

Developing English-Speaking Confidence through a Communicative English Program in Amanatussalam Boarding School: An Evaluation of Intensive Language Learning

Membangun Kepercayaan Diri Berbicara Bahasa Inggris melalui Program Bahasa Inggris Komunikatif di Pondok Pesantren Amanatussalam: Evaluasi Pembelajaran Bahasa Intensif

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Abstract

Communicative competence in English remains a persistent challenge for students in Islamic boarding schools (pesantren) in Indonesia, where Arabic dominates the linguistic environment. This community service study evaluated the effectiveness of the Global English Goes To (G-TO) Program, a five-day intensive English language learning initiative conducted at Pondok Pesantren Modern Wisata Amanatussalam, Wonosalam, Jombang. Employing a communicative language teaching approach integrated with game-based learning and student-centered instruction, the program engaged 47 participants from junior and senior high school levels. Participants were stratified into four proficiency classes (Basic 1, Basic 2, Pre-Intermediate, and Intermediate) based on placement test results. Assessment encompassed vocabulary, grammar, fluency, and pronunciation dimensions evaluated through daily scores (60%) and a final test (40%). Findings revealed that 70.1% of participants achieved the Good and Excellent categories. Affective outcomes indicated mean scores of 4.0 for confidence and motivation (Very Good category) and 3.8 for participation (Good category). The program achieved a 95.08% attendance rate across 16 instructional sessions. These results confirm that structured communicative English programs can effectively bridge the digital and linguistic gap in pesantren settings, fostering English habit formation and enhancing learners' speaking confidence. Implications suggest the need for sustained follow-up programs and institutional reinforcement to ensure long-term speaking competence development.

Keywords: Communicative Language Teaching, English Speaking Confidence, Language Anxiety.

Abstrak

Kompetensi komunikatif dalam bahasa Inggris tetap menjadi tantangan yang signifikan bagi siswa di pondok pesantren di Indonesia, di mana bahasa Arab mendominasi lingkungan kebahasaan. Studi pengabdian masyarakat ini mengevaluasi efektivitas Program Global English Goes To (G-TO), sebuah inisiatif pembelajaran bahasa Inggris intensif selama lima hari yang dilaksanakan di Pondok Pesantren Modern Wisata Amanatussalam, Wonosalam, Jombang. Dengan menggunakan pendekatan Communicative Language Teaching (CLT) yang diintegrasikan dengan pembelajaran berbasis permainan dan pembelajaran berpusat pada siswa, program ini melibatkan 47 peserta dari jenjang SMP dan SMA. Peserta dikelompokkan ke dalam empat kelas kemampuan (Basic 1, Basic 2, Pre-Intermediate, dan Intermediate) berdasarkan hasil placement test. Penilaian mencakup aspek vocabulary, grammar, fluency, dan pronunciation yang dievaluasi melalui nilai harian (60%) dan final test (40%). Hasil menunjukkan bahwa 70,1% peserta mencapai kategori Good dan Excellent. Capaian afektif menunjukkan rata-rata skor 4,0 untuk kepercayaan diri dan motivasi (kategori Sangat Baik) dan 3,8 untuk partisipasi (kategori Baik). Program mencapai tingkat kehadiran 95,08% dalam 16 sesi pembelajaran. Hasil ini mengonfirmasi bahwa program bahasa Inggris komunikatif yang terstruktur dapat secara efektif menjembatani kesenjangan linguistik di lingkungan pesantren, mendorong pembentukan English habit dan meningkatkan kepercayaan diri berbicara peserta. Implikasi menunjukkan perlunya program tindak lanjut yang berkelanjutan dan penguatan institusional untuk memastikan pengembangan kompetensi berbicara jangka panjang.

Kata Kunci: Communicative Language Teaching, Kepercayaan Diri, Berbicara Bahasa Inggris, Kecemasan Bahasa.

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INTRODUCTION

English proficiency has become an essential competency in the era of globalization, functioning not only as a medium of international communication but also as a gateway to academic and professional opportunities (Xiao & Chang, 2026). In Indonesia, the development of English-speaking skills presents a particularly nuanced challenge, especially within Islamic boarding school (pesantren) environments where Arabic typically serves as the dominant language of instruction and daily communication (Pan et al., 2026). This linguistic dominance, while reinforcing Arabic competence, often inadvertently limits learners' exposure to English and inhibits the formation of English-speaking habits (Basireddi et al., 2026).

Speaking is widely regarded as the most demanding of the four language skills, requiring simultaneous attention to vocabulary, grammar, pronunciation, and real-time information processing (Olivares-Matus et al., 2026). Learners in contexts where English is not the medium of instruction frequently exhibit high levels of language anxiety, which research consistently identifies as one of the primary barriers to speaking fluency (Hossain, 2026; Krismayani et al., 2026). Affective barriers such as fear of making errors, lack of confidence, and limited opportunities for authentic practice compound the linguistic challenges faced by these learners (Breiter & Lopez, 2026).

Within Indonesian pesantren environments, the challenge is further compounded by the cultural prioritization of Arabic as the language of religious instruction. Pondok Pesantren Modern Wisata Amanatussalam (AMLAM) in Wonosalam, Jombang, exemplifies this dynamic: although the institution implements a bilingual rotation system alternating between Arabic and English weeks, Arabic continues to dominate daily communication even during designated English weeks. This condition results in limited authentic English practice and inhibits the development of sustainable English-speaking confidence among students.

Communicative Language Teaching (CLT) has emerged as one of the most theoretically and empirically grounded approaches for addressing speaking deficiencies in foreign language contexts (Alimehmeti et al., 2026; Sari et al., 2026). CLT emphasizes meaningful interaction as the primary vehicle for language acquisition, moving beyond rote memorization of grammatical rules toward the authentic use of language in communicative situations (Orujova et al., 2026; Temirgalinova, 2026). Research indicates that CLT, when combined with complementary strategies such as Task-Based Language Teaching (TBLT) and game-based learning, produces meaningful improvements in speaking fluency, vocabulary acquisition, and learner motivation (Didenko et al., 2026; Ku, 2026).

The role of affective dimensions in language learning has received increasing scholarly attention, with studies demonstrating that the reduction of language anxiety and the enhancement of learner self-efficacy are critical prerequisites for speaking development (Alharbi, 2026). Game-based activities, peer interaction, and collaborative learning structures create low-anxiety environments that encourage risk-taking in language production, ultimately fostering greater communicative confidence (Zbenovich & Scott-Monkhouse, 2026). Higher-order thinking skills (HOTS) have also been integrated into contemporary speaking instruction as a means of developing not only linguistic but also cognitive competencies (Kurniati et al., 2026).

Despite the growing body of research on communicative English learning, relatively few studies have investigated intensive English programs specifically designed for pesantren contexts in Indonesia (Kang & Won, 2026). The unique sociolinguistic dynamics of these

environments, characterized by the coexistence of Arabic and Indonesian alongside limited English exposure, necessitate contextually responsive pedagogical interventions (Mao et al., 2026). This gap underscores the importance of community service-based educational programs that combine theoretical rigor with practical application tailored to institutional needs.

The Global English Goes To (G-TO) Program was designed to address this gap by delivering a structured, communicative, and practice-oriented intensive English program at AMLAM. Drawing on CLT principles, game-based learning, and student-centered approaches, the program targeted the four key dimensions of English language proficiency: vocabulary, grammar, fluency, and pronunciation. By conducting the program within the pesantren environment rather than in an external setting, the initiative sought to create immediate, contextually authentic learning experiences while simultaneously fostering the institutional conditions necessary for the development of an English-speaking culture.

This paper reports on the evaluation of the G-TO Program, examining participants' academic outcomes, attendance, and affective development. It contributes to the growing body of literature on community service-based language education in Islamic boarding school contexts and offers insights into the design of communicative English programs for similar institutional settings.

IMPLEMENTATION METHOD

The G-TO Program was implemented through a community service outreach initiative conducted by Global English, Pare, Kediri, in collaboration with Pondok Pesantren Modern Wisata Amanatussalam (AMLAM), Wonosalam, Jombang, East Java, Indonesia. The program adopted an integrated approach combining communicative language teaching, game-based learning, and student-centered instruction within a structured intensive format.

Program Design and Participants

A total of 47 participants from junior high school (SMP) and senior high school (SMA) levels, specifically grades 7–8 and 10–11, were involved in the program. Participants were stratified into four proficiency-based classes following an initial placement test administered through speaking interviews and simple oral assessments. The resulting classes were Egypt Class (Basic 1, n=10), Canada Class (Basic 2, n=13), Turkiye Class (Pre-Intermediate, n=12), and Australia Class (Intermediate, n=12). Four tutors from Global English were assigned to deliver instruction, implementing a teacher rotation system to ensure exposure to varied instructional styles.

Program Duration and Structure

The program was conducted over ten calendar days, with five days of effective instruction and one day of final evaluation. Each instructional day comprised three sessions of 90 minutes each, yielding a total of 16 instructional sessions per participant. The curriculum covered ten thematic chapters adapted to each proficiency level, encompassing vocabulary acquisition, grammar structures, and communicative speaking practice.

Each session followed a consistent instructional sequence: (1) Opening and warm-up, (2) Vocabulary and Pronunciation Drilling, (3) Material Delivery, (4) Practice Session, (5) Game

or Ice-Breaking Activity, and (6) Reflection. Learning materials were delivered via printed booklet modules, whiteboard, projector, speaker, and interactive game-based media.

Instructional Approach

The program applied Communicative Language Teaching (CLT) as its primary pedagogical framework, emphasizing language use over language knowledge. Instructional activities included vocabulary drilling, pronunciation drilling, role play, pair work, group discussion, question-and-answer sessions, individual and group presentations, ice-breaking activities, and game-based learning tasks. These activities were designed to reduce language anxiety, promote authentic communicative interaction, and build learners' confidence in real-world English use.

Assessment and Evaluation

Participant learning outcomes were assessed through a combined evaluation system comprising daily performance scores (60%) and a final individual test (40%). Assessment dimensions included vocabulary, grammar, fluency, and pronunciation, each rated on a five-point scale (1–5). Final scores were categorized as Excellent (≥ 4.00), Good (3.00–3.99), Fair (2.00–2.99), and Needs Improvement (1.00–1.99).

Qualitative assessment was conducted through structured tutor observation across four affective dimensions: confidence, participation, speaking habit, and motivation. Observer ratings employed a five-point scale with the following interpretive categories: Very Good (4.0–5.0), Good (3.0–3.99), Fair (2.0–2.99), Poor (1.0–1.99), and Very Poor (0.0–0.99).

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

Participant Distribution and Placement Test Results

The placement test stratified participants into four classes representing distinct proficiency profiles. Egypt Class participants (Basic 1) demonstrated limited sentence formation capacity and required considerable instructor scaffolding during speaking tasks. Canada Class participants (Basic 2) could construct simple sentences and follow basic instructions, but exhibited limited fluency and vocabulary range. Turkiye Class participants (Pre-Intermediate) could convey simple ideas with reasonably structured sentences, though grammatical errors and pronunciation challenges remained. Australia Class participants (Intermediate) demonstrated the widest vocabulary range, greater fluency, and stronger communicative confidence.

Table 1. Participant Distribution by Proficiency Class

Class	Level	Participants (n)	Percentage (%)
Egypt Class	Basic 1	10	21.3%
Canada Class	Basic 2	13	27.7%
Turkiye Class	Pre-Intermediate	12	25.5%
Australia Class	Intermediate	12	25.5%
Total	—	47	100%

Attendance and Participation

Program attendance was calculated based on 47 participants across 16 instructional sessions, yielding a total ideal attendance of 752 session-attendances. Actual attendance recorded 715 session-attendances, resulting in an overall attendance rate of 95.08%. Additionally, 97.87% of participants completed the final individual assessment. These figures indicate a high level of learner commitment and program engagement, consistent with findings that communicative and game-based instructional environments sustain learner motivation over the course of intensive programs (Mirsanjari, 2026).

Academic Achievement by Class

Table 2 presents the mean academic scores across vocabulary, grammar, fluency, and pronunciation for each class. The results indicate a general pattern of higher achievement among more proficient learners, with Australia Class and Turkiye Class recording the highest overall averages (4.2 and 4.0 respectively).

Table 2. Mean Academic Scores by Class

Class	Grammar	Vocabulary	Fluency	Pronunciation	Mean
Egypt Class	2.8	3.8	3.1	2.8	3.1
Canada Class	1.8	3.3	2.7	2.6	2.6
Turkiye Class	4.2	4.1	4.0	3.7	4.0
Australia Class	4.1	4.0	4.4	4.1	4.2
Overall Mean	3.2	3.8	3.5	3.3	—



Figure 1. Interactive English-Speaking Session with Pesantren Students

Egypt Class recorded the highest mean score in vocabulary (3.8) relative to its other dimensions, suggesting that drilling-based vocabulary activities were particularly effective at the basic level. Grammar and pronunciation remained the most challenging dimensions for lower-proficiency learners, a finding consistent with broader EFL research indicating that form-focused instruction requires extended practice periods to achieve transferable

competence (Bhar, 2026).

Canada Class presented the lowest overall mean (2.6), which may reflect the gap between participants' ability to recognize linguistic structures and their capacity to produce them fluently under time pressure. This discrepancy between receptive and productive competence is a well-documented phenomenon in second language acquisition research (Olszak & Borowicz, 2026).



Figure 2. Facilitator-Guided Communicative English Instruction during the G-TO Community Service Program.

Turkiye Class and Australia Class demonstrated balanced competence across all four dimensions, with Australia Class achieving the highest fluency score (4.4) of any class. These results suggest that intermediate-level learners benefited most from the communicative approach's emphasis on spontaneous oral production, an outcome supported by research indicating that CLT is particularly effective when learners possess sufficient linguistic resources to engage in meaningful interaction (Park, 2026).

Score Distribution and Achievement Categories

Table 3. Distribution of Final Score Categories

Category	Score Range	Participants (n)	Percentage (%)
Excellent	≥ 4.00	14	29.8%
Good	3.00–3.99	19	40.4%
Fair	2.00–2.99	14	29.8%
Needs Improvement	1.00–1.99	0	0%
Total	—	47	100%

The score distribution reveals that 70.2% of participants achieved Good or Excellent categories, with no participant falling into the Needs Improvement range. This outcome is particularly noteworthy given the relatively brief duration of the program (five effective

instructional days) and the challenging linguistic environment of the pesantren setting. The absence of participants in the Needs Improvement category suggests that even the lowest-achieving participants demonstrated foundational communicative development, a finding that aligns with research emphasizing the motivational benefits of structured communicative environments (Zhang, 2026).

Affective Outcomes: Confidence, Participation, and Motivation

Table 4. Qualitative Observation Results by Class

Aspect	Australia	Turkiye	Canada	Egypt	Mean	Category
Confidence	5	4	4	3	4.0	Very Good
Participation	4	4	4	3	3.8	Good
Speaking Habit	4	4	4	2	3.5	Good
Motivation	5	4	4	3	4.0	Very Good
Mean	4.5	4.0	4.0	2.8	3.8	Good

Affective outcomes were evaluated across four dimensions: confidence, participation, speaking habit, and motivation. The overall mean affective score was 3.8 (Good), with confidence and motivation achieving the highest scores of 4.0 (Very Good). These results underscore the central role of affective development in communicative language programs, consistent with research indicating that reductions in language anxiety directly correlate with improvements in oral production quality and frequency (Huanget al., 2026).



Figure 3. Facilitator Conducting an Individual English-Speaking Interview with a Participant

Australia Class recorded the highest affective mean (4.5, Very Good), reflecting the compounding benefit of existing linguistic proficiency, which reduces cognitive load and

allows greater attentional resources to be allocated to communicative risk-taking. Conversely, Egypt Class recorded the lowest affective mean (2.8, Fair), particularly on the speaking habit dimension (2.0), suggesting that learners at the basic proficiency level require extended exposure and more intensive scaffolding before speaking habits can be meaningfully established.

The finding that speaking habit formation was weakest among the lowest-proficiency participants is consistent with second language acquisition research emphasizing the interdependence of linguistic competence and communicative willingness (He et al., 2026). Learners who lack the vocabulary and grammatical resources necessary for spontaneous expression may experience what Krashen's Affective Filter Hypothesis terms an elevated filter, inhibiting production even in supportive environments. This observation points to the importance of differentiated scaffolding strategies in intensive programs that span multiple proficiency levels.

Program Effectiveness Analysis

The program's effectiveness was analyzed across three domains: cognitive (vocabulary and grammar development, mean score 3.5), psychomotor (fluency and pronunciation, mean score 3.4), and affective (confidence, participation, speaking habit, and motivation, mean score 3.8). The notably higher affective score relative to cognitive and psychomotor dimensions suggests that the communicative approach was particularly successful in transforming learners' relationship with English as a communication medium, even within the constraints of a five-day program.



Figure 4. Role-Play Activity to Enhance Students' English Speaking Skills during the G-TO Program

This pattern echoes findings from broader community service-based language education research, which consistently indicates that short-duration intensive programs

produce more robust affective than linguistic outcomes, while providing the motivational foundation necessary for sustained post-program language development (Du et al., 2026; Kurniati et al., 2026). The high attendance rate (95.08%) further corroborates the program's effectiveness in sustaining engagement, a dimension that game-based and communicative instructional designs have been shown to facilitate (Kamal & Khaidzir, 2026).

Pedagogical Implications for Pesantren Contexts

The contextual specificity of the G-TO Program carries important implications for English language education in pesantren settings. The dominant use of Arabic in the AMLAM environment presented a persistent challenge to English habit formation, particularly for lower-proficiency learners. This finding highlights the critical importance of environmental reinforcement beyond formal instructional sessions, as the development of an English-speaking culture requires consistent practice opportunities in authentic communicative contexts (Muthmainnah et al., 2026; Kumru-Yagmurkaya & Asik, 2026).

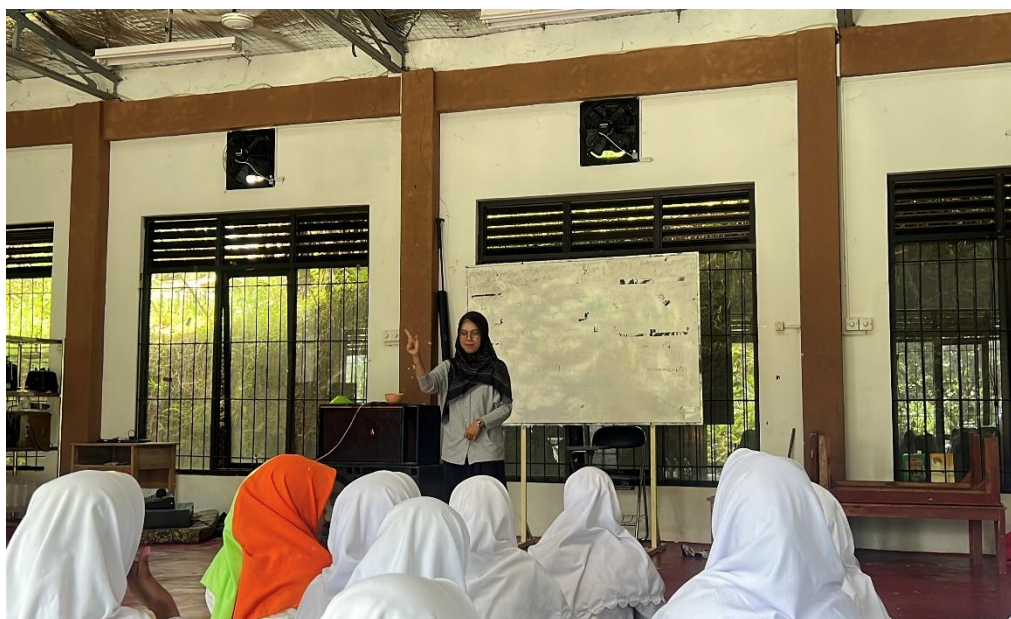


Figure 5. Classroom Role-Play Activity Implemented to Foster Communicative Competence in English Speaking.

The teacher rotation system implemented in the G-TO Program exposed participants to diverse instructional styles and communicative registers, which may have contributed to the observed gains in communicative flexibility and confidence. Research on peer interaction and diverse instructor exposure in EFL contexts suggests that varied instructional inputs can accelerate the development of intercultural communicative competence and linguistic adaptability (Hwang & Lee, 2026).

Game-based learning activities, including vocabulary games, pair work, role play, and competitive speaking tasks, functioned as critical mediators of affective barriers in the pesantren context. Consistent with findings by Ivanyan (2026), who documented significant correlations between game-based engagement and reductions in language anxiety ($r = .82-.89$, $p < .01$), the G-TO Program's integration of game-based tasks appears to have created the low-stakes communicative environment necessary for initial speaking confidence

development.

The limited program duration (five instructional days) remains the primary structural constraint on the depth of linguistic outcomes achievable through this model. Research consistently demonstrates that vocabulary acquisition, grammatical accuracy, and pronunciation refinement require extended, distributed practice across meaningful time periods (Bui & Dao, 2026). Future program iterations would benefit from a sustained follow-up component, potentially through institutionally embedded English practice hours, peer tutoring programs, or digital extensions using AI-assisted conversation tools (Sapena & Onaindia, 2026).

The implementation of intensive English language programs in Islamic boarding schools can be understood through the lens of communicative competence theory, which emphasizes that language learning extends beyond grammatical mastery toward the ability to use language effectively in authentic social contexts (Muthmainnah et al., 2026). Since the introduction of communicative language teaching (CLT), language education has increasingly shifted from teacher-centered knowledge transmission toward learner-centered interaction. This paradigm argues that language develops through meaningful communication rather than repetitive memorization of linguistic forms (Mair et al., 2026). Consequently, educational programs designed around authentic interaction create learning environments in which learners negotiate meaning, receive immediate feedback, and gradually construct communicative competence. Within this perspective, English proficiency is not viewed as the accumulation of vocabulary and grammar alone but as the integration of linguistic, sociolinguistic, discourse, and strategic competencies that enable learners to participate confidently in real communication (Th Ahmed & Lenchuk, 2026).

The theoretical foundation of communicative language teaching is closely associated with the concept of second language acquisition proposed by Krashen, particularly the Input Hypothesis, which suggests that learners acquire language when exposed to comprehensible input slightly beyond their current level of competence (Du et al., 2026). However, contemporary language acquisition theories argue that comprehensible input alone is insufficient to produce communicative proficiency. Long's Interaction Hypothesis extends this argument by emphasizing that negotiation of meaning during interaction facilitates language development because learners become aware of communication gaps and modify their linguistic output accordingly. Similarly, Swain's (Vlasova, 2026) Output Hypothesis explains that producing language is not merely evidence of learning but an essential mechanism that encourages learners to process linguistic knowledge more deeply, recognize deficiencies, and refine grammatical accuracy. Together, these perspectives demonstrate that effective English instruction requires balanced opportunities for receiving input, engaging in interaction, and producing meaningful output (Liu & Zhang, 2026).

Another theoretical perspective supporting intensive language instruction is Vygotsky's sociocultural theory, which conceptualizes learning as a socially mediated process. According to this framework, cognitive development occurs through interaction with more knowledgeable peers or instructors within the Zone of Proximal Development (ZPD) (Almuhaysh, 2026). Language learning therefore becomes a collaborative activity rather than an individual cognitive exercise. Teachers function not only as providers of knowledge but also as facilitators who scaffold learners' development by gradually transferring responsibility as competence increases (Jannah et al., 2026). Collaborative tasks, peer discussions, role-

playing, and cooperative problem solving represent instructional strategies that operationalize sociocultural theory by encouraging learners to construct knowledge collectively. Such approaches are particularly relevant in boarding school environments where learners interact continuously beyond formal classroom sessions, creating abundant opportunities for authentic language practice (Kamal & Khaidzir, 2026).

Student-centered learning further reinforces these theoretical perspectives by positioning learners as active participants responsible for constructing their own understanding (Papa & Adhami, 2026). Constructivist learning theory argues that knowledge cannot simply be transferred from teacher to learner but must be actively constructed through experience, reflection, and social interaction (Perera, 2026). Consequently, learning environments that prioritize exploration, collaboration, questioning, and authentic communication encourage deeper cognitive engagement than traditional lecture-based instruction. Student-centered approaches also foster learner autonomy, an increasingly important objective in language education because successful language acquisition depends on continuous practice beyond formal instructional settings. Autonomous learners are more likely to seek additional learning resources, monitor their own progress, and maintain motivation over extended periods of language development (Kumru-Yağmurkaya & Aşık, 2026).

Motivation represents another fundamental theoretical construct explaining successful language acquisition. Self-Determination Theory distinguishes between intrinsic motivation, driven by enjoyment and personal interest, and extrinsic motivation, influenced by external rewards or obligations (Minda, 2026). Research consistently demonstrates that intrinsic motivation contributes more substantially to sustained language learning because learners voluntarily invest greater cognitive effort and persist despite difficulties (Abdulrab et al., 2025). Intensive English programs that create enjoyable learning experiences through collaborative activities, authentic communication, and meaningful challenges satisfy learners' psychological needs for autonomy, competence, and relatedness, thereby strengthening intrinsic motivation. When learners perceive English as a practical communication tool rather than merely an academic subject, they are more likely to develop long-term commitment to language learning (Kim et al., 2025).

Complementing motivational theory, Bandura's Social Cognitive Theory highlights the importance of self-efficacy in shaping learning behavior. Self-efficacy refers to learners' beliefs regarding their capability to successfully perform specific tasks (Pan et al., 2026). Students with strong self-efficacy demonstrate greater persistence, resilience, and willingness to engage in challenging communicative activities despite making linguistic errors. Language classrooms that encourage experimentation, provide constructive feedback, and normalize mistakes as natural components of learning create conditions that strengthen learners' confidence (Xiao & Chang, 2026). This perspective aligns with communicative language teaching, where successful communication is prioritized over perfect grammatical accuracy during initial stages of language development. As learners accumulate successful communicative experiences, their self-efficacy increases, promoting further engagement in language use and accelerating acquisition (Basireddi et al., 2026).

The affective dimension of language learning is equally important in explaining why some learners progress more rapidly than others. Krashen's Affective Filter Hypothesis proposes that emotional variables such as anxiety, confidence, and motivation significantly

influence language acquisition by determining how much linguistic input learners are able to process (Olivares-Matus et al., 2026). High levels of anxiety create psychological barriers that prevent learners from effectively internalizing language input, whereas supportive learning environments reduce emotional resistance and facilitate acquisition (Hossain, 2026). Modern language pedagogy therefore emphasizes psychologically safe classrooms where learners feel comfortable expressing ideas without fear of excessive criticism. Positive teacher-student relationships, peer support, and collaborative learning activities contribute to lowering the affective filter, thereby maximizing learning opportunities (Krismayani et al., 2026).

Game-Based Learning (GBL) provides an additional theoretical explanation for learner engagement and sustained participation. From the perspective of experiential learning theory, games transform abstract linguistic knowledge into concrete experiences requiring active decision-making, communication, and problem-solving (Breiter & Lopez, 2026). Educational psychology further explains that games stimulate attention through immediate feedback, achievable challenges, and progressive goal attainment, all of which enhance cognitive engagement. Rather than functioning solely as entertainment, well-designed educational games create authentic contexts in which learners repeatedly apply vocabulary, grammatical structures, and communicative strategies (Alimehmeti et al., 2026). Such repeated application strengthens memory consolidation and facilitates the transfer of knowledge into long-term communicative competence. Consequently, GBL complements communicative language teaching by providing meaningful opportunities for repeated language use within enjoyable instructional settings (Sari et al., 2026).

Another theoretical framework supporting intensive English programs is experiential learning theory proposed by Kolb, which conceptualizes learning as a cyclical process involving concrete experience, reflective observation, abstract conceptualization, and active experimentation (Temirgalinova, 2026). Language learning becomes most effective when learners continuously cycle through these stages by experiencing communication, reflecting upon successes and difficulties, understanding linguistic principles, and applying newly acquired knowledge in subsequent interactions (Orujova et al., 2026). Intensive instructional environments naturally accommodate this learning cycle because learners engage in frequent communicative experiences followed by immediate reflection and subsequent practice. This iterative process promotes deeper understanding than isolated instructional sessions because knowledge is reinforced through repeated application across diverse communicative situations (Ku, 2026).

The concept of language immersion also provides substantial theoretical justification for intensive English instruction. Although complete immersion is often associated with bilingual education, partial immersion environments similarly increase learners' exposure to authentic linguistic input and communicative practice (Didenko et al., 2026). Usage-Based Theory argues that language develops through repeated exposure to meaningful linguistic patterns encountered in authentic contexts. Frequent interaction enables learners to recognize recurring grammatical constructions, vocabulary collocations, discourse structures, and pragmatic conventions without relying exclusively on explicit instruction (Alharbi, 2026). Intensive programs therefore accelerate acquisition by increasing both the quantity and quality of language exposure while simultaneously encouraging meaningful language production (Zbenovich & Scott-Monkhouse, 2026).

From a cognitive perspective, intensive language instruction can also be explained

through Cognitive Load Theory. Effective instructional design seeks to minimize unnecessary cognitive demands while maximizing learners' capacity to process meaningful information (Kurniati et al., 2026). Communicative tasks organized from simple to complex allow learners to gradually integrate vocabulary, grammar, pronunciation, and interactional skills without overwhelming working memory (Kang & Won, 2026). Scaffolding techniques, contextualized language use, and authentic communication further reduce extraneous cognitive load by providing meaningful contexts that facilitate comprehension. Consequently, learners allocate greater cognitive resources toward constructing durable linguistic knowledge rather than managing fragmented instructional materials (Mao et al., 2026).

Twenty-first-century education further emphasizes the integration of communication, collaboration, creativity, and critical thinking as essential competencies for lifelong learning (Mirsanjari, 2026). English language education increasingly serves not only linguistic objectives but also broader educational goals related to global citizenship and intercultural competence. Contemporary communicative pedagogy encourages learners to negotiate meaning, solve problems collaboratively, express opinions, and appreciate diverse cultural perspectives (Olajide et al., 2026). These competencies align closely with international educational frameworks that position language learning as preparation for participation in increasingly interconnected academic, professional, and social environments. Thus, intensive English instruction contributes simultaneously to linguistic proficiency and broader human capital development (Bhar, 2026).

Within the context of Islamic boarding schools, communicative English instruction possesses additional pedagogical significance because it complements existing traditions of collaborative learning, discipline, and character education (Olszak & Borowicz, 2026). Pesantren environments emphasize communal living, peer mentoring, and continuous interaction, characteristics that naturally support sociocultural approaches to language learning. Integrating communicative pedagogy into this educational context demonstrates that modern language education can coexist harmoniously with religious and cultural values (Park, 2026). Rather than replacing traditional educational practices, communicative approaches enrich existing pedagogical traditions by providing additional opportunities for authentic interaction, collaborative problem solving, and lifelong learning habits (Zhang, 2026).

Sustainable language development requires systematic support extending beyond individual instructional sessions. Ecological theories of education emphasize that learning outcomes emerge from interactions among learners, teachers, institutional culture, curriculum, and learning resources (Huang et al., 2026). Consequently, intensive English programs achieve greater long-term impact when supported by language-rich environments, consistent institutional policies, ongoing teacher professional development, and opportunities for authentic English use beyond classrooms (He et al., 2026). Creating an educational ecosystem that consistently reinforces communicative practice ensures that language learning becomes embedded within daily institutional life rather than remaining an isolated instructional activity (Hwang & Lee, 2026).

CONCLUSION AND SUGGESTION

This community service evaluation demonstrates that the Global English Goes To (G-TO) Program successfully enhanced speaking confidence, participation, and motivation

among 47 students at Pondok Pesantren Modern Wisata Amanatussalam, Wonosalam, Jombang. The integration of Communicative Language Teaching, game-based learning, and structured daily progression across four proficiency levels proved effective in creating an accessible and engaging learning environment within a linguistically complex pesantren context. The program's primary limitation lies in its short duration, which constrained the depth of linguistic development achievable within five instructional days. Lower-proficiency learners, in particular, require more sustained engagement before speaking habits can be meaningfully internalized. Future implementations are therefore recommended to incorporate longitudinal follow-up components, including institutionally embedded English practice sessions, peer conversation programs, and digital tools capable of extending communicative practice beyond formal instructional settings. Institutional reinforcement through consistent school policies promoting English use in designated spaces and times remains a critical complementary strategy for sustaining the affective gains achieved through the G-TO Program.

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ETHICAL APPROVAL

This research was carried out as part of a community service program where an evaluation of the educational program and learning outcomes was done. This program was executed in partnership with Pondok Pesantren Modern Wisata Amanatussalam (AMLAM), Wonosalam, Jombang. Participation in the program was carried out within the institutional framework of the community service program. There were no invasive procedures or clinical interventions in this study. If necessary, institutional permission was obtained before conducting the program.

DECLARATION OF INTEREST

The authors declare that they have no known financial or other conflicts of interest that might have influenced the conduct, evaluation, interpretation, and reporting of this study.

DATA TRANSPARENCY

The dataset used to analyze and obtain the findings from this research study has been collected from the implementation and evaluation process of the G-TO Program, including 47 participants. The data include aggregate academic assessment, attendance, and evaluation scores. Individual participant-level data is not disclosed to protect their anonymity, especially as some of them included junior and senior high school students. Aggregate data that support the findings are included in the article. Non-identifiable data can be provided by the corresponding author upon reasonable request.

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AI USAGE STATEMENT

AI tools were not used to obtain, analyze, and interpret empirical data described in this article. The authors are responsible for the study design, data interpretation, academic arguments, and content of the manuscript. If any language editing/proofreading support by using digital means is carried out as part of manuscript preparation, it did not relieve the authors of their duty in ensuring the correctness and validity of the manuscript.

AUTHORS' CONTRIBUTIONS

All authors were involved in this manuscript.

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