

Muhadhoroh and English Public Speaking Skills: Benefits, Challenges, and Strategies

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Abstract

In the modern era, Islamic boarding school education has changed forms of adaptation to the times. One of them is the existence of the term Modern Islamic Boarding School where the education system combines national and international curricula and adapts to the needs of the students. Extracurricular activities are one of the activities that exist in modern Islamic boarding schools. This activity is known as Muhadhoroh. This study explores Muhadhoroh and English-speaking skills related to the benefits, challenges, and strategies for these activities. This study uses a descriptive qualitative method. The research data were obtained from interviews, observations, and documentation while the participants in this study were three English teachers who teach at Amanatul Ummah Islamic boarding school both Indonesian and foreign teachers. The research data were analyzed in four stages, namely data collection, data display, data reduction, and conclusion. The results of this study indicate that Muhadhoroh could provide opportunities for students to develop talents in the field of English public speaking skills because students had the opportunity to perform various kinds of English performances in public. Related to challenges, this activity has challenges including preparation, time management, and facilities. Even so, several strategies could be taken to overcome these challenges, including arranging preparation and performance schedules, utilizing free time and shifting school schedules into preparation and performance schedules, as well as adding facilities by renting equipment to other parties during activities. This study is limited in location and the number of participants who are only in one Islamic boarding school and the type of research instrument. It is recommended for further research to be able to conduct similar research by adding variations of participants and Islamic boarding schools as well as adding variations of research instruments.

Keywords: *Muhadhoroh, Speaking, Benefits, Challenges, Strategies.*

INTRODUCTION

In the modern era, education develops following the times to improve the quality and competitiveness of educational institutions (Hikmat, 2021). One of the educational institutions that continue to develop in Indonesia is boarding school-based education (Rahmawati & Anwar, 2022; Rosyid et al., 2021). Islamic boarding school education is an educational institution that provides a much larger portion of religious learning than general subject learning, some even teach one hundred percent of religious lessons and do not provide general lessons even though it was still a pro and con (Sarnoto et al., 2022). Along with the times, the term modern Islamic boarding school emerged. Modern Islamic boarding schools are a form of adaptation of Islamic boarding school-based educational institutions in preparing their students for the modern era. In modern Islamic boarding schools, the focus is not only on religious knowledge-based learning but also on general lessons such as in schools in general. Moreover, many modern Islamic boarding schools provide

learning in general subjects with a large portion even exceeding the portion of subjects in public schools (Ridwan et al., 2022; Sa'dullah et al., 2021).

Regarding the curriculum in modern Islamic boarding schools, the type of curriculum applied is different from one Islamic boarding school to another (Mahfud, 2019; Rusdiana & Nasihudin, 2018). Some adopt the curriculum applied by the Indonesian government, some others apply the curriculum adapted from other educational institutions abroad to equate quality with the international level. In addition, Islamic boarding schools have also developed educational institutions that modify the curriculum according to the needs of students. These efforts are carried out by implementing a combined national and international curriculum and supplemented by providing activities according to the needs of students that are deemed necessary but are not included in the national or international curriculum.

Adjustment the curriculum according to the needs of students is one way to achieve the results and quality targets designed by modern Islamic boarding schools (Nur & Sulistyani, 2018; Poedjiastutie et al., 2018). One form of adjustment is the existence of extracurricular activities. Extracurricular activities are activities designed by institutions as extra learning efforts and are not limited to curriculum guidelines (Pei & Wu, 2019). The forms of these extracurricular activities vary according to the interests and talents of the students. For example, common extracurricular activities such as scouting, memorizing the Qur'an, martial arts, and many others. The target of holding these extracurricular activities is to develop the interests and talents of students to become better. Therefore, many of these extracurricular activities are based on the interests and talents of the students and cover broader domains such as cognitive, affective, psychomotor, and others.

One type of extracurricular in modern Islamic boarding schools is language-based activities. The extracurricular is held to develop the talents of students in the Language section. Some extracurriculars must be followed by all students, there are also those that only some students are obliged to follow. The schedule also varies. Some are held every week, month, half-semester, semester, and yearly. One of the extracurricular activities in modern Islamic boarding schools is known as Muhadhoroh. This Muhadhoroh activity is a talent development activity for students in Islamic boarding schools. In this activity, students are targeted to perform various kinds of performances either individually or in groups. The performances presented in Muhadhoroh activities themselves take various forms, ranging from speeches, poetry, drama, dance, and so on. In the Muhadhoroh event, the language used is usually a foreign language such as English and Arabic although Indonesian is also allowed. This policy was taken to improve the language skills of the students of Islamic boarding schools. In addition to developing language skills, this activity is also a place for entertainment and self-confidence development for students because students are required to display their talents in front of many audiences.

There are three studies related to extracurricular activities in Islamic boarding schools. The first research is entitled *The Role of Public Speaking Training to Build Self-Confidence for Class One Intensive Students of Darussalam Gontor Islamic Boarding School for Girls Campus 2* (Zarkasyi et al., 2018). The results of this study indicate that public Speaking in Darussalam Contemporary Islamic Institution Gontor begins with preparation in composing speech papers,

correcting and justifying papers, correction, and evaluation by a close friend while practicing speech, presenting a speech in public, cheered on by audience cheers, and judging by public speaking supervisor. Continuous, sequential, and repetitive speech practice helps nurture and shape confidence in public speaking. With careful planning, unique speech training for new students, the partition of the public speaking area, and the encouragement and incentive of diverse parties. However, the previous study did not explore English public speaking skills with Muhadhoroh. Therefore, research about that is needed to be conducted.

The second research entitled *Implementasi Kegiatan Muhadharah Dalam Meningkatkan Kepribadian Siswa Di Pondok Pesantren Putri Babul Khairat Kertosari Pasuruan* (Dja'far, 2019). The results of this study indicate that Muhadharah activities are weekly, and required extracurricular activities. Arabic is used in activities such as theater, khutbah, Qosidah, recitations, and others. Muhammadiyah's implementation significantly improves student personality traits such as self-confidence, responsibility, independence, discipline, compassion, and mutual aid. However, the previous study did not explore the benefits, challenges, and strategies related to the English public speaking skills of Muhadhoroh. Therefore, research about that is needed to be conducted.

The third research is entitled *The Effect of Public Speaking Program for Students at Nurussalam Islamic Modern Boarding School* (Komarudin et al., 2019). The results of this study indicate that the students were interested in pursuing that program, where public speaking programs are organized into ten clubs and only held on two days a week, Friday and Saturday, in three languages: English, Arabic, and Indonesian. However, the previous study did not explore English public speaking skills related to Muhadhoroh in Islamic Boarding Schools. Therefore, research about that is needed to be conducted.

Based on previous studies, there is a research gap, namely, there is no research that explores Muhadhoroh and his public speaking skills in English in terms of advantages, challenges, and strategies. Therefore, the purpose of this study is to fill the research gap by conducting research related to advantages, challenges, and strategies in Muhadhoroh activities and English public speaking skills. This research leads to three research questions. The three research questions are: (1) What are the benefits of Muhadhoroh for the English public speaking skills of the students? (2) What are the challenges of Muhadhoroh for the English public speaking skills of the students? (3) What are the strategies of Muhadhoroh for the English public speaking skills of the students?

METHOD

This study uses a qualitative design with a descriptive approach. Qualitative descriptive research methods are considered to be used because they can describe an event scientifically and are easy to understand (Nassaji, 2015; Seixas et al., 2018). The participants of this study were three English teachers who teach in junior high schools at the Amanatul Ummah Islamic boarding school.

Respondents

The participants were considered to be selected using the purposive sampling method. The participant selection technique using purposive sampling is

considered to be used because the selected participants have the potential to provide clear and detailed information (Campbell et al., 2020; Etikan, 2016).

Instruments

The data from this study are collected through interviews as primary data and supported by observation and documentation as secondary data. Interviews are considered to be selected as data collection instruments in this research because the data collected from interviews have the potential to become clear and detailed data (Ducu, 2017; Ryan et al., 2009; Saarijärvi & Bratt, 2021). Meanwhile, the type of interview chosen is an unstructured interview. Unstructured interviews are chosen to be used because the interviewers and interviewees can explore data without limitations related to the topics discussed so the data obtained became very rich and useful. Furthermore, the interview data is supported by data from observations. Observations are made to get a direct picture of Muhadhoroh's activities as a form of data triangulation. The observation is chosen to be a secondary data collection instrument because observation can provide data that is appropriate in the field (Cacciattolo, 2015). Furthermore, data is also collected through documentation activities. The data obtained through interview and observation techniques are documented and then analyzed so that they can be presented as the results of this study. Documentation is very important because it can support the main data so that the data from this research becomes richer and clearer (Bowen, 2009; Chanda, 2022).

Procedures

The research procedure involved several steps. Firstly, the researcher must determine the research question or objective that the interviews will seek to address. Next, the researcher selected a sample of participants who were likely to provide useful and relevant information. The sample size and recruitment process would depend on the research question and the available resources. Once participants have been selected, the researcher prepares a list of interview questions that were designed to elicit the information needed to answer the research question. The researcher also considered how to structure the interview, including the order and wording of questions. After conducting the interviews, the researcher would need to transcribe and analyze the data, looking for patterns and themes that could help to answer the research question.

Data analysis

The data from this study were then analyzed using four stages, namely data collection, data reduction, data display, and conclusion (Miles et al., 2014). These stages were carried out to get in-depth and clear results about existing phenomena. The collected data was then reduced to be selected and sorted as needed because not all the data collected was suitable and met the criteria to be used as data for this research. After the data was reduced, the data was then displayed in a simpler and more systematic form so that the data was more structured and easier to understand. In the end, the data has been displayed in a better form, conclusions were drawn which were the findings of this study.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The results of this study indicate that Muhadhoroh could provide opportunities for students to develop talents in the field of English public speaking skills because students had the opportunity to perform various kinds of English performances in public. Related to challenges, this activity has challenges including preparation, time management, and facilities. Even so, several strategies could be taken to overcome these challenges, including arranging preparation and performance schedules, utilizing free time and shifting school schedules into preparation and performance schedules, as well as adding facilities by renting equipment to other parties during activities.

Benefits

Activities carried out in the event called Muhadhoroh, provide benefits in terms of public speaking skills. In this case, related to the use of English. The students display something using English in public with the audience being all members of the SMPBP school. That way, students certainly want to look their best so that preparation is done as much as possible to get maximum results. This activity is something that provides opportunities for students to learn English as a form of intensive preparation both individually and in groups.

RP1: “kegiatan ini manfaatnya besar sekali. Karna dituntut untuk tampil di depan umum, para peserta didik dengan serius mempersiapkan diri. Mempelajari, menghafal, dan mempersiapkan segala sesuatunya”

E: “This activity has great benefits. Because they are required to appear in public, the students seriously prepare themselves. Studying, memorizing, and preparing everything”

The demand to appear in public optimally makes students prepare for appearances that automatically learn English because the display is in English. As a result, students become more intensive in learning English for maximum display results so that students' abilities in English also increase.

RP2: “persiapan yang mantap dan keberanian tampil menjadikan kemampuan para peserta didik meningkat dalam bidang public speaking terkait Bahasa Inggris”

E: “Steady preparation and courage to appear to make the students' abilities increase in the field of public speaking related to English”

Careful preparation and appearance in English at the Muhadhoroh event made students do public speaking both individually and in groups. This opens up opportunities for students to improve their public speaking skills in English.

Challenges

Related to challenges, this activity has challenges including preparation, time management, and facilities.

RP2: *“tantangan pertama bagi para peserta didik itu adalah persiapannya pak karena kita ini di pondok pesantren sehingga kegiatan para peserta didik sangat padat. Untuk mencari momen guna persiapan itu sulit juga properti yang dipersiapkan juga cukup memakan waktu”*

E: *“The first challenge for the students in the preparation, sir because we are in a boarding school so the activities of the students are very busy. Finding the moment for preparation is difficult and the property being prepared is also quite time-consuming”*

One way to get a good appearance is by doing careful preparation beforehand. However, the very crowded conditions of activities in Islamic boarding schools made preparations for the performance at an event called Muhadhoroh a challenge because students had to find free moments to prepare both individually and in groups. In addition, for appearances that require properties, preparation becomes even more difficult because the various properties used cannot be obtained instantly in the boarding school environment.

RP3: *“saya fikir tantangannya adalah dari manajemen waktu pak. Kita tahu bahwa di pondok pesantren waktu anak-anak untuk luang cukup terbatas sementara mereka harus mempersiapkan Muhadhoroh juga. Apalagi yang penampilan berkelompok untuk persiapan berkelompok juga sulit karena asrama yang berbeda menjadikan waktu luang berbeda sehingga pengelolaan waktu juga menjadi tantangan”*

E: *“I think the challenge is from time management sir. We know that in Islamic boarding schools, the time for children to be free is quite limited while they have to prepare for Muhadhoroh as well. Moreover, group performances for group preparation are also difficult because different dormitories make free time different so time management is also a challenge”*

The density of activities in Islamic boarding schools for students makes it difficult to manage time for an activity that requires prior preparation. The students are required to present their best performance at the Muhadhoroh event but there is no special time provided for them to do exercises and preparations so they have to think independently with other friends to be able to manage their time to prepare for their appearance at the Muhadhoroh event. If students plan to present performances in groups, they will find it more difficult to manage time because of the preparation that requires coordination with other students, while the activities of students may differ from one another due to different dormitories. This is a challenge for students related to appearance preparation.

RP1: *“menurut saya fasilitas juga menjadi tantangan bagi para peserta didik untuk memberikan suguhan penampil terbaik pak. Berbeda dengan peserta didik yang tidak berada di pondok pesantren mereka bebas mencari dan membeli perlengkapan dimana saja sedangkan bagi para peserta didik yang di pondok pesantren terbatas karena tidak bisa keluar dari pondok pesantren. Contohnya terkait alat elektronik saat perlu*

mencari backsound penampilan. Hal tersebut menyebabkan fasilitas untuk persiapan penampilan menjadi tantangan tersendiri”

E: “In my opinion, the facilities are also a challenge for students to provide the best performances, sir. In contrast to students who are not in Islamic boarding schools, they are free to find and buy equipment anywhere, while for students who are in Islamic boarding schools, it is limited because they cannot get out of the Islamic boarding school. For example, related to electronic devices when you need to find a performance background. This causes the facility for appearance preparation to be a challenge in itself”

Existing facilities in Islamic boarding schools are quite limited when compared to outside Islamic boarding schools. Inside the Islamic boarding school, there is a rule that students are not allowed to leave the area of the Islamic boarding school while many properties can easily be found outside the Islamic boarding school. Facilities at Islamic boarding schools are also limited, for example when students need to find songs as the background for their performances, of course, they need electronic devices such as laptops equipped with internet, while in Islamic boarding schools’ students are prohibited from bringing electronic devices. This is a challenge for students to prepare for their appearance.

Strategies

Muhadhoroh provides benefits for the development of English public speaking for students, even though they have gone through several challenges. However, several strategies can be applied to address these challenges. The strategies outlined are arranging preparation and performance schedules, utilizing free time, and shifting school schedules into preparation and performance schedules, as well as adding facilities by renting equipment to other parties during activities.

RP2: “Kita biasanya sebagai guru pendamping penampilan, kita berusaha merancang jadwal khusus untuk persiapan Latihan. Jadi saya mengumpulkan anak-anak bimbingan saya untuk saya tanya kapan yang sama-sama longgar waktunya untuk diadakan Latihan bareng secara rutin misalnya seminggu tiga kali. Tentunya di jam mereka luang seperti setelah makan malam”

E: “We usually as performance assistant teachers, try to design a special schedule for preparation for the Exercise. So, I gathered my tutors to ask me when they had both loose times for regular practice together, for example, three times a week. Surely in their spare time like after dinner”

The first strategy applied by the students and teachers was creating a schedule for regular meetings. This is mainly done for students who appear in groups. Due to the difference in free time and schedules, the accompanying teacher and students from different dormitories gather to determine the free time for all students to be used for regular meetings as a moment of preparation for appearances. Exercises are generally carried out at night after all the activities of the Islamic boarding school are finished, namely at the time of finishing dinner.

RP1: *“Kalau semakin dekat dengan waktu penampilan, kami sepakat dengan guru-guru lain untuk mengubah jam pelajaran menjadi jam untuk berlatih di dalam kelas. Biasanya satu minggu sebelum tampil saya meminta jam pelajaran guru-guru lain yang mengajar di kelas anak bimbingan saya untuk saya pakai membimbing mereka berlatih”*

E: *“As it was getting closer to the performance time, we agreed with other teachers to change the lesson time to practice time in the classroom. Usually one week before the show, I ask other teachers who teach in my tutor's class for me to use to guide them to practice”*

The next strategy applied concerning the challenge of performing Muhadhoroh is to agree to use the lesson time as a time to practice with the team and accompanying teachers. The lack of free time in Islamic boarding schools gave rise to the idea of negotiating with other teachers from non-English subjects to use their lesson hours to give students and accompany teachers the opportunity to prepare for the best performance at the Muhadhoroh event. This is usually done less than eight days or one week before the event. The one week is used by the students to do and finalize the exercises for their best performance at the Muhadhoroh event.

RP3: *“Karena fasilitas terbatas dan larangan peserta didik untuk keluar lingkungan pondok pesantren, strategi kita biasanya guru pendamping yang berusaha mencarikan di luar pondok pesantren. Kadang juga sempat sewa kostum yang diperlukan dari pihak luar pondok pesantren”*

E: *“Due to limited facilities and prohibition of students from leaving the Islamic boarding school environment, our strategy is usually the accompanying teacher who tries to find outside the Islamic boarding school. Sometimes I also have time to rent the necessary costumes from outside the boarding school sedangkan kalau alat elektronik seperti laptop dilengkapi dengan internet, kami biasanya menggunakan laptop para pendamping untuk itu”*

Regarding the limited facilities within the Islamic boarding school environment and limited access outside the Islamic boarding school, the technique used is to rent equipment from outside the Islamic boarding school. Even though the students cannot do it, the accompanying teachers can do it.

Muhadhoroh is an extracurricular activity held at Islamic boarding schools. This activity has the potential to improve the students' public speaking skills. However, some challenges must be considered. Several strategies can be applied to solve these challenges. This study is limited in location and the number of participants who are only in one Islamic boarding school and the type of research instrument. It is recommended for further research to be able to conduct similar research by adding variations of participants and Islamic boarding schools as well as adding variations of research instruments.

CONCLUSION

Muhadhoroh is an extracurricular activity held at Islamic boarding schools. This activity has the potential to improve the students' public speaking skills. However, some challenges must be considered. Several strategies can be applied to solve these challenges. This study is limited in location and the number of participants who are only in one Islamic boarding school and the type of research instrument. It is recommended for further research to be able to conduct similar research by adding variations of participants and Islamic boarding schools as well as adding variations of research instruments.

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