

Optimizing EFL Education: A Boarding Language Program Management Model for Indonesian Islamic University Students

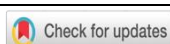
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ABSTRACT

Objective: This research investigates the development of an educational management model for a Boarding Language Program (BLP) designed to enhance the language competencies of advanced English as a Foreign Language (EFL) learners at the State Islamic University in Salatiga, Indonesia. The study aims to (1) analyze the learners' language skill profiles before joining the program, (2) propose a comprehensive management model encompassing curriculum, infrastructure, and student admissions, and (3) evaluate the model's acceptability and effectiveness. **Method:** A mixed-methods approach combining qualitative and quantitative data collection, including observations, interviews, and assessments. **Results:** Results indicate that the BLP significantly improves language proficiency while fostering immersive, interactive learning experiences. The development model on educational management of boarding language programs on language aspects for advanced English as a Foreign Language (EFL) learners is adequate or acceptable in improving learners' language skills based on the result of the Wilcoxon test. **Novelty:** Findings suggest that the BLP offers significant potential for improving language skills and preparing students for global competitiveness, providing a replicable framework for other educational institutions.

INTRODUCTION

The increasing globalization of education has created a pressing need for innovative English language instruction methodologies, particularly for learners of English as a Foreign Language (EFL). Indonesian Islamic universities play a pivotal role in fostering linguistic and cultural competence among students. English proficiency has become essential for academic, professional, and social mobility, driving demand for effective language instruction (Bellino, 2021; Liu et al., 2024; Ma et al., 2024; Mackenzie, 2022; Sah & Karki, 2023). EFL education enables Indonesian students to access international knowledge, participate in global discourse, and enhance career prospects.

Education fosters growth and development within the knowledge economy, marking a paradigm shift from physical labor to intellectual work. The 21st century has ushered in unprecedented changes in the global education landscape, driven by technological advancements, shifting workforce demands, and increasing globalization (Fan, 2025; Koseda et al., 2024; Stoyanova et al., 2024; Ul Hassan et al., 2025; Zhang, 2023). The traditional teaching paradigms are giving way to innovative, student-centered approaches focusing on skills rather than mere content knowledge (Adipat, 2024; AlAhmad, 2021; Ling, 2024; Malhotra et al., 2023; Oyelana et al., 2022). Indonesian students must develop linguistic competence

To participate effectively in international discourse.

Given those challenges in education, education management is one critical area requiring improvement. Education management encompasses both the planning and execution of educational activities (Nadif, 2024). Its primary goal is to facilitate and optimize the implementation of educational processes to achieve desired outcomes effectively. To this end, improvements must be made in various aspects, including personnel, funding, methods, tools, infrastructure, educational processes, learning designs, and graduate competencies.

This research integrates theoretical frameworks that underscore the interconnectedness of language learning, motivation, and cultural context, offering valuable insights for managing boarding school language programs. Social Constructivist Theory (Vygotsky, 1978) emphasizes the collaborative nature of language learning, aligning with the communal environment of boarding schools. Self-determination theory highlights the importance of fostering students' autonomy, competence, and motivation, which can be incorporated into program design to enhance engagement. Language Acquisition Theory addresses cognitive, affective, and social factors that can inform personalized and effective teaching approaches. Language planning (Manik et al., 2024) underscores the importance of aligning program goals with broader community objectives, creating a structured and supportive academic and linguistic success environment. These theories provide a comprehensive foundation for optimizing language programs in boarding school settings.

The State Islamic Affairs Institute of Salatiga serves as the research site for this pilot project. Initial observations revealed that while stakeholders provided some facilities and infrastructure to support English language use, managerial aspects remained inadequate. To address these gaps, the Boarding Language Program (BLP) was conceptualized as an intensive language immersion initiative designed to foster daily English communication among students in a residential setting. This program emphasizes creating a dynamic and engaging learning environment like language camps, mainly English camps. The effectiveness of English camps in enhancing learners' interest and abilities by making the learning process more vivid, reducing stress, and fostering relaxed yet meaningful communication. Such camps provide authentic language experiences by bringing together individuals from diverse cultural backgrounds.

The pilot research involved participants from international and regular classes at UIN Salatiga. Observations of the infrastructure management process in the International Class revealed several shortcomings, including unclear planning related to funding and accountability, insufficient procurement processes, and inadequate maintenance and administrative procedures. These issues hinder the efficient and effective delivery of learning activities. Nurmalina et al. (2023) emphasize the importance of effective management in developing foreign language programs, offering recommendations for leadership, teaching staff, and students in Islamic boarding schools. These insights are equally relevant to high schools, where structured management of language learning activities can enhance outcomes. Famularsih et al. (2024) also explained in their study, while addressing the language aspects in the curriculum management for the International Class Program (ICP) at UIN Salatiga and UINSI Samarinda using CIPP model that the structured and precise curriculum supports the language learning aspects and the opportunities for the ICP management

to improve the curriculum on language aspects of learning to achieve the expected outcome.

This study, then, aims to answer how an evidence-based educational management model can optimize advanced EFL learners' linguistic competencies in reading, listening, speaking, and writing within boarding language programs and how valid, reliable, and acceptable the proposed model among stakeholders is. Therefore, it pursues three primary objectives: (1) conducting a comprehensive baseline analysis of advanced English as a Foreign Language (EFL) learners' linguistic competencies in reading, listening, speaking, and writing prior to participating in a boarding language program; (2) conceptualizing and developing an evidence-based educational management model tailored to optimize language instruction within these programs; and (3) evaluating the validity, reliability, and acceptability of the proposed model among stakeholders, ultimately informing effective instructional strategies and policy recommendations.

RESEARCH METHOD

This study employs a mixed-methods approach, integrating both qualitative and quantitative methodologies. The research flow encompasses several stages: initial research and data collection, planning, and developing limited-scale preliminary product drafts. The decision to limit the scope is attributed to time constraints and the researchers' capabilities at this stage.

The data sources for this study include stakeholders involved in the educational management of the Boarding Language Program for international and regular classes at UIN Salatiga. Data collection techniques include distributing questionnaires and conducting interviews through Focus Group Discussions (FGDs), which provide direct insights and facilitate interactive discussions (Karunarathna et al., 2024; Lokot, 2021; Marley et al., 2023; Schuster et al., 2023; Yayeh, 2024). The instruments employed are categorized into those used for preliminary studies, expert validation, and limited testing involving 28 learners from the Boarding Language Program.

The collected data are analyzed using both qualitative and quantitative descriptive methods. Quantitative analysis is applied to assess data from the development process and model testing, measuring the effectiveness of the proposed model through a one-group pretest and post-test experimental design (Aswita et al., 2024; Kew & Tasir, 2022; License, 2023; Natsir et al., 2023; Pramasdyahsari et al., 2023). Qualitative descriptive analysis complements the quantitative findings, providing in-depth insights to support the research outcomes.

Integrating qualitative and quantitative results enables refining a factual educational management model. Identified weaknesses are validated and tested in the field to ensure the model's reliability and applicability. The findings serve as a foundation for further developing and implementing the proposed model.

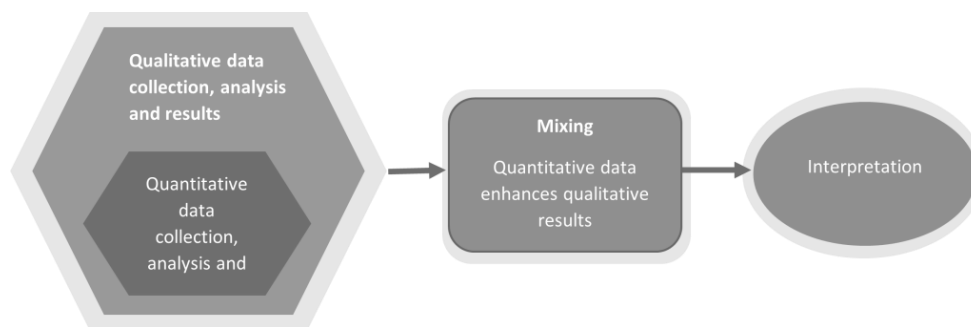


Figure 1. Mixed-method research flow chart.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Results

This section addresses the research question by presenting empirical findings on how an evidence-based educational management model can optimize advanced EFL learners' language skills competencies within boarding language programs. It also evaluates the proposed model's validity, reliability, and acceptability among stakeholders, contributing to the existing body of knowledge with insights into learners' linguistic profiles, innovative management strategies, and practical policy recommendations for enhancing EFL education in boarding school contexts.

Preliminary Study Results

The research began with a preliminary study to evaluate the initial proficiency levels of learners enrolled in the Boarding Language Program. Using pretest scores as a baseline, learners' reading, listening, speaking, and writing abilities were assessed, guided by TOEFL standards. The pretest results revealed a score range of 346 to 633, with a mean score of 507.89. These results suggest moderate English proficiency; most scores fell between 400 and 600. Only one learner scored below 400, achieving 346. These findings are summarized in Figure 2. This preliminary data highlights a strong foundation for learners to progress through the program.

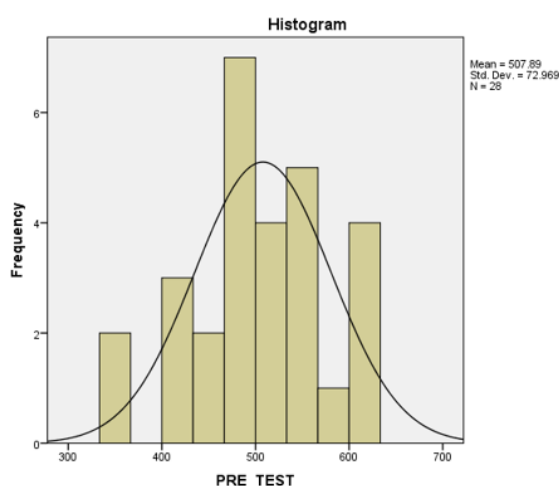


Figure 2. Histogram of Pretest

Development Program Overview

The 11-week Boarding Language Program was designed to enhance learners' English proficiency through a structured and intensive curriculum. The syllabus was developed

with expert input to ensure relevance and effectiveness. Key focus areas included structure, reading, writing, listening, speaking, vocabulary, and TOEFL preparation. Materials were tailored to learners' needs and delivered via Google Meet due to COVID-19 restrictions.

The program involved 60 meetings, each lasting two hours, held Monday through Saturday. Periodic evaluations every two weeks helped monitor progress and refine teaching strategies. Three tutors with expertise in English education facilitated the sessions, ensuring the program's quality and consistency.

The model is being refined based on input from experts, including Dr. Mujazin, an expert in lesson plan and syllabus development, Kartika Ekasari, M.A., an expert in English language, and Asih Dwi Romeathy, S.Pd., M.Pd., an expert in educational management. They have actively provided suggestions for improving the model, such as (1) conducting evaluations periodically over shorter intervals to monitor the program's progress, (2) selecting highly motivated learners and tutors who are committed to mutual growth, which may require a brief formal selection process, and (3) choosing materials that are truly necessary for the learners to master and that will have a significant impact on their development.

Based on the conditions in the preliminary study, the researchers arranged some development programs dealing with the curriculum to meet the needs of students in boarding language programs. The materials comprise structure (1-3), reading (1-2), writing (1-2), listening (1-2), speaking (1-2), vocabulary (1-2), and TOEFL (1-2). Table 2 shows the program syllabus.

Results of the Development Program

The program's effectiveness was measured by comparing pretest and post-test scores. Post-test results showed an increased mean score of 534.00, indicating significant improvement. The descriptive statistics, including the mean, median, and standard deviation, confirmed this positive trend, as visualized in Figure 4.5.

Statistical analysis further validated these findings. Normality tests using Shapiro-Wilk indicated non-normal data distribution ($p > 0.05$). Consequently, the Wilcoxon Signed Ranks Test was employed, yielding a Z-value of -4.626 and a p-value of 0.00. These results demonstrate the program's effectiveness in improving learners' language skills.

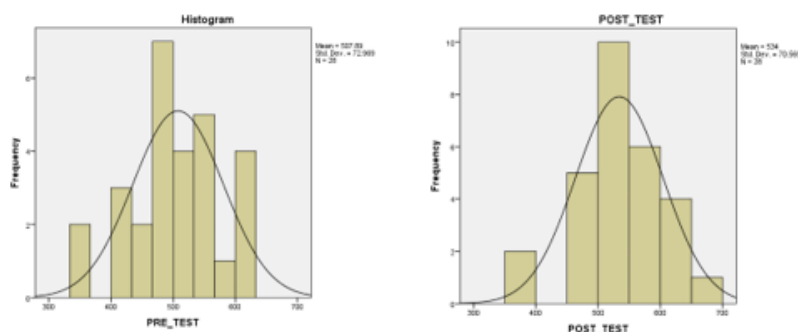


Figure 3. Histogram of pretest and post-test.

Figure 3 presents the descriptive statistics for the pretest results of 28 learners, which include a mean of 507.89, a median of 504.50, a mode of 346, a minimum value of 346, and a maximum value of 633. In contrast, the descriptive statistics for the posttest show

a mean of 534.00, a median of 533.50, a mode of 525, a minimum value of 371, and a maximum value of 650. A normality test should be performed before a T-test on the pretest and post-test data. The results of the normality test and the Q-Q plot data can be found in Table 1.

Table 1. Tests of Normality

	Kolmogorov-Smirnov ^a			Shapiro-Wilk		
	Statistic	df	Sig.	Statistic	df	Sig.
PRE_TEST	.13	28	.20*	.96	28	.36
POST_TEST	.12	28	.20*	.95	28	.28

*. This is a lower bound of the true significance.
a. Lilliefors Significance Correction

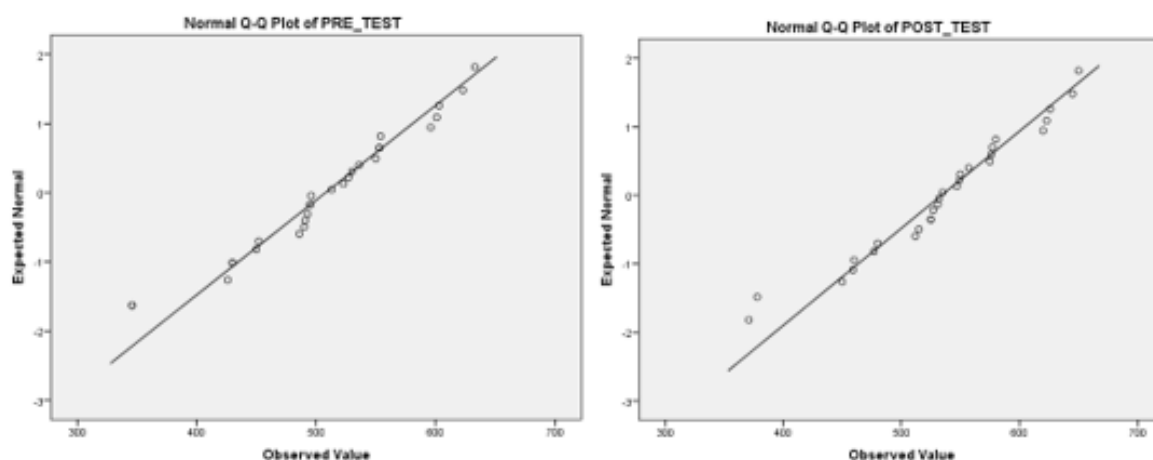


Figure 4. The Q-Q plot data.

Based on Figure 4, it can be concluded that the pre-test and post-test data were not distributed normally. Therefore, the effectivity or acceptability test should use Wilcoxon, as shown in Table 2.

Table 2. Wilcoxon test's result.

Test Statistics	
Z	POST_TEST - PRE_TEST
Asymp. Sig. (2-tailed)	-4.62 ^b
a. Wilcoxon Signed Ranks Test	.00
b. Based on negative ranks.	

Based on the Wilcoxon test, T-count is -4.62, while $p = 0.00 < 0.05$; thus, H_a accepted and H_o rejected, which means that the boarding language development program is effective or acceptable in improving learners' language skills.

Key Recommendations for Future Programs

The following recommendations are proposed following recommendations are proposed to enhance flying further; the program should incorporate periodic evaluations at shorter intervals. These evaluations will enable more frequent tracking of learners' progress, ensuring that any challenges can be identified and addressed

promptly. This approach will help maintain alignment with the program's goals and objectives. Secondly, the selection process for both learners and tutors should emphasize motivation and commitment. Highly motivated participants are likelier to engage actively with the program, fostering a more dynamic and productive learning environment. A formal selection process can help identify individuals well-suited to the program's rigorous demands.

Lastly, the program's materials should focus on areas with the most significant practical impact on learners' proficiency. By prioritizing essential topics, the program can ensure that learners gain skills that are directly applicable to their academic and professional goals, maximizing the overall effectiveness of the curriculum. These recommendations aim to build upon the current program's success, ensuring sustainable improvement in learners' English language skills while enhancing the learning experience.

Discussion

This section discusses the research findings on how an evidence-based educational management model optimizes advanced EFL learners' linguistic competencies within boarding language programs. Based on descriptive data and statistical tests, the analysis demonstrates the model's significant impact on enhancing learners' language skills. The discussion examines learners' initial proficiency levels, the model's development and validation, and its effectiveness as evaluated by stakeholders. The findings are compared with prior studies to contextualize the results and underscore the model's innovative contributions to EFL education in boarding programs.

Learner Profiles and Initial Scores

Analyzing learners' pretest scores provides valuable insights into their initial proficiency levels. With a mean score of 507.89 and most learners scoring above 400, the participants were already at an advanced level of English proficiency. The presence of one student scoring significantly lower (346) suggests that the group was relatively homogeneous, with only a minor outlier. Several factors may explain this disparity. First, learners may have been familiar with the test format, as previous exposure to similar assessments often enhances performance (Mameghani et al., 2024). Second, some participants might have engaged in intensive language programs, which are known to develop comprehensive language skills and contribute to higher proficiency levels (Ammigan & Bentahar, 2024). Finally, the strong performance of most learners indicates they were well-prepared and motivated, reflecting a positive attitude toward language learning and a commitment to their studies (Franchisca et al., 2024). These factors highlight the importance of understanding learners' backgrounds to design tailored language instruction effectively.

Model Development and Expert Feedback

The development of the boarding language program was a thoughtful and systematic process shaped by expert feedback from educators with backgrounds in English language teaching and educational management. The program's design was driven by the need to equip learners with the skills and knowledge necessary for success in an increasingly competitive global environment. Experts provided several key recommendations to enhance the model. One suggestion was to implement more

frequent evaluations over shorter periods to monitor the program's progress more effectively and ensure that learning goals were met. This approach would allow for timely adjustments, ensuring learners remained on track. Research has shown that regular formative assessments can significantly improve language learning outcomes by providing immediate feedback and allowing for adjustments to be made as needed (Han et al., 2024). Another important recommendation was carefully selecting learners and tutors based on motivation. Motivated participants are more likely to engage actively with the program and achieve better results, while motivated tutors can foster a dynamic and supportive learning environment. Studies indicate student and teacher motivation positively influences language learning (Franchisca et al., 2024). Finally, experts emphasized the importance of selecting relevant materials that directly address the learners' needs and will significantly impact their language development. Recent research supports using personalized and contextually relevant materials to boost engagement and language acquisition (Sukarno & Riyadini, 2024). These suggestions were incorporated into the final version of the model, which was subsequently implemented with the learners.

Effectiveness of the Program: Statistical Analysis

The statistical analysis of the pretest and posttest data revealed that the boarding language program had a measurable impact on learners' language skills. The paired T-test results, with a T-count of -4.62 and a p-value of 0.00, indicated that the differences between the pretest and post-test scores were statistically significant. This suggests that the program was effective in improving learners' language proficiency. The findings support the idea that intensive language programs, such as the one implemented in this study, can positively affect learners' skills quickly. The significant improvement in learners' scores aligns with previous studies, such as those by Abbahusain et al. (2019), which found that intensive English programs can substantially improve students' language abilities over a brief duration. This reinforces the program's effectiveness in enhancing language proficiency, particularly for advanced learners.

Comparison with Previous Studies

The findings of this research are consistent with those of other studies on intensive English programs. For example, Abbahusain et al. (2019) demonstrated that short-term intensive programs could significantly increase students' scores, which mirrors the positive outcomes observed in this study. Additionally, Pond (2021) highlighted that language learning programs should focus on language skill development and preparing students academically and culturally for future academic challenges. This holistic approach is reflected in the design of the boarding language program, which integrated both language instruction and preparation for academic studies. The program's ability to enhance language proficiency and academic readiness distinguishes it from conventional language programs and contributes to its effectiveness.

Unique Features of the Boarding Language Program Model

The boarding language program developed for this study incorporates several unique features that distinguish it from other language learning models. First, it emphasizes theoretical knowledge and practical application, ensuring that materials are relevant to learners' needs and applicable to real-world situations. This approach aligns with recent

findings that integrating theoretical frameworks with practical experiences enhances language learning outcomes (Papi & Hiver, 2024). Second, the program includes multiple evaluation points throughout its duration, allowing for continuous monitoring of learners' progress and the effectiveness of instructional methods. This emphasis on ongoing assessment ensures that the program remains responsive to learners' needs and can be adjusted if necessary. Studies have shown that regular formative assessments significantly improve language learning by providing immediate feedback and opportunities for adjustment (Weaver et al., 2024). Finally, the program is designed to cater to advanced learners enthusiastic about learning English, regardless of their access to tutors. This flexibility allows learners to engage with the program at their own pace, fostering a sense of autonomy and motivation. Research indicates that learner autonomy and motivation are crucial to successful language acquisition (Ahmed & Hossain, 2024). These features contribute to the program's success and highlight its potential for future implementation in similar contexts.

CONCLUSION

Fundamental Finding: This study demonstrates the effectiveness of the Boarding Language Program in improving learners' English proficiency. The fundamental finding highlights significant progress in post-test scores, validating the structured and intensive approach of the program. **Implication:** This research suggests that well-designed and expertly reviewed curricula, motivated learners, and skilled tutors can substantially improve language skills. **Limitation:** However, the study acknowledges certain limitations. The reliance on online delivery due to COVID-19 restrictions impacted the interactive dynamics of the program. Additionally, the small sample size of 28 learners limits the generalizability of the findings. **Future Research:** Future research should explore implementing similar programs in hybrid or in-person settings to compare outcomes. Expanding the sample size and including learners from diverse backgrounds would provide more comprehensive insights. By addressing these areas, future studies can contribute to the continuous improvement of language education programs.

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