



Student Perspectives on the English Camp Parade Season 5 at Universitas Bhinneka PGRI

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Abstract. *This study aims to explore the perspectives of sixth-semester students regarding the implementation of the English Camp Parade (ECP) Season 5 at Universitas Bhinneka PGRI. ECP is an activity-based learning program designed to promote contextual English use through interactive activities such as drama performances, quizzes, and group discussions. Using a qualitative approach, the study involved 14 purposively selected sixth-semester students and 2 key informants (the ECP coordinator and the chairperson of the English Student Association). Data were collected through semi-structured interviews, open-ended questionnaires, and observation, and analyzed thematically. The findings indicate that most students responded positively to the program, particularly in terms of increased speaking confidence, vocabulary development, and cross-semester collaboration. However, some students perceived the activities as more entertaining than academically structured. These results highlight the need to improve the program design by balancing educational content with engaging activities. The study contributes to the development of activity-based English learning strategies in higher education contexts.*

Keywords: *Activity-Based Learning, Cross-Semester Collaboration, English Camp Parade, English Language, Student Perspective*

Abstrak. Penelitian ini bertujuan untuk mengeksplorasi persepsi mahasiswa semester enam terhadap pelaksanaan English Camp Parade (ECP) Season 5 di Universitas Bhinneka PGRI. Program ECP dirancang sebagai sarana pembelajaran berbasis aktivitas yang mendorong penggunaan bahasa Inggris secara kontekstual melalui kegiatan seperti drama, kuis, dan diskusi kelompok. Penelitian ini menggunakan pendekatan kualitatif dengan partisipan yang dipilih secara purposive, terdiri dari 14 mahasiswa semester enam serta 2 narasumber kunci (koordinator kegiatan dan ketua ESA). Data dikumpulkan melalui wawancara semi-terstruktur, angket terbuka, dan observasi, kemudian dianalisis secara tematik. Hasil penelitian menunjukkan bahwa sebagian besar mahasiswa memberikan respon positif terhadap ECP, khususnya dalam aspek peningkatan kepercayaan diri, penguasaan kosakata, dan interaksi lintas semester. Namun, beberapa peserta menilai bahwa kegiatan masih lebih bersifat hiburan dibanding pembelajaran akademik yang terstruktur. Temuan ini menunjukkan pentingnya penyempurnaan desain program agar lebih seimbang antara nilai edukatif dan daya tarik kegiatan. Penelitian ini memberikan kontribusi terhadap pengembangan strategi pembelajaran bahasa Inggris berbasis aktivitas di pendidikan tinggi.

Kata kunci: Bahasa Inggris, English Camp Parade, Kolaborasi Lintas Semester, Pembelajaran Berbasis Aktivitas, Persepsi Mahasiswa

1. INTRODUCTION

English has become a cornerstone of global education and communication, particularly in non-English-speaking countries where it serves as a gateway to academic, professional, and cultural advancement. In the Indonesian context, English is taught from an early age to equip students with the linguistic competencies required in the globalized world (Aziza, 2020). Universities play a pivotal role in this development, especially within English Language

Education programs, where students are expected not only to master the language academically but also to use it confidently in real-world settings (Parupalli, 2019). However, bridging the gap between classroom knowledge and communicative competence remains a major challenge for many students.

Internal and external factors continue to inhibit students' ability to use English effectively. Internally, many learners experience low confidence, fear of making mistakes, and limited vocabulary, which hinder their willingness to speak (Ky Nhan, 2024). Externally, learning environments often lack the immersive, supportive conditions necessary to foster regular language use. Language learning, particularly speaking, requires consistent practice, meaningful interaction, and emotional support. Grit defined as perseverance and passion for long-term goals—has been found to positively impact second language acquisition when learners are provided with opportunities to practice in realistic, low-stress settings (Wang et al., 2021).

To address these limitations, the English Education Department at Universitas Bhinneka PGRI introduced the English Camp Parade (ECP), an annual program that offers students an immersive environment to use English actively. The event aims to bridge theory and practice by involving students in engaging, language-rich activities such as group performances, debates, games, and quizzes. All communication during the event is conducted in English, providing students with contextualized speaking opportunities that enhance both fluency and confidence. According to Anwar Dalimunthe et al. (2024), such immersive environments are instrumental in fostering motivation, participation, and language development.

ECP has evolved since its inception in 2018, transitioning through various names before officially becoming the English Camp Parade. By Season 5, the format underwent significant changes shifting from a multi-week schedule to a single-day event packed with interactive sessions. Activities included spontaneous group dramas, academic presentations, and quiz competitions involving students from multiple semesters. These structural changes aimed to make the event more efficient, enjoyable, and inclusive. Prior research supports the effectiveness of cooperative learning environments in improving English speaking skills, as they offer real-life communication contexts, reduce anxiety, and promote peer interaction (Sánchez Montaña & Cango Patiño, 2024; Alzubi et al., 2025).

While previous studies have explored the impact of ECP on students' speaking ability (Kartikawati et al., 2018; 2020) and investigated perceptions from earlier sessions (Natsir, 2020; Nugrahini et al., 2024), there is limited research specifically focused on ECP Season 5.

This latest iteration introduced several innovations in structure, content, and student engagement, making it important to examine how these changes were received. Furthermore, exploring student perspectives can provide essential insights into how the program aligns with their expectations, supports their development, and identifies areas for improvement in future implementations.

This study investigates the perspectives of sixth-semester students on the implementation of English Camp Parade (ECP) Season 5 at Universitas Bhinneka PGRI. A total of 14 students who participated in both the fourth and fifth sessions of ECP were selected as respondents. Their experiences offer valuable insights into how this redesigned activity-based program impacts language development and learner engagement. By focusing on the reflections of these participants, the study aims to evaluate the effectiveness of the current format and identify areas for improvement.

2. METHOD

This study employed a qualitative research approach to explore sixth-semester students' perspectives on the implementation of the English Camp Parade (ECP) Season 5 at Universitas Bhinneka PGRI. The participants consisted of 14 sixth-semester students selected purposively based on their participation in both the fourth and fifth ECP programs. Additionally, two key informants the ECP coordinator and the chairperson of the English Student Association (ESA) were interviewed to provide deeper organizational insights. The research was conducted between February and March 2025, involving students who had participated in both the fourth and fifth sessions of the ECP, as well as key informants such as the program coordinator and the chairperson of the English Student Association (ESA). Data were collected using semi-structured interviews, open-ended questionnaires distributed via Google Forms, observation notes, and audio recordings. These instruments aimed to capture students' experiences, opinions, and suggestions regarding the ECP program. Thematic analysis was used to identify patterns across responses, beginning with data transcription, followed by coding and interpretation to derive key themes. To ensure the credibility of the findings, triangulation was applied by comparing multiple data sources and supporting the analysis with relevant theoretical frameworks from previous studies on language learning and student engagement. This method enabled a comprehensive understanding of how the revised format of ECP influenced students' language development and learning motivation.

3. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The findings of this study are based on the responses of 14 sixth-semester students, supported by interviews with two key informants: the ECP coordinator and the ESA chairperson. The results of this study reveal that most sixth-semester students held positive perceptions toward the implementation of the English Camp Parade (ECP) Season 5 at Universitas Bhinneka PGRI. Many participants stated that the event helped them improve their English-speaking skills, particularly in vocabulary use and sentence construction. Activities such as group drama performances and English quizzes were considered effective in encouraging active language production in a fun, low-pressure setting. These findings align with the view of Aimen and Khadim (2024), who emphasize that skill-based, experiential learning environments enhance communicative competence by allowing learners to engage with language meaningfully.

Confidence in speaking English emerged as a major theme in the responses. Several students reported feeling more comfortable using English during ECP, especially in informal group settings. However, others admitted that their confidence remained limited, particularly when speaking in front of a large audience. This mixed response reflects Ky Nhan's (2024) finding that internal factors such as anxiety and fear of negative evaluation remain significant barriers to oral language production. Still, many participants appreciated the supportive and nonjudgmental atmosphere of the event, which aligns with Wang et al.'s (2021) theory that grit—defined as consistent effort over time can be strengthened through encouraging, practice-rich environments.

Another key finding was the success of ECP in promoting cross-semester collaboration. Most students expressed that they enjoyed interacting with peers from other academic levels. Randomized group assignments and collective performance tasks helped build a sense of community and fostered teamwork. This supports the collaborative learning framework described by Alzubi et al. (2025), which emphasizes that social interaction enhances both language development and motivation. Similarly, Sánchez Montañaño and Cango Patiño (2024) argue that cooperative tasks improve speaking fluency, vocabulary, and grammar in EFL contexts benefits that were echoed in students' reflections on ECP.

Despite the positive outcomes, several students noted that the academic value of the event was somewhat limited. While they found the activities enjoyable and engaging, some felt that the focus was more on entertainment than on structured language learning. One participant commented that “we only play games, not really practice our skills in detail,” indicating a desire

for more academically oriented tasks. This critique highlights a potential gap between student expectations and the program's design. As Syarifudin (2017) argues, communicative language teaching should integrate both fluency and accuracy, balancing spontaneity with clear linguistic goals.

Students also expressed concerns about the one-day format of ECP Season 5. While they appreciated the compressed schedule, some felt that the event was too rushed, limiting the depth of engagement with each activity. Others suggested that more time should be allocated for feedback, reflection, or structured practice. These comments suggest the need for better pacing and time management in future iterations, in line with Douwes et al. (2023), who emphasize that program design must accommodate learners' cognitive and emotional needs for optimal engagement.

Compared to previous research, this study offers a more focused exploration of student perceptions regarding the revised format of ECP. While Kartikawati et al. (2018; 2020) measured the effect of ECP on speaking ability quantitatively, and Natsir (2020) analyzed student views in earlier sessions, this study addresses the structural changes in Season 5 such as its one-day duration and collaborative performance model. This qualitative approach provides deeper insight into how those changes were experienced by learners and how they influenced language development, motivation, and classroom culture.

In summary, the implementation of ECP Season 5 was positively received by students and successfully fostered English practice, peer interaction, and learner engagement. However, findings also indicate areas for improvement, particularly in strengthening academic content, adjusting the event's pacing, and incorporating more targeted language skill development. These insights can inform future enhancements to the ECP program and contribute to broader efforts in designing effective activity-based English learning models in higher education.

4. CONCLUSION

This study explored sixth-semester students' perspectives on the implementation of the English Camp Parade (ECP) Season 5 at Universitas Bhinneka PGRI. The findings indicate that the program was generally well-received and perceived as a meaningful learning experience. Students reported improvements in speaking confidence, vocabulary use, and peer collaboration, particularly due to the immersive and interactive nature of the activities. The ECP successfully created a supportive environment that encouraged spontaneous English use and fostered engagement across academic levels.

However, some students expressed concerns regarding the balance between entertainment and academic depth, as well as the time constraints of the one-day format. These findings highlight the need for future program improvements that better integrate educational goals with engaging activities. Overall, this study affirms the value of activity-based English learning programs while emphasizing the importance of student feedback in refining language learning initiatives in higher education.

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