



CHAPTER I INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background of the Study

English is now a global language. Rao (2019) emphasized that, as the main international language, English is an important tool for education, entertainment, getting information, and building international communication. Today, being able to speak English is an important part of life. Everyone should at least know basic English or be able to understand it to follow instructions, directions, or explanations.

According to Ahmad (2016), many people agree that English is widely spoken around the world. People use it to communicate with others from different regions, states, countries, or continents. Not being able to use proper English can make it hard for someone to reach their personal goals. Fulcher (2003), cited by Wulandari et al. (2022), explained that speaking is one of the most important skills in human communication.

In Indonesia, which is a developing country, English is part of the school curriculum. It is taught as a foreign language from elementary school to university. English has four main skills: writing, reading, listening, and speaking. Aulia et al. (2021) asserted that speaking is the most important skill because it helps people express their ideas, thoughts, and feelings. However, speaking English is not easy. Many students face challenges and often stay silent or passive during English lessons, both inside and outside the classroom.

Speaking a foreign language needs more than just grammar knowledge. Students must also learn how to use English in real situations. Learning in class is not enough because time is limited. So, students need more speaking practice outside the classroom. Hedge and Tricia, as explained in Agista (2022) that practicing outside the classroom can improve academic results, make learning more fun, reduce bad behavior, and increase motivation.

Educational institutions play an important role in supporting students' language development, especially by providing consistent opportunities to practice speaking. The more often students engage with the target language in real situations, the more confident and fluent they become. One strong example of this effort can be seen at Al-Madienah, an Islamic boarding school that implements a comprehensive English Language Program.

In this program, students are required to speak English every day, not only in formal contexts such as classrooms but also in informal settings like dormitory conversations. To maintain the effectiveness of the program, the school enforces a language policy with specific consequences for violations, such as being asked to translate or explain grammar in front of the language committee. The program has been running since 2016 and includes various activities like daily vocabulary memorization, conversation sessions, speech performances, and monthly language events.

Despite the well-structured program and strong institutional support, early findings reveal that students still face significant challenges particularly in grammar accuracy and the influence of their social environment. Based on interviews with English instructors, one of the main concerns is students' tendency to focus on fluency while neglecting grammatical correctness. As one of the teachers explained, "They are focus on speaking fluently, so it's difficult to organize the grammar. For example, they say, "Let's go go." the 1st tutor. This reflects what is known as inherited language usage, where students adopt sentence patterns from their seniors without realizing whether they are grammatically correct. Over time, these inaccurate expressions become normalized and frequently used, reinforcing habits that can be difficult to correct later.

Another issue is negative language transfer, where students unconsciously apply structures from their native languages such as Indonesian or Javanese into English. As the 2nd tutor noted, "The obstacle is the negative transfer from Indonesian or Javanese to English. So, they often transfer their own language." This blending of languages can lead to awkward phrasing and consistent grammatical errors. Vocabulary use is also a challenge. Although students memorize more than 20 new words daily, their understanding of these words is sometimes superficial. The 1st tutor pointed out, "The vocabulary used is very different from general English. For example, "debt" is used instead of "owe," which is rarely used." This suggests that students may learn new vocabulary without gaining enough exposure to how it is actually used in context, resulting in inappropriate or unnatural usage.

Environmental factors further influence students' language development. In some areas of the school especially among male students English is not fully spoken due to peer habits. The 1st tutor explained, "The main factor is the environment. This was happened with the boys because the men never speak English, so the boys don't speak English 100%." This showed that when the surrounding environment did not fully support English



usage, students struggle to maintain the habit of speaking English consistently, even if the program encourages it.

Considering these challenges, it is important to understand how students perceive the Language Program they are part of. Their experiences can offer valuable insights for improvement, especially in addressing issues like inherited language usage, limited vocabulary application, and inconsistent language environments. Several studies (e.g., Ubaedillah et al., 2021; Munir et al., 2023) have emphasized the value of student feedback in shaping more effective language programs. Therefore, this study aims to explore how students view the program, what obstacles they face, and how their perceptions can contribute to developing more responsive and impactful language policies in the future. Entitled “The Challenges and Benefits of an English Language Program in Islamic Boarding School: A Study of Students’ Perception”.

1.2 Research Questions

Based on the background of study above, the researcher has formulated the following research questions:

1. What challenges do students face in the Language Program of Islamic boarding schools from their perspective?
2. What benefits do students obtain from the Language Program of Islamic boarding schools from their perspective?

1.3 Research Objectives

The objective of the research:

1. To investigate the challenges encountered by students when implementing Language Program.
2. To know the benefits of language program that obtained by Islamic boarding school students’.

1.4 Significance

The research expects the finding of this study will be useful in both theoretically and practically:

1. Theoretical

This study aims to examine the way the Language Program is conducted in Islamic boarding school as perceived by the students. It will assist us to know how effective the program is, the challenges that occur and which areas require improvement. It will also examine the perceived benefits by the students in the program.



2. Practical

a. For the language commission

By the result of this study, the language commission can make an evaluation to improve more interesting and relevant activities and can ensure that the policies are effectively implemented.

b. For the English instructor

The finding can help to know the needed of the students and compile the strategies to overcome it.

c. For The Students

This research is expected to help students realize that their active participation is essential to the success of the language program. Understanding the challenges and benefits they face encourages students to take responsibility, support each other in using English, and embrace making mistakes as part of the learning process.

1.5 Scope and Delimitation

This study focus on identifying students' perceptions of the internal and external challenges and the benefits of a language program.

This study involved 24 students from the Al Madienah Islamic boarding school in Jombang. Each level was represented by five to seven students. There were four proficiency levels: Great, Gorgeous, Amazing, and Excellent.

1.6 Definition of Key Terms

1. Students' perception

This term refers to the student's perspective, experiences, and opinions about the language program. It includes their perceptions of the program's effectiveness, relevance, and impact on their learning process and overall development. The term emphasizes the need to understand language programs through students' perceptions, as it can provide information about the challenges and benefits of the program.

2. Challenges

This term refers to the difficulties, obstacles, or problems students face in participating in a language program. These challenges can include issues related to the environment and teacher support, lack of resources, or personal factors such as motivation, and confident. This term is used to identify and analyse obstacles that



hinder the success of implementation of language programs in Islamic boarding school.

3. Benefits

Refers to the positive outcomes, benefits or gains experienced by students as a result of participating in a language program. These may include improved language skills, increased self-confidence, and better academic performance. This term is used to highlight the value and impact of language programs on students' academic and personal.

