement can strengthen students' language habits (Abidin, 2016). Furthermore, in his work related to the Affective Filter Hypothesis, Krashen states that high motivation and low anxiety can create a good environment for students' language learning (Wang, 2024).

The effectiveness of the English Day program implementation in improving students' vocabulary mastery requires further study, especially from the perspective of teachers as implementers and direct observers in the field. An in-depth understanding of how the program is run, the materials used, and students' responses to these activities is important to determine the extent to which the program is able to achieve its goals.

In previous studies conducted by Tathahira and Nahrissy, it was stated that foreign language learning programs such as English Day can open up meaningful opportunities for students to practice languages (Tathahira & Nahrissy, 2020). However, this study only focused on the students' perspective, while the teachers' perspective was not represented. Other studies have also emphasized the positive impact of contextually relevant learning materials and student engagement. For example, research conducted by Husnawati, Puspitasari, and Yundayani found that adapting learning materials to students' lives significantly increased student motivation and interest in learning (Husnawati et al., 2024). Furthermore, research on learning through the Contextual Teaching and Learning (CTL) approach in Indonesia has shown that students' speaking skills improve when learning materials are linked to their life contexts (Yusyac et al., 2021). In fact, the role of teachers as facilitators is very important in the continuity of the English Day program. In addition, vocabulary introduction through the English Day program can also be linked to the Contextual Teaching Learning method, which emphasizes that connecting the material to students' real lives is important (O'Brien et al., 2023). However, research specifically addressing teachers' perspectives on English Day in Indonesian schools is still rare, creating a gap that this study will investigate.

Therefore, this study is not only relevant for evaluating the implementation of English Day at SMPN 19 Surabaya, but also contributes to a broader discussion on how contextual learning strategies can be utilized in Indonesian schools to promote more sustainable language acquisition. Specifically, the purpose of this study is to analyze the implementation, impacts on students, obstacles, and strategies to optimize the English Day program as a means of introducing contextual vocabulary, based on the teachers' perspective. The findings of this study are expected to contribute to readers in the field of contextual vocabulary learning and have

implications for institutions that will hold English Day programs as a sustainable vocabulary learning program.

In line with the research objectives, the research questions in this study are presented in a descriptive form so that they are organized and in accordance with academic writing requirements. This study aims to describe the implementation of the English Day program at SMPN 19 Surabaya and examine the program's contribution to students' vocabulary and speaking skills. In addition, this study also identifies various obstacles that arose during the implementation of the program, while describing the strategies proposed by teachers to optimize the overall effectiveness of English Day.

Therefore, this study was conducted to analyze the implementation of the English Day program at SMPN 19 Surabaya as a medium for contextual vocabulary introduction. The main focus of the research includes the extent to which this program has run according to its objectives, its impact on students' English language skills, and the challenges faced in its implementation. The results are expected to be an input for the development of similar programs, not only in SMPN 19 Surabaya, but also in other schools that want to improve the quality of English learning through a more practical and contextual approach.

METHOD

Research design

This research uses a descriptive qualitative approach that aims to understand and describe in depth the implementation of the English Day program at SMPN 19 Surabaya as a medium for introducing contextual English vocabulary. This approach was chosen because the researcher wanted to explore the subjective views of teachers as implementers of activities and get a real picture of the process, challenges, and impact of the program on students (Creswell, 2018). This qualitative study design is considered appropriate because it allows for a detailed explanation of a program in its real-world context.

Participants of the Study

The subject of the study was an English teacher at SMPN 19 Surabaya. This school was chosen because SMPN 19 Surabaya organizes an English Day program that is relevant to the focus of the study. The English Day program was attended by all 8th grade students, so its implementation provided a comprehensive picture of student engagement. The teacher was chosen based on their direct involvement and experience in implementing the English Day program, as they play an important role in carrying out these activities.

Research Setting

This research was conducted at SMPN 19 Surabaya. This school was chosen because it implements an English Day program that aligns with the research focus.

Research Instrument

The primary research instrument in this study was the researcher, who directly identified, collected, and analyzed data from the field, supported by an interview guide. The interview questions were structured in a semi-structured format with open-ended questions to provide comfort to respondents while maintaining focus on the research objectives. The questions were designed to analyze five aspects of the English Day program, which include the implementation of programs, the suitability of the material to students' lives, the impact on students' English language skills, challenges faced during the program's implementation, and suggestions for the development of this program.

Table 1. Interview guidelines

Aspect	Indicator	Question
Program implementation	How the English Day program is implemented	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What is your role in this program? • Can you explain how the English Day program is implemented? • Who is involved in this program?
Suitability of the material to students' lives	Relevance of English Day material to students' daily lives	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How do you choose the material or vocabulary for this program? • Is it tailored to the students' daily lives? • Are there other criteria for the material?
Impact on students'	Improvement of students' vocabulary and skills	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • In your opinion, what has been the impact of the English Day program so far? • Apart from developing speaking skills, has this program developed any other skills? • Have you noticed any developments in the students, such as increased confidence?
Obstacles	Challenges faced by students and teachers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What challenges did you encounter in implementing this program? • How did you overcome them? • How did the students respond to this program? Were they enthusiastic or indifferent?
Suggestion	Recommendations for improvement from teachers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What suggestions do you have to optimize the English Day program in the future? • In your opinion, what activities can be done to support this program?

Data Collection

Data collection techniques were carried out through interviews with one English teacher who was directly involved in the implementation of the English Day program. The interviews were conducted once, lasting approximately 30 minutes, and all conversations were recorded and transcribed to ensure accuracy. Member checking was conducted after transcription to avoid errors or omissions in the interview results. In addition to the interviews, documentation was also collected, such as vocabulary lists and photographs of English Day activities, to strengthen data triangulation.

Data Analysis

The data analysis process follows the steps outlined by Creswell, which include data reduction, data presentation, and conclusion drawing (Creswell, 2018). The analysis was conducted thematically by identifying patterns in the interview data, which provided an in-depth understanding of how English Day activities were implemented in language teaching relevant to students' daily lives. The analysis process itself was carried out in three stages:

1. Data Reduction

The recorded interviews with teachers were transcribed exactly as they were spoken. Important teacher responses related to program implementation, English Day materials, impacts, obstacles, and suggestions for the program were coded or highlighted.

2. Data Presentation

Group similar codes into specific categories.

3. Conclusion Drawing

From the categories created, broader themes were drawn to answer the research questions.

To ensure the trustworthiness of the findings, several strategies were implemented. Credibility was maintained by member checking, confirming interview results with the source. In addition, information was reinforced by transparently recording each step of the analysis to facilitate review of the process.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Results

Implementation of English Day Program at SMPN 19 Surabaya

The English Day program at SMPN 19 Surabaya is held regularly every Tuesday to Thursday. Students are given special time to use English in the morning before teaching and learning activities begin. The vocabulary used by students on that day is read aloud through the school broadcast in the morning. Students, guided by their teachers in the classroom, listen to the broadcast and then role-play with their classmates to practice the vocabulary in conversation. The duration of this activity is about 20 minutes. The role of teachers, in addition to being guides or facilitators, is to supervise, ensuring that the program runs smoothly and orderly. English teachers play a crucial role in this program, as they must coordinate with the first-period subject teachers overseeing the English Day activities. They also provide corrections, guidance, and motivation to students to keep them enthusiastic about participating in the program.

As the teacher said: *“We coordinate with the subject teachers to ensure that students have time to practice. My role is not only to guide, but also to motivate students and provide input to other teachers.”*

Appropriate of Material to School Context

The vocabulary used in English Day is contextual and relevant to students' daily lives. The vocabulary includes terms that are often used in school environments, such as stationery, items in the library, items at school, and other terms related to students' routines at school. Some sentences such as “Can I borrow your pencil?”, “Can I go to the toilet?”, “Let's go to the library” are easy to remember and practical to use. Contextual materials such as these can help students understand and apply vocabulary easily.

As teacher said: *“Students are more confident using English when their expressions are simple and still related to school matters”*. This shows how contextual input support their motivation.

Impact on Students' Language Skills

The English Day program contributes to improving students' vocabulary and English-speaking skills. Students practice greeting teachers and friends, asking for permission, asking questions, and participating in simple conversations in English. Through this program, students also become more confident and willing to interact informally in English. However, the impact of this program is limited to improving students' speaking skills. Other skills, such as writing, have not improved significantly, as the program focuses only on oral practice.

As teacher said: *“The students, who were usually shy, began to speak to me in English, even if only in short phrases. I could see their confidence growing.”*

Obstacles in Implementing English Day

Some students are still reluctant to use English. This is because they still feel shy, afraid of making mistakes, and lack motivation. Some students consider the English Day program to be

an additional burden. Teachers, as facilitators, also face challenges such as finding fun learning strategies so that the program continues to run well, without adding pressure to students.

As teacher said: *“The biggest challenge faced in implementing this program is the students’ lack of confidence. Many are afraid of being ridiculed or laughed at if they make mistakes”*

Program Development and Optimization

Teachers suggested extending the duration of this program. In addition, teachers also suggested including more varied and enjoyable activities, such as games, short plays, or learning activities outside the classroom. Rewards can also be given to students who are active during English Day activities to motivate other students. Involving students in program planning, such as participating in theme selection, organizing games, and designing learning strategies, can foster active student participation in each activity.

As teacher said: *“It seems that if we can add role plays or other types of short games, students become more enthusiastic. Maybe giving rewards can also make them even more enthusiastic.”*

Discussion

The implementation of the English Day program at SMPN 19 Surabaya demonstrates the school's commitment to improving students' English skills. Findings from this study show that the English Day program is carried out regularly from Tuesday to Thursday, every morning before teaching and learning activities begin. The routine nature of this program provides good support for second language acquisition. As revealed in interviews with teachers, teachers play a dual role as facilitators and supervisors, ensuring that the English Day program runs smoothly. This is in line with the theory of language immersion, in which students are trained to become accustomed to using their target language in their daily activities.

Another factor that influences the smooth running of the English Day program is the context of the material used. The vocabulary used in the English Day material is chosen according to the students' daily lives, such as “may I go to the toilet?” or “let's go to the library”. The selection of these materials illustrates the learning system through the Contextual Teaching and Learning (CTL) approach, in which learning materials are linked to students' real experiences (O’Brien et al., 2023). In her research, Nurhasannah cites Ausubel's theory of “Meaningful Learning,” which states that students will absorb knowledge better when the material is related to their experiences (Nurhasannah et al., 2022). The selection of English Day material that is relevant to students' daily lives makes learning easier to understand and more useful, thereby increasing students' intrinsic motivation to learn (Husnawati et al., 2024).

In the context of language skills, the implementation of English Day has proven to be effective in developing students' speaking skills and vocabulary mastery. Students have become more adept at asking for permission, borrowing items, and engaging in short conversations in English. This demonstrates positive progress in language acquisition. The findings of this study are in line with behaviorism theory, which emphasizes repetition, practice, and reinforcement as the key mechanisms in language learning (Sari & Rahmani, 2024), (Abidin, 2016). The results of this study are also in line with the findings of Tathahira and Nahrisya, who stated that regular exposure through English Day activities creates opportunities for authentic practice, although their study did not discuss the role of teachers as facilitators in depth.

In addition, the implementation of this program is in line with Krashen's affective filter hypothesis. Krashen states that a supportive and pleasant environment can reduce anxiety and fear of making mistakes, allowing students to practice English with more confidence (Wang, 2024). However, the results of this study also show that the implementation of this program is still limited to oral skills, while other aspects are still underdeveloped. This indicates that it is still necessary to expand the scope of the English Day program to cover a broader range of

English language Although this program has yielded positive results, several obstacles remain. For example, some students are reluctant to actively use English because they feel embarrassed, afraid of making mistakes, or lack confidence. This is in line with the findings of Pratama et al., who stated that affective factors often hinder student participation (Pratama et al., 2021). In addition, teachers also face challenges, such as maintaining consistency, especially with a busy lesson schedule. These factors indicate that although the English Day program provides a good opportunity for students to practice their English language skills, the sustainability of the program still depends on student motivation and institutional support.

To overcome these obstacles, program development and optimization need to be improved and expanded. This can be done by extending the duration of the program so that students have more time to practice, as well as creating more varied learning activities such as games, short plays, or outdoor activities that still use English. Through this, students will find learning activities more enjoyable and less boring. Diversity of activities is also key to keeping English Day interesting (Wallace & Leong, 2020). To increase motivation, teachers can give prizes to students who are active during the program. Giving prizes is not only a form of appreciation, but can also indirectly motivate other students to be more active in the program. In addition, involving students in program planning is also necessary, such as choosing themes, organizing activities, or planning programs, which can foster a sense of ownership and responsibility in students. With these methods, the English Day program will not only be a weekly program but can also develop into a sustainable school culture.

Overall, the discussion showed that the English Day program at SMPN 19 Surabaya successfully promoted contextual vocabulary learning and student speaking practice. However, its limited impact on other language skills and the persistent reluctance of students to participate in the program indicate the need for further innovation. By reinforcing material relevant to students' daily lives and strengthening English language habits through behaviorism principles, the English Day program has the potential to become a sustainable program with a comprehensive model for language immersion in schools.

Implications and Limitations Study

From actual field practice, the implementation of the English Day program has several implications. For schools, the English Day program requires even stronger support from the school, so that the teachers involved in this program are not only English teachers. For teachers, it is very important to develop diverse and interesting activities so that students do not get bored with this program. For policymakers, the English Day program can be used as a reference for creating similar low-cost programs that can be replicated in other schools. For future researchers, the long-term impact of this program's implementation can be studied. Of course, this study is not without limitations. The findings in this study are based on teacher interviews and observations. In addition, the main focus of this study is from the teachers' perspective, while not discussing the students' perspective. It is important to acknowledge these limitations, as they can provide direction for future researchers to conduct research with more diverse perspectives.

CONCLUSION

The English Day program implemented at SMPN 19 Surabaya has proven to be one of the effective learning media in introducing English vocabulary contextually to students. Through this activity, students are not only invited to recognize and memorize vocabulary, but also directed to understand its use in everyday situations. This provides a more meaningful and applicable learning experience, so that students can more easily internalize the vocabulary learned. In addition, this program significantly contributes to the improvement of students'

speaking skills. With activities such as light conversations, short presentations, and delivering instructions in English, students are encouraged to be more active in using English in interactions at school, and their self-confidence has also increased in a supportive and non-pressurized atmosphere.

However, the implementation of this program still has room for development, especially in terms of the duration of implementation and the variety of forms of activities. Some students have not benefited maximally due to time constraints and limited methods. Therefore, it is important for schools and teachers to continue to evaluate and improve this program so that it can reach and involve all students more evenly and optimally. The success of this program also depends on teachers acting as facilitators and motivators, and the school's support in making English language activities a habit that is fun and consistent.

This study has limitations, namely that data was obtained from only one English teacher as the primary subject. Therefore, for further research, it is recommended to involve more teachers and also include student perspectives, as well as use other methods, to obtain more comprehensive insights. More broadly, this program also provides an opportunity to learn more about the long-term impact of the English Day program on other language skills. The findings of this study can also serve as a reference for other schools that will implement the English Day program. Thus, the English Day program is not just a routine activity, but also an important part of a sustainable and adaptive language learning strategy.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

Praise and thanks be to Allah SWT, who has always helped me complete this article, and thanks to Mr. M. Hanfi, M.Ag, MA, who has guided me in completing this article. I realize that this article is not yet perfect and would never have been completed without the help and input of many people who have contributed greatly in helping me complete this article. I hope that the results of this article can help other researchers to conduct further research and serve as a reference for future researchers and everyone who reads this research.

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