

An Integrated English Model to Enhance English Competence in Islamic Higher Education through Habituation and Language Environment

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Abstract: The aim of this study was to develop an integrated model for enhancing students' English competence through habituation and the language environment at the State Islamic University of Imam Bonjol Padang. The research and development type was used to develop the model in four phases, namely, need analysis, designing the model, validating, and a hypothetical model. 350 randomly selected active students participated in this research. Observation, questionnaires, interviews, and the English test were used to collect the data. The findings revealed that students' English competence was low, with a mean score of 65. Students tended to develop their competences through listening to music for listening skills, reading articles for reading skills, practicing individually for speaking skills, and sending messages for writing skills, with a mean score of 4.06. Reading, speaking, and writing skills were mostly improving. Students expressed a high demand for English club activities and academic English services to enhance their English competence through habituation and the language environment, with mean satisfaction scores of 84% and 86%. The hypothetical Integrated English Model (IEM) for enhancing English competence through habituation and the language environment consisted of four main phases: planning, organizing, implementing, and evaluating. This study concludes that designing this integrated model is crucial for improving students' English competence at the State Islamic University of Imam Bonjol Padang. It implies that an integrated English model for enhancing English competence will lead to significant improvements in English competence among students.

Keywords: Integrated model; English competence; habituation; language environment.

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INTRODUCTION

In today's interconnected world, individuals who wish to engage in global discussions, pursue academic education, and undertake professional endeavors increasingly recognize English proficiency as an important skill. This is very relevant in the context of Islamic higher education, where students prepare to explore various cultural and academic landscapes while upholding their values and principles of faith. Through the mastery of English language skills, it is hoped that every student in higher education can easily obtain information from various references and promote the knowledge and competencies they possess. They are expected to be able to face changes and developments in digital-based technology and to compete at a global level that is becoming increasingly competitive without neglecting Indonesian as the national mother tongue, norms, national cultural values, and the philosophy of Pancasila \.

Mastering a set of English language rules and being able to interact in that language within appropriate contexts, implemented through the four language skills of listening, speaking, reading, and writing, is a manifestation of English language competence (Canale, 2014; Celce-Murcia et al., 1995; Mustofa et al., 2019; Surahman, 2021). To support this English language competence, at least five language competencies are required, which include knowledge of linguistics, cultural knowledge of the language, language situational context, appropriate language use, and knowledge of the communicated topic (Saville-Troike, 2008). Therefore, to fulfill that need, it must be accompanied by strategies that are impactful, maximizing the existing facilities, and revitalizing both formal and informal language environments on campus. This is in line with the views of Purba and Mudinillah, who emphasize that the language environment and appropriate strategies can help an individual develop their language skills more effectively (Purba, 2013; Shidqi & Mudinillah, 2021). By paying attention to the learning environment, students will be able to achieve skills, independence, competencies, and the ability to compete.

Creating a language environment and habituation to English on an Islamic campus, particularly at UIN Imam Bonjol Padang, is an urgent undertaking. A language environment serves as a platform for developing foreign language competence, fostering an atmosphere that motivates learners to use English in their interactions (Aziz & Dewi, 2019; Krashen & Terrell, 1983; Miolo et al., 2017). Such an environment promotes cooperation among learners and enhances their motivation for language learning (Halimah, 2018). This process is non-judgmental, allowing learners to engage freely (Nurhasanah, 2015; Surahman, 2021). English language habituation involves repeated or prolonged use of English in communication, eventually becoming habitual (Bouton, 2007; Samani, 2019). Conditioning through repeated activities under consistent conditions fosters habituation (Djaali, 2013; Ellis, 1994). This practice builds self-confidence, motivation, and language skills (Rahmiani, 2021; Wahid et al., 2021; Wu & Marek, 2010).

Establishing a language environment and promoting language habituation at Islamic university of Imam Bonjol Padang is part of the university's vision to become a competitive Islamic institution in ASEAN by 2040. This requires students to be prepared as global citizens, culturally grounded, and competitive in the workforce (Alfarisy, 2021; Septiani et al., 2022; Handayani, 2016). The transition to the Merdeka Belajar curriculum presents a challenge, as students must achieve proficient foreign language competence (Kırkgöz, 2009; Mariati, 2021; Sabriadi & Wakia, 2021), preparing them for employment, collaboration, and creativity, ultimately benefiting themselves and the community (Mariati, 2021). Moreover, English proficiency enables students to communicate their knowledge globally, both orally and in writing, through international forums, and to access diverse English literature. Language skills also facilitate relationships between universities and various countries through student exchange programs.

However, the unavailability of a language environment outside the classroom affects students' competence. Parker confirmed that the lack of such an environment influences English learning outcomes (Parker et al., 2013). Weak English learning strategies in the classroom also impact both spoken and written language skills (Afriazi, 2016). The Language Center Unit Program, intended to develop language competence, has not fully maximized students' foreign language proficiency. The lack of research in the field of developing English language competencies among students encourages the need for this study. The results of previous research primarily focus on forming a language environment

and foreign language habituation at Islamic boarding schools and madrasahs (Alfarisy, 2021; Mardiana, 2021; Yasin & Himam, 2019). In contrast, the habituation of using foreign languages in vocational high schools and in new campus environments is centered on training foreign language learners (Sahara et al., 2023). To address this need effectively, strategies must be implemented that maximize existing infrastructure and revive both formal and informal language environments on campus. This aligns with the views of Purba and Mudinillah, who emphasize that a supportive language environment and appropriate strategies can significantly enhance language skills (Purba, 2013; Shidqi & Mudinillah, 2021). Therefore, this research is to create a comprehensive model to enhance English competence through habituation and language environment initiatives at the Islamic University of Imam Bonjol Padang. The study evaluates current English proficiency levels, identifies priority areas for improvement, and proposes strategies that align with educational reforms and global competency demands. By developing this model, the research seeks to empower students, support educational stakeholders, and contribute to the broader community, aligning with the university's vision of preparing globally competitive graduates rooted in Islamic values.

METHOD

This research was focused on developing students' English language competence through habituation and the language environment at State Islamic University Imam Bonjol Padang. Adopting Gall et al. and Fraenkel's (Gall et al., 1996; Wallen & Fraenkel, 2013) model, the development process included four stages: (1) preliminary study and needs analysis; (2) designing the initial model; (3) expert validation and revision through FGDs; and (4) creating a hypothetical model ready for testing.

Data collection for the needs analysis involved six steps: observing students' daily communication activities, distributing questionnaires via Google Forms to identify necessary models, interviewing randomly selected English lecturers and vice deans of student affairs, and conducting in-depth interviews with students to understand their needs and activities for English language development. Data collection tools included questionnaires via Google Forms, interview sheets, observation checklists, and English tests. The questionnaire based on the Strategy Inventory for Language Learning (SILL), used a Likert scale (1–5) to assess competency development needs and model validity, including aspects of substance, technical aspects, and language aspects. Unstructured interviews with faculty leaders and English lecturers were also conducted, using cameras, field notes, and recordings for data collection. The Statistical Product and Solution (SPSS) program version 17.0 for Windows was used for calculations.

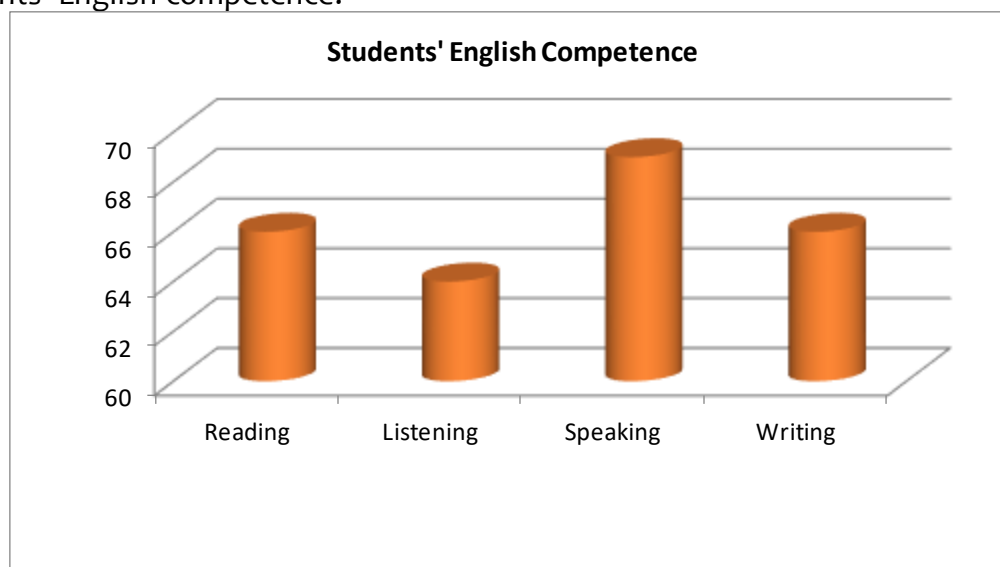
The next step involved drafting the habituation-based English language competency development model, considering the need for the model, activities, and required time, facilities, infrastructure, and evaluation methods. This draft was refined through focus group discussions and expert validation with faculty leaders, English lecturers, and student representatives, resulting in a hypothetical model ready for testing. 350 respondents from semester 4 of the 2022-2023 academic years were selected using a simple random sampling technique from the students who have taken general English subjects and English training at the Language Center Unit. Respondents from English lecturers teaching the general English subject were selected using a total sampling technique.

The data were analyzed statistically and described qualitatively. Qualitative data from observations and interviews was analyzed by extracting main ideas, suggestions, and experiences, which includes data reduction, data presentation, and drawing conclusions (Huberman, 2014). Quantitative data from questionnaires was processed using tabulation techniques to determine total scores, average scores, ideal scores, and the percentage of achievement level. Quantitative data from experts' material assessments were analyzed using SPSS 17.0.

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

The Description of the English Language Competence of Students at UIN Imam Bonjol Padang

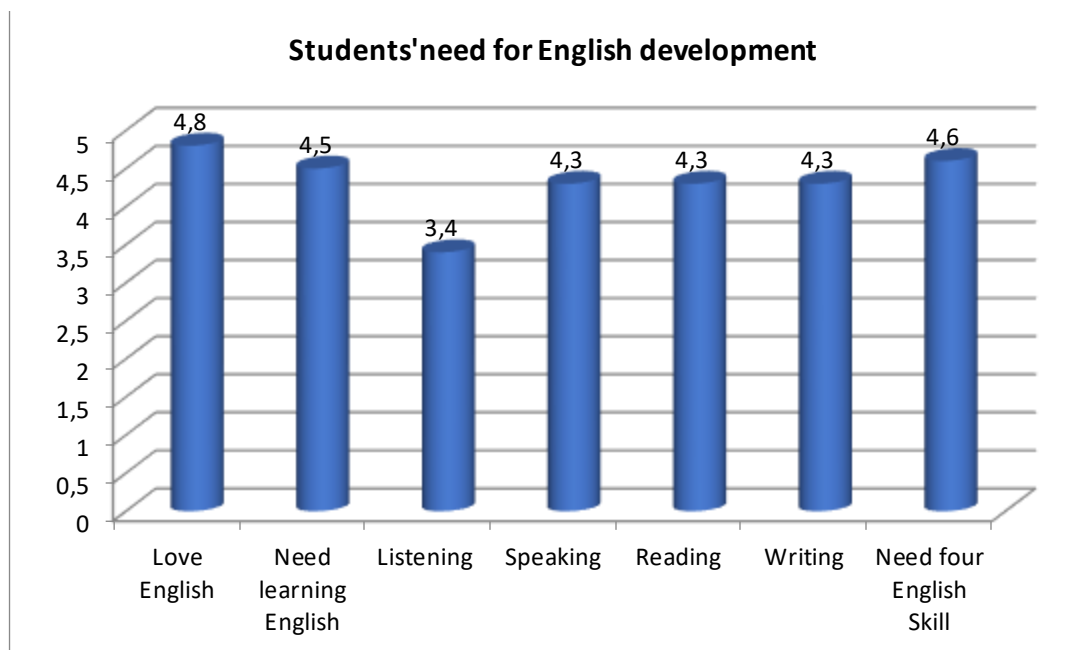
The result of students' scores of English competences among students was low, averaging 65. Specifically, reading scored 66, listening 64, speaking 69, and writing 66. About 73% of students gained low English competence. Interviews and questionnaires confirmed that students perceived their English skills as weak across all language skills, indicating a clear need for targeted language competency development efforts. The results of this study are in line with the findings of Parnawati, who discovered that the average English language competency of university students is low (Oliver et al., 2012; Parnawati & Ulinuha, 2019). The following is a description of the results of the analysis of students' English competence.



Graphic 1. Students' English Language Competency at State Islamic University Imam Bonjol Padang

Students' Needs for English Development

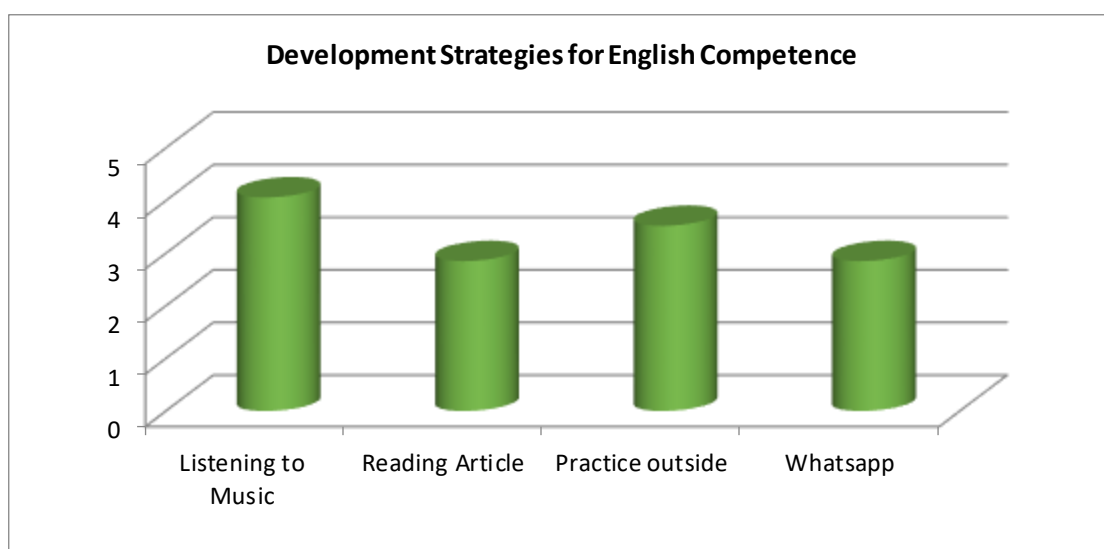
The results of the data analysis on the questionnaires showed that 96% of the students stated that they love English; 90% of them needed to develop their English competence; and 92% needed to develop all four language skills. The following graph illustrates students' needs for English competency development.



Graphic 2. Students' Need to English Language Development

Strategies for Developing English-Language Competence

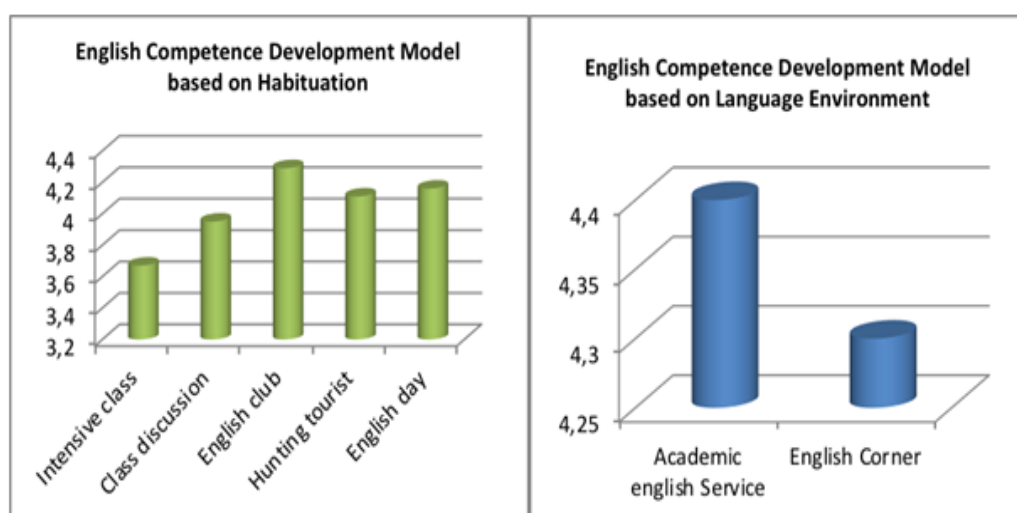
The results of the questionnaire and interview analysis showed that students carried out different learning strategies for each of their English skills. They tended to carry out activities like listening to music (81.2%) for listening skill, reading articles for reading skill with a mean score of (2.85) or 57%, practicing alone outside the classroom with a mean score of (3.52) or 70.4% for speaking, and sending messages via WhatsApp with a mean score of (2.85) or 57% for writing. The variation in learning strategies employed by students also influences their English language proficiency. Hong Nam and Jie also emphasized the various strategies used by students in learning English (Hong-Nam & Leavell, 2006; Jie & Xiaoqing, 2006). However, students greatly needed the development of their speaking, reading, and writing skills in English. Therefore, a model for developing English language competencies based on habituation and language environment is greatly needed. Below is a graph of the dominant English skill strategy's development.



Graphic 3. Strategies for Developing English Language Competence by the Students

Habituation and Language Environment-Based English Competency Development Model Required

From various language competency development activities offered, such as intensive classes (73.4%), English clubs, class discussion (79%), tourist hunting (82%), and English days (83%), they tend to choose the English club for the development of their English language skills. Meanwhile, for competency development within a language environment, they tend to favor English-language academic services over English-only programs. Interviews also indicate that students need these activities to improve their daily English skills. These programs, which include debates, poetry, speeches, drama, and international seminars, help students develop their speaking, reading, and writing abilities. The results of this study are in line with the findings of Rahmiani, who developed a concept map of the habituation model based on Ti-ZEL zones (time zone in English language) for non-English major students (Rahmiani, 2021). This research has produced a conceptual map model focused on academic services for students that has not yet been tested and is intended as a reference for strengthening students' English language skills. The graph below illustrates these habituation-based competency development models and the dominant language environment needed.



Graphic 4. The Need for Habituation and Language Environment -Based English Competency Development

The study identified several key components essential for developing students' English competence through habituation-based and language environment-based models. The dominant strategy for habituation was English clubs. For language environment-based development, the necessary components include academic English services. The English club, in particular, provides a comfortable, non-intimidating environment for students to practice English without the pressure of heavy workloads. This aligns with the findings of Zulhermindra and Fitriany, who noted that English clubs foster a stress-free, enjoyable learning environment that enhances students' enthusiasm for learning, helping them organize their ideas and speak more effectively (Fitriany et al., 2022; Zulhermindra, 2019). Additionally, students gain knowledge through interactions with peers and educators, which boosts their confidence in using English in everyday interactions (Zulhermindra,

2019). Moreover, English clubs provide students with more time to practice English, compensating for the limited exposure they receive in regular classes, ultimately improving their communication skills (Hamadameen & Najim, 2020; Melviza et al., 2017). The study concludes that by fostering English language habituation in the campus environment, supported by the appropriate model, students will become more accustomed to speaking English. This regular practice motivates students to use English in their interactions, gradually turning it into a habit. Over time, this builds high self-confidence, motivation, and enhanced language skills, contributing to lifelong learning and success (Aziz & Dewi, 2019; Bouton, 2007; Krashen & Terrell, 1983; Roschelle & Burke, 2019; Samani, 2019; Wahid et al., 2021).

Designing an Integrated English Model Based on Habituation and Language Environment at UIN Imam Bonjol Padang

The hypothetic Integrated English Model (IEM) at *Imam Bonjol* Islamic University aimed to develop students' English language skills through various activities outside regular classes. This model included four phases, namely planning, organizing, implementing, and evaluating. In the planning phase, six essential components were meticulously organized: selecting participants, preparing materials, arranging facilities, scheduling, choosing locations, and assigning tutors. This comprehensive preparation was crucial for the successful implementation of the model and fostering positive learning outcomes.

Participation invitations were extended to students and academic staff via a Google Form, ensuring broad involvement across faculties. Faculty leaders also provided the necessary regulations to maintain the model's effectiveness. The learning materials were carefully tailored to meet participants' needs, with a strong focus on enhancing speaking, reading, and writing skills.

The teaching materials encompass a diverse range of speaking activities, including pronunciation practice, conversations, debates, and performances of songs and poems. The teaching materials also guide students in delivering discussions, mastering MC roles, and preparing presentations for international seminars. To enrich vocabulary, the reading materials cover a variety of topics such as art, politics, religion, culture, and sports. Writing activities focus on strategies for crafting compelling essays, encouraging students to explore and express their thoughts on engaging topics. For academic staff, the training materials focused on simple daily service conversations, incorporating specific grammar and vocabulary relevant to their roles. These materials were presented on small, attractive cards displayed in faculty corridors for daily visibility. The topics covered included academic calendar services, faculty activities, SIAKAD services, final project services, scholarship and career services, academic advising, and learning activities and tools. All materials were compiled into modules to ensure a comprehensive and accessible learning experience.

The implementation of the Integrated English Model (IEM) at Imam Bonjol Islamic University was closely coordinated with faculty leaders, student associations, and the faculty's Student Activity Unit to ensure smooth execution. Interviews revealed that the IEM activities were centered within each faculty to facilitate better coordination. The program included both indoor and outdoor sessions. Indoor activities consisted of structured classroom learning, while outdoor activities involved engaging events such as English corner activities, English day, hunting tourists, seminars, and performances. These

activities were conducted within the faculty environments, such as office rooms and study program rooms, with the schedule tailored to align with the students' study timetables.

To ensure comprehensive student participation, a 100-minute weekly session was organized for 25 members, coordinated by the academic department. The campus administration established clear regulations to ensure the effective implementation of these activities, making them a flagship program in each faculty. The Language Center Unit handled the preparation of teaching staff and tutors, providing English language professionals to support the Integrated English Model (IEM). To enhance the effectiveness of academic staff services, a short training program consisting of five sessions was conducted, utilizing the provided training materials. Additionally, the necessary facilities and infrastructure were prepared, including learning media such as YouTube channels, modules, videos, audio resources, study rooms, and other essential tools to ensure the smooth execution of the activities.

In the organizing phase of the IEM at Imam Bonjol Islamic University, six key activities were involved: determining the program's achievements, setting its objectives, selecting relevant materials, planning the implementation process, assessing English language competency, and following up on evaluation results. The implementation of the IEM was structured according to the stages of the higher education learning process, divided into three main phases: pre-teaching, main teaching, and post-teaching. During the main teaching stage, activities were designed to be communicative and engaging, offering participants ample opportunities to develop their English competence through interactive training. These activities included warm-up sessions, introductions, reading, group discussions, writing and speaking exercises, and reviews, all carried out through orientation, exploration, elaboration, communication, and re-creation. The closing phase focused on reviewing, summarizing, and reflecting on the material covered, serving as the final part of the activity sequence. This stage involved assessments through oral and written tests, regular evaluations of student progress using tools like TOEFL tests, and continuous feedback from students and teachers. Adjustments were made based on evaluation results to improve the model's effectiveness, with outcome analysis conducted to measure the impact on students' English competence.

Finally, the model incorporated continuous improvement by integrating feedback from students, faculty, and stakeholders, refining and enhancing the model over time. A sustainability plan was also developed to maintain the model long-term, ensuring the ongoing enhancement of English competence at the institution. This systematic framework effectively fostered English competence among students in Islamic higher education through structured habituation practices and a supportive language environment, with continuous adjustments to optimize outcomes.

The design of the IEM model has syntax, social system, reaction principles, instructional and accompanying impacts, and support systems. The syntax of this model consists of introductory activities, main activities, and closing activities. The social system underlying this model involves a dynamic relationship between tutors and students, where roles can shift between teacher-centered and student-centered approaches. The principle of reaction within this model refers to the tutor's strategy of providing reinforcement to ensure that the learning activities have a meaningful impact on the students. By actively involving students in the learning process, the model aims to improve their English language competence both orally and in writing. The instructional impact is directly evident in the participants' increased proficiency in English, while the accompanying impact

includes their ability to use English in various activities, such as drama, singing, debating, and presenting. The support system encompasses all elements that facilitate the learning process, ensuring that activities are conducted effectively. A well-organized activity plan and additional resources, such as multimedia tools and videos, are integral to this support system, helping to create an environment conducive to successful language learning.

To further support the effective implementation of the IEM model, a comprehensive guidebook is provided. This guidebook serves as both a theoretical and practical reference for tutors, helping them apply the IEM model to develop students' English competence. The guidebook is divided into four parts: Part I outlines the rationale behind the model, Part II covers supporting theories, Part III provides detailed implementation instructions, and Part IV offers concluding thoughts. The rationale section of the guidebook discusses the theoretical and legal foundations for the model, addressing the current conditions and challenges faced by students in acquiring English language skills. It highlights the necessity of English language competence for higher education students, enabling them to access a wide range of information, showcase their knowledge, and compete effectively on a global scale.

The IEM model and its accompanying guidebook were reviewed by experts in English education, including lecturers, student affairs administrators, and student representatives from UIN Imam Bonjol Padang, through a Focus Group Discussion (FGD). Additionally, the model's internal consistency was tested by two expert lecturers in English education. The FGD results showed strong approval for the IEM model, with participants acknowledging the need for such a structured approach to improving students' English competence, which is often lacking. Suggestions for improvement were also made, such as aligning the model with higher education learning processes, clearly outlining the activity syntax, and ensuring that core activities are conducted communicatively.

The FGD also emphasized the importance of a well-organized preparation stage for the IEM model, covering aspects such as participant analysis, activity materials, required facilities, implementation time, location, and tutor assignments. To ensure students can apply their English skills in the campus environment, academic staff needs comprehensive training. Recommendations for implementing the IEM model include arranging it in alignment with higher education stages, structuring activities to foster individual English competence development, and evaluating participants' progress through pre- and post-tests, as well as through engaging activities like drama, presentations, and essay writing.

In conclusion, the IEM model and guidebook received positive feedback and high approval from the FGD participants and internal consistency tests, with an average achievement level of 86% for the model and 85% for the guidebook. This high level of internal validation indicates that the IEM model is well-designed and suitable for implementation in developing students' English language competence at UIN Imam Bonjol Padang. Expert suggestions for refining the theoretical aspects of the model were also incorporated, further ensuring the model's feasibility for pilot implementation. The following is the hypothetical design of the Integrated English Model (IEM) for developing students' English competence.

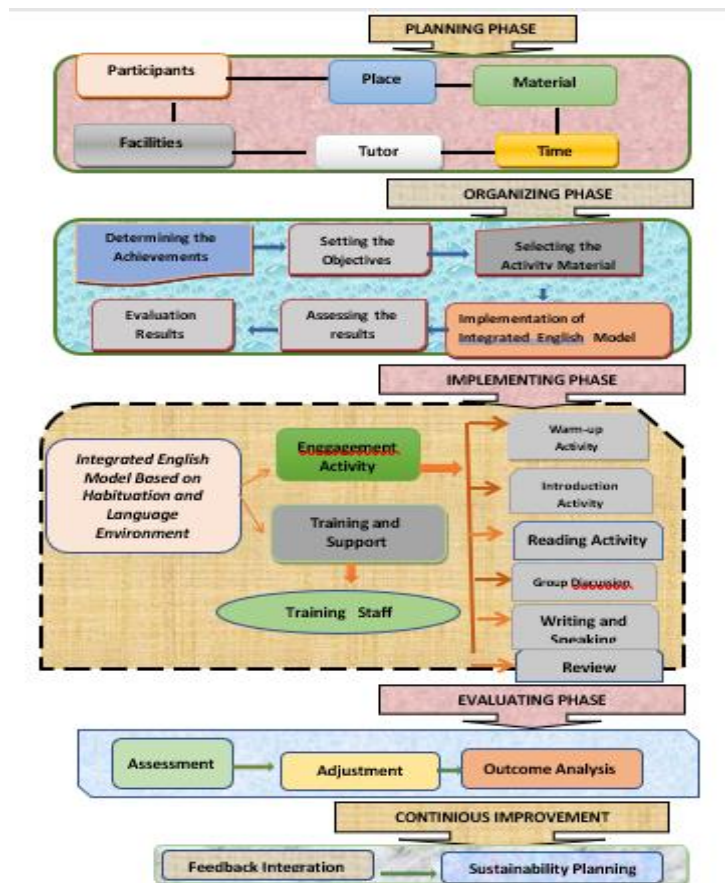


Figure 1. Design of Hypothetical Model of Integrated English Model (IEM) for Developing Students' English Competence Based on Habituation and Language Envi at UIN Imam Bonjol Padang.

CONCLUSION

Designing an appropriate language habituation and academic environment model has emerged as a key solution for enhancing English language mastery among students at the Islamic University of Imam Bonjol Padang. The findings revealed a general tendency toward low competence in English language skills, particularly in listening, speaking and writing. Students expressed a strong preference for developing all these competencies through varied learning strategies, such as listening to music for auditory skills, reading articles to enhance comprehension, engaging in casual conversation for speaking practice, and writing for everyday purposes like sending messages via WhatsApp. The development of a habituation-based competency model and a supportive language environment was identified as crucial. English clubs and academic English services were needed to develop their English competence.

The Integrated English Model (IEM) emerged as a suitable framework for developing the English language competence of UIN Imam Bonjol Padang students. This model includes planning, organizing, implementing, and evaluating. To ensure the effective implementation of the IEM model, comprehensive model implementation instructions have been provided. These include detailed activity plans, guidebooks, and activity materials, all of which serve as the support system for this model. The focus group discussions responded positively to the IEM model, endorsing its design and recommending it for the development of English language competence among students at UIN Imam Bonjol Padang. The research findings suggest that the consistent application

of this model will significantly enhance students' English language skills. The Integrated English Model is thus a feasible and practical approach to help students become accustomed to speaking English in the campus environment, preparing them to navigate changes in digital-based technology and to compete effectively in an increasingly competitive global landscape.

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