

SCHOOL-BASED SPEAKING HABITUATION IN EFL CONTEXTS: INVESTIGATING THE ENGLISH FRIDAY LET'S TALK PROGRAM IN INDONESIAN SECONDARY EDUCATION

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ABSTRACT

This qualitative case study investigated how the English Friday Let's Talk program was implemented as a school-based speaking habituation program at Al-Azhar 16 Islamic Senior High School, Semarang, and how students perceived the program. The study involved one English teacher, five English Talent Program students, and five regular students who participated in the program. Data were collected through semi-structured interviews, observation, and supporting documentation, then analyzed using Miles and Huberman's interactive model consisting of data reduction, data display, and conclusion drawing and verification. The findings show that the program was implemented through structured weekly topic assignment, writing tasks, oral/reading activities, video performances, English communication practice every Friday, school policies such as the No English, No Service rule, teacher monitoring and feedback, and in-house training for non-English teachers. Students perceived improvements in speaking fluency, vocabulary, pronunciation, confidence, sentence construction, and language habituation through their participation in the program. English Talent Program students reported stronger technical speaking development and spontaneity, whereas regular students emphasized increased courage and confidence. The main challenges were limited vocabulary, pronunciation and grammar anxiety, fear of negative evaluation, uneven proficiency, and limited English use among non-English teachers. The study implies that a school-based English-speaking program can support communicative practice through preparation, performance, policy, feedback, and teacher development.

Keywords: English Day, EFL Students, Friday Let's Talk, Qualitative Case Study, Speaking Skills

INTRODUCTION

Speaking is one of the most visible indicators of English learning because it demonstrates how learners organize ideas, select vocabulary, manage pronunciation, and respond to other interlocutors in real time. In Indonesian English as a foreign language context, however, speaking proficiency is often difficult to develop because classroom time is limited and students rarely meet authentic opportunities to use English beyond formal lessons. The problem is not merely linguistic; it is also affective and environmental. Learners

may know grammatical rules but hesitate to speak when they must face peers, teachers, or a camera. This situation explains why speaking instruction increasingly needs programs that create repeated practice, emotional safety, interaction, and meaningful use of language. Speaking pedagogy also needs to move beyond teacher explanation toward performance, feedback, and habituation because oral competence grows through repeated production and interaction (Brown & Lee, 2015; Richards, 2008; Thornbury, 2005). Structural competence remains useful because students need grammar and sentence organization to express meaning appropriately, yet structural knowledge alone does not automatically become speaking competence without practice (Annury, 2013).

Recent studies in EFL speaking have shown that students' oral performance is influenced by the interaction between linguistic competence, affective factors, and opportunities for communication. Vocabulary mastery, pronunciation control, grammatical accuracy, speaking fluency, and self-confidence contribute to students' ability and willingness to communicate, while a supportive learning environment can reduce speaking anxiety and increase student participation (Leong & Ahmadi, 2017; Teimouri et al., 2019). In Indonesian senior high school settings, extracurricular and club-based speaking activities have been reported to provide a more relaxed space for students to practice English and to reduce the pressure commonly associated with formal classroom speaking (Maros et al., 2023). These findings are relevant to school-based language programs because they indicate that students need systematic exposure, supportive feedback, and a learning environment that normalizes mistakes as part of development.

One response to this challenge is the implementation of English Day or weekly conversation programs. These programs generally designate a certain day or period when students are encouraged or required to use English in communication. The purpose is to create a semi-immersive environment where students can practice speaking in classrooms, school corners, dormitories, or extracurricular spaces. Previous research has shown that the English Day program has a positive contribution to students' confidence, fluency, vocabulary development, and speaking performance when the program is supported by meaningful activities, clear language policies, teacher guidance, and consistent implementation (Aryaputri & Kaniadewi, 2024; Beay et al., 2023; Silvia et al., 2023; Suseno & Rosdiana, 2025). Similar findings have also been reported in various speaking development programs, including daily language activities in Islamic boarding schools, English communities, debate activities, cooperative learning, and technology-based speaking practice. These programs emphasize the importance of vocabulary learning, communication practice, student-to-student interaction, and authentic use of English in supporting the development of speaking skills (Amanarsih et al., 2022; Chaidir et al., 2024; Hafizhah & Daulay, 2025; Hayatinnufus, 2018; Ishak, 2024; Lumbangaol & Mazali, 2020). Overall, these studies demonstrate that the development of speaking skills is influenced not only by teaching techniques but also by meaningful communicative tasks, active student engagement, constructive feedback, and a learning environment that encourages the authentic use of English.

Despite the growing body of research on English Day and speaking programs, previous studies have tended to focus on program effectiveness, student performance, or general implementation. However, limited attention has been given to how different components of

speaking development can be integrated within a school-based program. Specifically, few studies have explored programs that combine structured preparation, speaking performance opportunities, language habituation, school language policies, teacher monitoring and feedback, and pedagogical support as interconnected components in fostering speaking development. This limitation indicates the need for further research on speaking programs that are not merely viewed as separate activities, but as comprehensive learning environments that shape students' experiences in using English.

Furthermore, previous research has been limited in exploring differences in students' experiences based on varying levels of speaking readiness. Previous research has generally examined students as a single group, resulting in limited understanding of how learners with different levels of speaking readiness experience the same speaking program. This distinction is important because students with more intensive English exposure and experience may have different perceptions regarding the benefits, challenges, and learning strategies involved in participating in a speaking program compared to students who only engage in general English learning activities. In this study, students participating in the school's English Talent Program are considered to have more intensive involvement and experience in English-related activities, whereas regular students refer to those who participate in general English learning activities at school. Examination of these two groups provides insight into how differences in prior experience and speaking readiness may influence students' perceptions of a school-based speaking program.

Therefore, this study investigates the implementation of English Friday Let's Talk at Al Azhar 16 Islamic Senior High School, Semarang, and explores students' perceptions toward the program. The study is guided by two research questions: (1) How is the English Friday Let's Talk implemented as a school-based speaking habituation program? and (2) What are students' perceptions of English Friday Let's Talk? Rather than viewing English Friday Let's Talk merely as a weekly speaking activity, this study reveals the program as an integrated speaking habituation model consisting of four main elements: preparation, performance, language habituation, and teacher support. The novelty of this study lies in identifying how these components are integrated to shape students' speaking habituation within a school-based EFL context and how students with different levels of speaking readiness perceive the benefits, challenges, and learning experienced through the program.

METHODS

Research Design

This study employed a qualitative case study design. A qualitative approach was selected because the study aimed to understand the implementation of English Friday Let's Talk and the participants' perceptions based on their direct experiences. A case study was appropriate because the program was investigated as a bounded educational practice within one school context, namely Al Azhar 16 Islamic Senior High School, Semarang. Case study research is useful for examining a contemporary phenomenon in its real-life context, especially when the researcher needs to explore processes, perceptions, and contextual factors rather than isolate variables experimentally (Harrison et al., 2017; Yin, 2018). The

design also allowed the researcher to describe how the program operated, what challenges appeared, and how students and teachers responded to those challenges.

The study was interpretive in orientation because the meanings of the program were constructed from participants' accounts. Rather than measuring improvement through statistical testing, this research focused on how the speaking program was experienced by the English teacher and students. This orientation is consistent with qualitative inquiry, which emphasizes participants' perspectives, natural setting, and detailed interpretation of educational phenomena (Creswell & Poth, 2018).

Participants

The participants consisted of one English teacher and ten students aged 16-17 who were involved in the English Friday Let's Talk program. This study focused on Grade 11 students who were selected using purposive sampling based on their direct involvement, level of participation in the program, and relevance to the objectives of the study.

The English teacher was selected because the teacher had direct knowledge of the implementation of the program, including the program objectives, weekly activities, student participation, monitoring and feedback, challenges, and the strategies employed to address those challenges. The student participants consisted of five students from the English Talent Program and five regular students. The classification of these two groups was based on their level of involvement and exposure to English within the school program. English Talent Program students were more frequently involved in English-related performance activities, such as video performances, and represented the program in school publications or promotional content. In contrast, regular students participated in English Friday Let's Talk as part of the general school program without additional involvement in English performance activities. The distinction between English Talent Program students and regular students was important because differences in readiness, confidence, and speaking opportunities may influence their experiences of the program.

Instruments and Data Collection

The main instrument was a semi-structured interview guide developed based on the two research questions. Semi-structured interviews were used because they allowed the researcher to maintain focus while still giving participants space to explain their experiences in detail (Mackey & Gass, 2022). The interviews were conducted with one English teacher and ten Grade 11 students. All interviews were conducted in Indonesian to facilitate participants' natural expression of their experiences and opinions. The teacher interview was conducted on May 11, 2026, with a duration of approximately 30 minutes, focusing on the program objectives, planning, implementation, challenges, and strategies used in implementing English Friday Let's Talk. Meanwhile, the student interviews were conducted on May 12, 2026, with a duration of approximately 5 minutes for each student and focused on their experiences during the program, perceived benefits, challenges, and strategies for solving difficulties. All interviews were audio-recorded with the participants' consent and transcribed verbatim to ensure data accuracy. The researcher also obtained permission from

the school prior to data collection and maintained the confidentiality of all participants' identities.

In addition, this study also used non-participant observation to collect direct data regarding the implementation of English Friday Let's Talk. This observation was conducted once during the School Field Introduction Program (PLP) from September 29-November 12, 2025, during an English Friday Let's Talk, with the researcher acting as an observer without directly participating in the program. The observation lasted approximately 15 minutes during the core English Friday Let's Talk activity and focused on speaking activities, student involvement, and teacher-student interactions. The results of the observation were recorded in field notes to support the interview data. Supporting documentation was used to understand the structure of the program, including the weekly topic assignment, writing task, and oral presentation activity.

To enhance data trustworthiness, this study applied method triangulation and source triangulation. Method triangulation was conducted by comparing data from interviews, observations, and documentation, while source triangulation was conducted by comparing information from the English teacher, English Talent Program student, and regular students. This triangulation process helped verify data consistency and enhance the credibility of the research interpretation.

Data Analysis Procedures

The data were analyzed using the interactive model of Miles, Huberman, and Saldaña (2014) which consists of data reduction, data display, and conclusion drawing and verification. In data reduction stage, all data obtained from interviews, observations, and documentation were collected, transcribed, and read thoroughly to understand participants' experiences and the context of the English Friday Let's Talk implementation. After gaining an overall understanding of the data, the researcher conducted inductive coding by identifying important information, recurring patterns, and relevant statements from the data without using predetermined categories. Codes with similar meanings were then grouped into categories and reviewed to identify relationships among categories until themes and subthemes were developed.

In the data display stage, the developed themes and subthemes were systematically organized to represent the research findings. Data from various sources were then compared to identify the relationship between program implementation and participants' experiences. In the conclusion drawing and verification stage, the researcher interpreted the developed themes by comparing information from the English teacher, English Talent Program students, and regular students. The conclusions were verified by checking whether the final interpretation was supported by empirical evidence from multiple data sources.

RESULTS

Implementation of English Friday Let's Talk

The first research question examined how English Friday Let's Talk was implemented as a school-based speaking habituation program. The data show that the program was not limited to a single speaking task. It was implemented through a sequence of preparation,

performance, English communication habituation, environmental support, teacher monitoring, feedback, and teacher professional development. Table 1 summarizes the main themes and their meanings.

Table 1. Implementation of English Friday Let's Talk

Theme	Activities	Supporting Data	Interpretation
Weekly preparation	Weekly topic assignment and a writing task requiring at least five sentences.	Teacher and student interviews and weekly topic assignment documents showed that students from grades 10 to 12 received the same weekly theme before Friday and wrote at least five English sentences.	Writing served as scaffolding before speaking because students prepared ideas, vocabulary, and sentence structure.
Speaking performance	Class presentation, reading activity, and video performance for selected talent students.	Teacher interviews, observations, and documentation showed that English Talent Program students were more frequently selected for video performance, while other students presented or read their writing in class by turns.	Performance provided speaking practice before an audience and camera-based authentic communication.
English Environment	English communication every Friday, English Corner, and No English, No Service policy.	Student interviews and field observation showed that students used English with teachers and friends, although many still mixed English and Indonesian.	The program created a semi-immersive school environment, although consistency remained a challenge.

The first pattern found in the implementation was weekly writing preparation. Before Friday, students from grades 10 to 12 received a weekly theme. The theme became the basis for writing at least five sentences in English. The teacher explained, "Before Friday, students from grades 10 to 12 are usually given the same weekly theme. Then, they are asked to write at least five sentences based on the theme". This statement was supported by both English Talent Program students and regular students. One English Talent student explained that the class usually received a topic one day before Friday and then wrote at least five sentences related to that topic. A regular student also stated that students received a theme before Friday and used it as a preparatory step before speaking. The writing task helped students prepare what to say, reduce hesitation, and organize their vocabulary and grammar before presenting their ideas orally. This finding was also supported by weekly topic assignment and writing documents analyzed by the researcher, which showed that students were consistently required to prepare written assignments before the speaking activity.

The second pattern was speaking performance. After the morning pledge activity, students were given opportunities to present or read their writing in front of the class with their peers or homeroom teacher for 10 minutes. Because time was limited, not all students performed in every meeting; therefore, the performance was conducted in turns. This

rotation system allowed the program to include students gradually without forcing all students to perform at once. This pattern was confirmed through direct classroom observation and documentation in the form of activity records which showed that students took turns presenting or reading their writing during the core English Friday Let's Talk activity. After the presentations, the writing was collected by the homeroom teacher to be stamped as proof of the students' participation in the program.

In addition to class presentation, the program also involved video performance. The teacher stated that selected talent students usually performed in front of the camera by delivering their writing or speaking performance. English Talent Program students confirmed that they were more frequently involved in video recording, while other students sometimes appeared as the video background. Initially, the videos were used as routine school content, website material, and school promotional media. At the time of data collection, the publication was more incidental and appeared on the school's social media in certain moments. This finding indicates that English Friday Let's Talk combined classroom performance and media-based performance as speaking opportunities.

The third pattern was English communication practice in the school environment every Friday. The teacher explained that the school applied full English use on Fridays. Students reported that they used English when communicating with teachers and friends during the program. However, the implementation was not always complete because many students still mixed English and Indonesian. This code-switching occurred because students were not fully accustomed to English communication and still needed vocabulary support. Field observations also showed that several students used English during interactions but switched to Indonesian when they experienced vocabulary difficulties. To strengthen English use, the school applied the No English, No Service rule in all areas of the school designated as English corner areas such as the teachers' room, classrooms, and other areas, except the canteen. Under this rule, students were expected to use English when they wanted to ask for help or express needs. Nevertheless, several students explained that the policy was not always implemented consistently and still depended on the situation. The findings show that English Friday Let's Talk attempted to create a language-rich environment, but maintaining consistency across school spaces remained a challenge.

The fourth pattern was teacher support and professional development. The teacher monitored the program, corrected students' mistakes, motivated students to speak, and guided them gradually. The teacher stated that students were encouraged to speak without fear of mistakes and that the teacher tried to build a comfortable learning atmosphere. This support was important because many students still felt shy, lacked confidence, and were afraid of grammar or pronunciation errors. Observation notes supported this finding by showing that teacher provided guidance, encouragement, and corrective feedback while students were performing their speaking tasks in class. The school also organized In-House Training every Saturday to support non-English teachers. Through this training, teachers learned simple English expressions such as opening and closing classroom activities and translated subject-related terms into English. The training was intended to help all teachers, including non-English teachers, support English Friday Let's Talk. These findings suggest

that the program was not only a student activity but also a school-level effort to develop an English-supportive environment.

The implementation also faced challenges from students and teachers. From the students' side, the teacher reported that many students still felt shy and lacked confidence when speaking English. Some students were afraid of grammar mistakes, pronunciation mistakes, and being laughed at by their peers. The teacher also stated that students' English proficiency was diverse, causing some students to remain silent or use Indonesian. This challenge was also reflected in the observation data, where some students appeared hesitant before speaking and required encouragement from the teacher before beginning their presentation. From the teachers' side, the main challenge was the limited English proficiency of non-English teachers. The teacher explained that not all teachers had sufficient English ability because those who were used to speaking English in daily communication were generally English teachers. This condition made it difficult to create a consistent English-speaking environment across the school. To respond to these challenges, teachers used motivation, direct correction, gradual guidance, a comfortable atmosphere, and IHT for teachers.

Table 2. Students' perceptions of English Friday Let's Talk

Student Group	Perceived Benefits	Challenges	Strategies
Talent students	Perceived improvement in speaking fluency, pronunciation, vocabulary, sentence construction, spontaneity, and readiness to speak in front of a camera or audience.	Difficulty generating ideas, perfectionism in writing, grammar concern, limited vocabulary for certain expressions, and in some cases no significant challenge.	Reading articles, seeking internet references, discussing with friends, and asking the teacher or mentor.
Regular students	Perceived improvements in courage, confidence, vocabulary, pronunciation, sentence construction, and motivation to use English.	Low confidence, grammar anxiety, pronunciation anxiety, fear of being laughed at, and limited vocabulary.	Using Google Translate, self-learning, asking the teacher, and joining private English learning support.

The first theme was positive perceptions. All English Talent Program students and regular students expressed positive views towards English Friday Let's Talk. They considered the program useful because it gave them opportunities to use English outside formal lessons. One talent student stated, "In my opinion, this program helps improve my speaking ability because I become more accustomed to speaking English". A regular student explained that the program was very helpful because the students was not fluent in English before entering the school, but after participating in English Friday Let's Talk, the student felt that their speaking ability had improved. These statements indicate that students

perceived the program as meaningful because it provided repeated practice and helped them build English habits.

The second theme was perceived benefits on speaking skills. English Talent Program students reported that they perceived development in speaking fluency, pronunciation, vocabulary, sentence construction, and spontaneous speaking. They also felt more prepared to speak in front of the camera and an audience. These perceived benefits were related to their frequent involvement in video performance and public speaking tasks. Regular students also reported perceived improvement, but they emphasized courage and confidence more strongly. They stated that the program helped them become braver in speaking English, increased their vocabulary, improved pronunciation, and made them more able to arrange sentences. The difference shows that English Talent Program students experienced the program as a space for refining speaking performance, while regular students experienced it as a space for reducing fear and increasing participation.

The third theme was challenges experienced by students. English Talent Program students mostly reported challenges related to generating ideas, writing accurate sentences, and worrying about grammar. One English Talent Program student said that the student sometimes found it difficult to start a sentence in English because the student did not usually use artificial intelligence to write. Another English Talent Program student admitted thinking too much when making sentences because the student wanted the result to be good and correct. Another student said that the main challenge was fear of grammar mistakes, while another stated that the student sometimes knew the intended meaning in Indonesian but did not know the English word. Interestingly, one English Talent Program student stated that there was no significant challenge because the most important thing was to be brave enough to speak first. These statements indicate that English Talent Program students were more focused on the quality and accuracy of their performance.

Regular students reported more varied and more basic challenges. Their difficulties included low confidence, fear of grammar mistakes, fear of pronunciation mistakes, fear of being laughed at by their peers, and limited vocabulary. One regular student explained that some English words had similar pronunciation but different meanings, which made the student hesitant to speak. Another student stated that the main problems were fear of speaking incorrectly, inaccurate grammar, limited vocabulary, and lack of confidence. A student also explicitly said, "I am afraid of being laughed at by my friends". These statements show that regular students' challenges were strongly connected to affective barriers and limited linguistic resources. Their experience suggest that English Friday Let's Talk needs to provide emotional support as much as speaking practice.

The fourth theme was students' strategies to overcome difficulties. English Talent Program students tended to use strategies related to content development and language refinement. They read articles, searched references from the internet, discussed with friends, and asked the teacher or mentor. These strategies reflect their attempt to improve ideas, content quality, and accuracy. Regular students used more basic support strategies. They used Google Translate, studied independently, asked the teacher, and in some cases joined private English lessons. These strategies show that regular students were trying to compensate for limited vocabulary and grammar knowledge. The contrast between the two

groups indicates that the same program can produce different forms of learner agency depending on students' proficiency, confidence, and performance demands.

DISCUSSION

Implementation of English Friday Let's Talk

The findings show that English Friday Let's Talk functioned as an integrated speaking program rather than a single weekly activity. Its implementation started with a weekly topic and a short writing task, continued with oral presentation, expanded into video performances, and was reinforced through Friday English communication, English Corner, No English, No Service, teacher feedback, and teacher training. This design is pedagogically meaningful because students were not asked to speak without preparation. Instead, the program gradually guided students from preparing ideas through writing to applying them in oral communication while providing continuous opportunities to use English in meaningful school contexts. This combination suggests that speaking practice was supported not by a single activity but by the interaction of preparation, performance, language habituation, and continuous teacher support. Brown & Lee (2015), J. C. Richards (2008), and Richards and Rodgers (2014) argue that speaking develops through meaningful communication, repeated language use, and communicative tasks, rather than through language knowledge alone.

The use of writing before speaking was particularly relevant for students who struggle with anxiety and limited vocabulary. Students first prepared five sentences, checked vocabulary, and prepared sentence structures before speaking. This sequence appeared to reduce the cognitive demands of oral performance because students had already organized their ideas before expressing them orally. As a result, they could focus more on communicating their ideas than simultaneously generating content and producing language. The writing task therefore functioned as a form of scaffolding that supported students in moving from written preparation to oral production. This is in line with Leong and Ahmadi (2017) and Thornbury (2005) who argue that speaking requires the integration of vocabulary, grammar, pronunciation, fluency, and comprehension. This finding also supports Annury (2013), who argues that structural competence contributes to speaking development when learners are provided with opportunities to transform grammatical knowledge into meaningful oral communication.

The program's speaking performance activities also confirm the value of public and semi-authentic speaking practice. Presenting or reading in front of classmates trained students to speak before an audience, while video performances introduced an additional level of communicative responsibility. Repeated participation in these activities appeared to strengthen students' speaking practice by encouraging them to prepare more carefully, organize their ideas, and gradually become more familiar with speaking publicly. English Talent Program students, who participated in video performances more frequently, perceived greater development in fluency, pronunciation, vocabulary, sentence construction, and spontaneity. These findings are consistent with previous studies showing that performance-based activities, such as speech, storytelling, debate, presentation, and

English club activities, promote speaking components and confidence (Hayatinnufus, 2018; Laoli, 2021; Lumbangaol & Mazali, 2020; Maros et al., 2023; Maziyah et al., 2023; Musfirah, 2017). However, unlike many performance-based programs, English Friday Let's Talk incorporated these activities into regular weekly school routines, providing continuous opportunities for both English Talent Program and regular students to practice speaking.

The video performance component added an important contemporary dimension to speaking practice. Although not all students participated equally in video recording, the activity connected classroom speaking with a wider audience through school publications. Knowing that their performances might be viewed by teachers, classmates, or the wider school community encouraged students to pay greater attention to pronunciation, fluency, and speaking quality. Consequently, video performances functioned not only as speaking activities but also as opportunities for reflection and improvement. Previous studies similarly report that technology-enhanced learning can increase students' engagement and provide authentic speaking opportunities (Chaidir et al., 2024; Nuha & Saputri, 2021; Hafizhah & Daulay, 2025; Saptiany et al., 2025). However, the present study shows that even simple school-based video performances can support speaking practice when they are integrated with structured preparation, teacher guidance, and regular opportunities to communicate.

The English communication practices every Friday and the No English, No Service policy demonstrate that speaking development depends not only on classroom instruction but also on opportunities to use English in everyday interactions. By encouraging students to communicate with teachers and peers outside formal lessons, the program positioned English as a language for daily communication rather than merely as a school subject. This regular exposure helped students become more accustomed to communicating in English and gradually reduced their hesitation to speak because English was practiced in authentic situations rather than only during classroom activities. However, the findings also suggest that creating a language-rich environment requires consistent implementation. When students continued to switch between English and Indonesian or when teacher applied the policy inconsistently, opportunities for meaningful communication became more limited. Previous studies have similarly emphasized that school-based English program is most effective when meaningful communication is supported through consistent implementation and a language-rich environment (Aryaputri & Kaniadewi, 2024; Beay et al., 2023; Ishak, 2024; Silvia et al., 2023; Suseno & Rosdiana, 2025).

The challenges identified in this study indicate that providing opportunities to speak alone was not sufficient to encourage all students to communicate in English. Regular students frequently reported fear of grammar mistakes, fear of pronunciation mistakes, lack of confidence, limited vocabulary, and fear of being laughed at. These challenges appeared to reduce students' readiness to participate because they felt uncertain about their ability to express their ideas accurately. As a result, students often hesitated to speak even when opportunities were available. These findings suggest that school-based speaking programs should provide not only opportunities for speaking practice but also a supportive learning environment that helps students gradually build confidence and willingness to communicate. Previous studies similarly have also shown that limited vocabulary, fear of

making mistakes, and foreign language anxiety can reduce students' willingness to participate in EFL speaking activities (Dewaele & MacIntyre, 2016; Leong & Ahmadi, 2017; Maros et al., 2023; Teimouri et al., 2019).

Teacher feedback emerged as one of the key strategies for sustaining the program. Students needed not only correction but they also needed motivation and a comfortable atmosphere. The teacher's strategy of guiding students gradually and providing direct correction appeared to help students improve their speaking while maintaining their confidence to participate. In the current study, feedback was not perceived as punishment; instead, it functioned as part of teacher support that encouraged students to continue speaking despite making mistakes. This is important because overly harsh correction may increase students' anxiety, whereas the absence of correction may allow errors to persist. A balanced feedback approach therefore appeared to help students maintain their willingness to communicate while gradually improving their speaking accuracy. This interpretation is consistent with Nurjanah et al. (2024) who argue that appropriate oral corrective feedback can improve speaking proficiency while maintaining students' confidence and motivation.

Teacher professional development was another distinctive finding of this study. The school held Saturday in-house training for teachers, including non-English teachers, so that they could use simple English expressions and subject-related vocabulary in everyday interactions. This strategy appeared to address one of the main implementation challenges: the limited English proficiency of non-English teachers. By involving teachers from different subject areas, the program created more opportunities for students to encounter and use English beyond English lessons, helping strengthen the school-wide language environment. This finding contributes to English Day literature by suggesting that a school-wide language program requires teacher capacity building, not only student compliance. Previous studies have often highlighted student confidence, vocabulary, or speaking performance (Aryaputri & Kaniadewi, 2024; Beay et al., 2023; Silvia et al., 2023). The present study further suggests that teacher professional development is also important for sustaining school-based speaking programs because responsibility for creating opportunities to communicate is shared across the wider school community.

Students' Perceptions of English Friday Let's Talk

The distinction between English Talent Program students and regular students provides one of the main contributions of this study. Although both groups participated in the same program, they perceived different benefits because they entered the program with different levels of speaking readiness and learning experience. English Talent Program students reported greater development in fluency, pronunciation, vocabulary, sentence construction, and spontaneous speaking. Their more frequent involvement in video performances and other English-related activities appeared to provide additional opportunities to practice and refine their speaking skills. In contrast, regular students mainly perceived improvements in courage and confidence while continuing to face challenges related to limited vocabulary, pronunciation, and fear of making mistakes. This suggests that English Friday Let's Talk served different functions for different learners. For English Talent Program students, it became a platform for refining speaking performance, whereas for

regular students it functioned as a supportive environment that gradually encouraged participation in oral communication. These findings support the importance of differentiated support because students with different levels of readiness may benefit from the same program in different ways. This interpretation is consistent with Solikah et al., (2025), who emphasize the importance of willingness to communicate in the Indonesian EFL context, and (Namaziandost et al., 2019), who show that cooperative and supportive learning can increase speaking motivation. The program should therefore provide differentiated support rather than treating all students as having the same readiness.

Students' learning strategies further illustrate that the two groups engaged with English Friday Let's Talk in different ways. English Talent Program students read articles, searched online references, discussed with friends, and consulted the teacher to improve the quality of their performance. These strategies suggest that they were already able to focus on refining content, accuracy, and delivery rather than simply producing English. In contrast, regular students relied more on Google Translate, independent study, teacher guidance, and private learning support to overcome basic difficulties in vocabulary and grammar. This indicates that they required greater linguistic support before feeling ready to communicate in English. These differences reinforce the importance of differentiated support within the same school-wide program. Teacher may therefore provide vocabulary banks, model sentences, pronunciation practice, idea-generation prompts, and peer support before Friday performances. Such scaffolding may help regular students build confidence while enabling English Talent Program students to further develop the quality and complexity of their speaking performance.

Overall, the findings of this study suggest that English Friday Let's Talk is a meaningful school-based speaking program because it supports speaking development through the interaction of structured preparation, repeated speaking opportunities, a supportive English-speaking environment, teacher guidance, and school-wide participation. The findings also demonstrate that the same program may benefit students in different ways depending on their readiness, confidence, and opportunities to communicate. Therefore, sustaining school-based speaking programs requires not only regular speaking practice but also differentiated support that responds to students' different learning needs.

CONCLUSION

English Friday Let's Talk at Al-Azhar 16 Islamic Senior High School, Semarang, can be concluded as a school-based speaking program that integrates weekly topic assignment, short writing preparation, oral presentation or reading activity, video performance, Friday English communication, English Corner, the No English, No Service policy, teacher monitoring and feedback, motivation, and in-house training for teachers. Students perceived the program as supporting the development of their speaking skills, confidence, and English-use habits by combining preparation, performance, environmental habituation, and teacher support. Students perceived the program positively because it helped them become more accustomed to using English and gave them opportunities to practice outside formal classroom instruction.

English Talent Program students and regular students experienced the program differently. English Talent Program students perceived greater development in fluency, pronunciation, vocabulary, sentence construction, and spontaneous performance, while regular students emphasized increased courage and confidence. The main challenges were limited vocabulary, grammar anxiety, pronunciation anxiety, fear of negative evaluation, unequal proficiency, and limited English proficiency of non-English teachers. The strategies used by teachers and students helped reduce these difficulties and supported program implementation.

This study also has several limitations. The participants were limited to one teacher, five English Talent Program students, and five regular students in one Islamic senior high school. The findings therefore represent a specific school context and should not be generalized to all English Day programs. The study relied on interview, observation, and documentation data, so it did not measure students' speaking scores through pre-test and post-test. Future research may combine qualitative data with speaking rubrics to examine changes in fluency, pronunciation, vocabulary, grammar, and confidence more systematically. Longitudinal studies are also needed to examine whether English Friday Let's Talk produces sustained speaking development over a semester or academic year. Future studies could also compare the perceptions of teachers from different subjects to understand how non-English teachers participate in school-wide English communication policies. Overall, English Friday Let's Talk can be considered a meaningful school-based speaking program because it helps transform speaking practice into a regular, social, and supportive learning habit.

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