

CHAPTER IV

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

A. Findings

This chapter presents the findings of the research based on the data collected from narrative interviews with teacher or leader participants and supporting students in the English Program at Al-Falah Islamic Boarding School Banjarbaru. The findings are arranged according to the research questions of this study. The first research question focuses on how teachers experiences in the English program apply social-emotional skills in English speaking learning. The second research question focuses on the challenges faced by teachers in integrating social-emotional skills into English speaking learning.

The interview data show that the application of social-emotional skills in English speaking learning is not only found in formal classroom activities, but also in dormitory interactions, daily communication, teacher-student relationships, correction practices, peer support, and the use of *Pesantren* values. The teacher participants did not always describe their practices using the term “Social-Emotional Learning.” However, their stories show that they applied several social-emotional practices such as building emotional safety, reducing speaking anxiety, giving supportive correction, encouraging students

personally, using humor, strengthening *ukhuwah*, and connecting English learning with Islamic values.

Research Question 1: How do teachers' experiences in the English program at Al-Falah apply social-emotional skills in English speaking learning?

To answer the first research question, the data were analyzed and grouped into four themes: Building Trust and Emotional Safety, Providing Scaffolding and Supportive Correction, Managing Speaking Anxiety and Performance Pressure, and Embedding Pesantren Values as Moral Support. The findings for each theme are presented below.

a. Building Trust and Emotional Safety

The first finding revealed that building trust and emotional safety became the teachers' initial priority before expecting students to participate in English speaking activities. Rather than immediately emphasizing linguistic accuracy or speaking performance, the teachers consistently described the importance of creating an emotionally supportive environment where students felt accepted, respected, and unafraid of making mistakes. Their narratives demonstrated that emotional readiness was considered a prerequisite for speaking participation, particularly because many students entered the classroom with anxiety, low confidence, or negative assumptions about English learning.

Teacher 1 explained that his first response to a quiet classroom was not to begin formal instruction but to reduce students' emotional tension through informal interaction. Instead of asking students to perform immediately, he initiated light conversations, used humor, conducted ice-breaking activities, and personally approached several students to encourage participation. As he explained:

"When I faced a quiet class, I began with light conversations, humor, and ice-breaking activities because many students were afraid of speaking in public." (Teacher 1)

Teacher 2 described a similar strategy, although his narrative also revealed uncertainty during the early stages of teaching. Rather than remaining at the front of the classroom, he deliberately sat among the students and initiated casual conversations about their daily lives before gradually introducing English activities. However, he admitted that this approach did not immediately succeed because some students still preferred to remain silent.

"I tried to become their conversation partner rather than someone who judged them, although this approach did not always work because every class had different characteristics." (Teacher 2)

Unlike the previous participants, Teacher 3 focused on addressing students' hidden assumptions about English itself. He recognized that some students perceived English as something foreign or even incompatible with their religious environment. Instead of

ignoring this perception, he openly discussed it in a humorous way before explaining the broader purpose of learning English.

"I jokingly asked whether they wondered why they should learn English, then explained that English could become a tool for da'wah." (Teacher 3)

These narratives demonstrate that although the teachers employed different strategies, they shared the same objective: reducing students' emotional barriers before focusing on speaking performance. Emotional safety was therefore established through humor, informal communication, personal interaction, and meaningful dialogue rather than through direct language instruction alone.

Classroom observation further supported these interview findings. During several speaking sessions, the teachers greeted students warmly before beginning the lesson, checked students' emotional condition through informal conversation, smiled frequently, and postponed formal speaking tasks until students appeared more relaxed. Rather than immediately correcting mistakes, teachers allowed students to complete their responses and frequently offered encouraging verbal expressions before providing feedback. These classroom behaviours reflected the teachers' intention to establish an emotionally supportive learning environment before expecting active participation.

The importance of emotional safety was also confirmed by the students themselves. One student explained that the leader never

interrupted him while he was speaking and instead encouraged him to continue despite his nervousness.

"The leader didn't directly blame me or cut my words. He simply raised his hand slightly as encouragement and calmly said, 'It's okay, continue.'" (Student 1)

Although Student 2 did not describe this specific classroom incident, his interview similarly reflected that supportive interactions with teachers helped him feel more comfortable participating in English learning. Together, the students' narratives indicate that the teachers' efforts to create an emotionally supportive environment were experienced positively by learners from different perspectives.

Taken together, the interview, observation, and student data consistently indicate that emotional safety was not merely perceived by teachers as a desirable classroom atmosphere but was experienced directly by students through supportive interactions and respectful communication.

More importantly, the teachers' narratives suggest that emotional safety was understood as a dynamic process rather than an instructional technique that always produced immediate success. Teacher 2 explicitly acknowledged that some students remained silent despite his efforts and admitted questioning whether his strategy was appropriate. This narrative is particularly significant because it demonstrates that the teachers did not portray themselves as consistently

successful practitioners. Instead, they described teaching as an ongoing process of experimentation, reflection, and adaptation. Emotional trust was gradually negotiated through repeated interactions rather than established instantly.

Another important interpretation emerging from these findings concerns the teachers' understanding of students' silence. Instead of interpreting silence as laziness or unwillingness to learn, all three teachers tended to associate it with anxiety, fear of negative evaluation, emotional insecurity, or unfamiliarity with English. Consequently, they adjusted their instructional decisions according to students' emotional conditions rather than rigidly following predetermined lesson plans. This indicates that the teachers viewed emotional awareness as an essential element of effective speaking instruction.

The findings also reveal a distinctive characteristic of social-emotional practices within the *pesantren* context. Emotional relationships were developed not only during formal classroom instruction but also through continuous interaction in the dormitory. Since the teachers simultaneously served as dormitory supervisors and mentors, opportunities to build trust extended into daily activities such as meals, prayer times, and informal conversations. This continuous interaction reduced psychological distance between teachers and students, allowing emotional support to develop naturally beyond the

classroom. Consequently, emotional safety became embedded within students' everyday experiences rather than remaining confined to scheduled English lessons.

b. Scaffolding, Mistakes, and Supportive Correction

The second finding revealed that teachers applied social-emotional skills by providing scaffolding and supportive correction during English speaking activities. Rather than treating mistakes as failures that required immediate correction, the teachers described correction as a gradual process intended to preserve students' confidence while simultaneously improving their language competence. Their narratives indicate that emotional support and linguistic assistance were delivered together, reflecting the belief that students were more likely to improve when they felt psychologically secure throughout the learning process.

Teacher 1 explained that when students suddenly stopped speaking during presentations, his immediate concern was not correcting their language but reducing their emotional pressure. Instead of interrupting the student, he used supportive body language before offering minimal linguistic assistance.

"I immediately gave a smile and a small nod to calm him down, then said softly, 'Take your time, it's okay.' Sometimes I also help by giving him a simple keyword or question so that he can continue without feeling pressured." (Teacher 1)

Similarly, Teacher 2 described allowing students several moments of silence before intervening. Rather than rushing students or completing their answers, he deliberately waited until the student's anxiety began to decrease before offering a small clue.

"I gave him a few seconds first. If he seemed to become more anxious, I slowly nodded, smiled, and quietly said, 'It's okay, take a deep breath.' Then I gave only one keyword to reconnect his thinking." (Teacher 2)

Teacher 3 shared a similar experience but demonstrated a slightly different strategy. Instead of immediately providing vocabulary assistance, he first encouraged students to pause, calm themselves, and briefly express their ideas in Indonesian before offering one English keyword to help them continue speaking.

"I immediately gave a hand gesture to stop for a while. I smiled and said softly, 'Istighfar first. Drink the water.' After he calmed down a bit, I asked him in Indonesian, 'What do you want to say about this?' After he answered in Indonesian, I helped him with one vocabulary keyword." (Teacher 3)

Although each teacher used different expressions, their narratives reveal a common understanding that students experiencing speaking anxiety required emotional reassurance before receiving academic assistance. Teacher 1 focused on calming students through supportive gestures, Teacher 2 emphasized allowing students sufficient time to regulate their emotions independently, while Teacher 3 incorporated emotional regulation together with religious expressions

such as *istighfar* to help students regain composure. These differences illustrate that scaffolding was not limited to linguistic assistance but also involved helping students restore emotional stability before continuing their speaking performance.

The teachers also described correction as a process that should protect students' confidence. Teacher 1 explained that he deliberately postponed grammar correction until students had completed their ideas.

"I usually don't interrupt them immediately. I let them finish first, then I repeat their sentences using the correct version. Sometimes I ask, 'Maybe you can use this word?' so that they feel invited, not blamed." (Teacher 1)

Teacher 2 implemented a similar strategy but emphasized maintaining the natural flow of communication. Rather than explicitly pointing out grammatical errors, he reformulated students' stories using more accurate English while continuing the conversation.

"I respond enthusiastically while repeating the story using correct English. They hear the correct grammar naturally because it feels like a conversation, not correction." (Teacher 2)

Likewise, Teacher 3 preferred indirect correction by naturally modelling the correct language instead of directly telling students that they were wrong.

"If someone says, 'Yesterday I go to the mosque,' I let him finish the story. Then I respond by saying, 'Oh, so you went to the mosque yesterday? MashaAllah, did you read the Qur'an there?' He hears the correct form without me saying, 'Your grammar is wrong.'" (Teacher 3)

These findings indicate that all three teachers intentionally reduced the psychological threat commonly associated with corrective feedback. Rather than focusing on grammatical accuracy alone, they attempted to preserve students' willingness to communicate. Correction therefore functioned as emotional support as much as linguistic guidance, allowing students to continue speaking without feeling judged or embarrassed.

Positive reinforcement also emerged as an important aspect of supportive correction. Teacher 1 observed that even a brief compliment noticeably changed one student's body posture.

"I once complimented a student by saying, 'Your pronunciation is much clearer.' Immediately he stood more upright and began making eye contact." (Teacher 1)

Teacher 2 shared a similar experience when praising a student's sentence construction.

"I told him, 'Masya Allah, your sentence arrangement is very neat.' He slowly straightened his shoulders, lifted his head, and smiled shyly." (Teacher 2)

Teacher 3 also described how a simple compliment transformed one student's confidence.

"I immediately said, 'Mumtaz! You're as good as a news anchor.' The student immediately raised his head, straightened his shoulders, and kept smiling until the lesson ended. The next day he became the first student to volunteer during the question-and-answer session." (Teacher 3)

These narratives demonstrate that positive feedback influenced not only students' motivation but also their observable behaviour. Teachers consistently described immediate improvements in posture, facial expressions, eye contact, and willingness to participate after receiving encouraging feedback. Such behavioural changes suggest that praise functioned as an important mechanism for strengthening students' confidence during speaking activities.

The participants also highlighted the importance of protecting students from ridicule during speaking practice. Teacher 1 explained that whenever classmates laughed at someone's mistakes, he immediately reminded the class that everyone was still learning before redirecting attention to the student who was speaking.

"I immediately reminded them that everyone here is still learning. I told them not to laugh at their friend because making mistakes is part of the learning process." (Teacher 1)

Teacher 2 similarly emphasized protecting students' emotional well-being.

"I looked toward the students who were laughing and reminded them that this was a learning space. Then I returned my full attention to the student speaking and praised his courage." (Teacher 2)

Teacher 3 demonstrated an even firmer response by linking respectful behaviour to Islamic values.

"I immediately stopped the class and reminded them about adab before knowledge. I said, 'If you laugh at your brother who is struggling, your knowledge will not be blessed.' Then I smiled at the student and encouraged him to continue." (Teacher 3)

These responses illustrate that teachers actively regulated classroom interactions to preserve emotional safety. Rather than ignoring ridicule as ordinary classroom behaviour, they interpreted it as something capable of damaging students' confidence and therefore requiring immediate intervention.

Classroom observation confirmed these interview findings. During speaking activities, teachers rarely interrupted students while they were speaking. Instead, corrective feedback was generally provided after students completed their responses. Observation also showed that teachers frequently smiled, nodded, used encouraging verbal expressions, and occasionally offered vocabulary prompts before discussing pronunciation or grammatical errors. When classmates laughed at mistakes, teachers immediately redirected the classroom atmosphere and encouraged students to continue speaking. These behaviours created an emotionally supportive learning environment in which correction was experienced as assistance rather than punishment.

The students' narratives further strengthened these findings. Student 1 explained that the teacher immediately protected him when classmates laughed at his pronunciation.

"The leader reprimanded my friend for laughing at me. After that I felt much closer to the leader because he really cared about his students." (Student 1)

Student 2 described a similar experience after accidentally saying *"I want to cook in the chicken"* instead of *"I want to cook in the kitchen."* Rather than criticizing the mistake, the teacher humorously responded before explaining the correct pronunciation.

"The leader didn't immediately say 'Wrong!'. He joked first, 'Wait, you cook inside the chicken? Poor chicken!' After everyone laughed, he calmly explained the difference between kitchen and chicken. I felt helped instead of embarrassed because the correction became a funny joke rather than a harsh reprimand." (Student 2)

Student 2 further explained that when classmates continued laughing, the teacher immediately stopped them and defended the student.

"The leader immediately knocked on the table and told everyone to stop laughing. Then he smiled at me and said, 'It's okay. You'll never forget the difference between kitchen and chicken again.' At that moment I felt safe because the leader stood up for me." (Student 2)

Taken together, the interview, observation, and student data consistently suggest that supportive correction was experienced as an emotionally protective process rather than merely an instructional technique.

More importantly, the narratives reveal that the teachers continuously negotiated the balance between correcting mistakes and preserving students' confidence. They recognized that excessive

correction could discourage participation, particularly among students who were already anxious about speaking English. Consequently, correction became selective, gradual, and sensitive to students' emotional readiness instead of focusing exclusively on linguistic accuracy.

Interestingly, the findings also reveal that supportive correction was not always easy to implement. Teacher 2 described a situation in which a student defensively rejected grammatical feedback by arguing that native speakers did not always prioritize grammar. Rather than responding emotionally or asserting his authority, the teacher intentionally postponed the discussion until later that evening, when he approached the student privately in the dormitory. Teacher 3 similarly acknowledged that some students required emotional recovery before they were ready to receive correction, leading him to postpone feedback, modify speaking activities, or continue mentoring students through informal conversations outside the classroom. These experiences demonstrate that maintaining students' trust often required teachers to regulate their own emotions, adapt their instructional decisions, and prioritize long-term relationships over immediate linguistic accuracy.

This finding suggests that supportive correction involved emotional regulation on the part of both students and teachers. While

students were expected to accept feedback constructively, teachers also needed to regulate their own emotions, adapt their communication strategies, and determine the most appropriate time and context for delivering correction. Therefore, effective scaffolding in English speaking learning was not limited to linguistic guidance but also depended upon teachers' emotional awareness, interpersonal sensitivity, and reflective decision-making.

c. Managing Speaking Anxiety and Performance Pressure

The third finding revealed that teachers intentionally managed students' speaking anxiety before expecting them to perform in English. Rather than assuming that anxiety reflected a lack of ability, the participants consistently described it as an emotional response that needed to be addressed before meaningful learning could occur. The teachers believed that reducing psychological pressure enabled students to participate more confidently in speaking activities. Consequently, they implemented various social-emotional strategies, including recognizing signs of anxiety, modifying learning activities, providing emotional reassurance, using pair work, humor, and religious encouragement to help students overcome performance pressure.

The three teachers described similar physical and behavioral indicators when students experienced severe speaking anxiety. Teacher 1 explained that anxious students often lowered their heads, avoided eye

contact, spoke with trembling voices, became visibly tense, and repeatedly looked at their notes because they lacked confidence.

"It is usually seen from those who are lowered, avoiding eye contact, the voice becomes soft or shaking, and some even sweat or stiffen when standing. Some also look restless, such as playing with their hands or keeping looking at notes because they are not confident." (Teacher 1)

Teacher 2 observed even stronger physical reactions.

"Their body language becomes very obvious. They keep squeezing the ends of their clothes or sarongs, their breathing becomes short, and some suddenly lose their voice even though outside the classroom they are very talkative. Their eyes keep looking everywhere except at me." (Teacher 2)

Similarly, Teacher 3 recognized comparable symptoms.

"Some students keep twisting their prayer beads or squeezing the ends of their sarongs. Their eyes avoid looking at me, and students who are usually loud suddenly become silent or lose their voice completely." (Teacher 3)

Although each teacher described different details, their narratives consistently indicate that speaking anxiety was visible not only through students' verbal hesitation but also through their physical behavior. Rather than interpreting these behaviors as laziness or unwillingness to participate, the teachers viewed them as signals that students required emotional support before academic instruction could continue. This finding suggests that emotional awareness became an important part of the teachers' professional judgment during speaking lessons.

The participants also described situations in which they deliberately changed their lesson plans after recognizing that students' collective anxiety was too high. Teacher 1 explained that an individual presentation was changed into a small-group discussion because students appeared too nervous to perform independently.

"When students appeared too anxious, I changed individual presentations into group discussions first." (Teacher 1)

Teacher 2 shared an even more reflective experience.

"When I announced an impromptu speech, the classroom suddenly became completely silent. Finally, I cancelled the speech and changed it into a talk-show discussion." (Teacher 2)

Teacher 3 experienced a similar situation.

"I wanted students to deliver individual speeches, but the whole class immediately became tense. I tore up the presentation order and changed it into a relaxed role-play. The students immediately laughed and became much more comfortable speaking." (Teacher 3)

These narratives reveal that lesson plans were not treated as rigid instructional documents but were continuously adapted according to students' emotional conditions. More importantly, Teacher 2's narrative illustrates a professional dilemma between completing curricular objectives and protecting students' psychological well-being. Rather than prioritizing lesson completion, the teachers collectively chose to modify instructional activities to reduce students' anxiety. This finding

indicates that emotional responsiveness frequently guided pedagogical decision-making more strongly than predetermined teaching plans.

Pair work also emerged as an important strategy for reducing students' performance pressure before individual speaking tasks. Teacher 1 explained that students first practiced with close friends before presenting independently, allowing them to develop confidence gradually.

"I usually start with pair work so students can practice with friends they are closer to and therefore feel less stressed. After that, we continue with small-group discussions so they already have ideas before performing individually. This helps them become more confident." (Teacher 1)

Teacher 2 described pair work as a "mental rehearsal room," where students could make mistakes without fear of being judged.

"Pair work is like a rehearsal room for their mentality. If they immediately speak alone, it feels like being thrown into the sea without knowing how to swim." (Teacher 2)

Teacher 3 similarly emphasized that students became more confident because they practiced with roommates who created a safe environment for making mistakes.

"I replaced individual speeches with role-play because students became much more relaxed." (Teacher3)

These experiences were strongly supported by both students. Student 1 explained that paired speaking activities helped students

correct one another naturally while laughing together, making speaking practice feel less stressful.

"When I first learned English, I was not confident. But pair speaking helped us correct each other's mistakes while laughing. It felt much easier than speaking alone." (Student 1)

Student 2 also described practicing English secretly with roommates before examinations.

"Before the speaking exam, my roommate and I always practiced together at night. The next day, when I had to perform in front of the Leader, the sentences already felt familiar because we had practiced them together." (Student 2)

These findings indicate that pair work functioned not merely as a collaborative learning technique but also as emotional preparation before public performance. Practicing with trusted peers reduced students' fear of negative evaluation while strengthening their confidence before speaking individually.

The teachers further emphasized the importance of preparing students emotionally before debates, oral examinations, and other high-pressure speaking activities. Teacher 1 motivated students by reminding them that effort was more important than perfection.

"I usually motivate students first and emphasize that what is assessed is their effort, not perfection. I also provide gradual practice and simulations so they become familiar with the situation. In addition, I encourage them to relax and not be too afraid of making mistakes." (Teacher 1)

Teacher 2 gathered students before examinations, invited them to breathe deeply, recite *istighfar*, and forget about grades.

"Forget about winning. Forget about getting an A. The most important thing is winning against your own insecurity."
(Teacher 2)

Teacher 3 conveyed a similar message.

"Coming out of this room, nobody cares about wrong grammar. What matters is your courage. Your mouth is a tool. Just let your voice come out." (Teacher 3)

These narratives demonstrate that teachers intentionally shifted students' attention away from performance outcomes toward personal growth and emotional resilience. Instead of encouraging perfectionism, they promoted courage, effort, and persistence as the primary goals of speaking activities.

Humor also became a recurring strategy for lowering classroom tension. Teacher 1 explained that simple jokes immediately relaxed the classroom atmosphere before speaking practice began. Teacher 2 frequently inserted casual conversations and humorous comments to reduce students' nervousness. Likewise, Teacher 3 deliberately exaggerated his own local accent while pronouncing English words so that students laughed together before beginning speaking practice.

The students' experiences strongly confirmed these findings. Student 1 recalled that teachers frequently began lessons with warm

greetings, games, and ice-breaking activities that created an enjoyable classroom atmosphere before learning started.

"Usually the Leader greets us warmly and sometimes starts with games or ice breaking. It makes us feel excited before studying."
(Student 1)

Student 2 also explained that teachers often shared funny personal stories about their own mistakes when learning English.

"He often told funny stories about making grammar mistakes himself. That made us realize that becoming good at English is a long process." (Student 2)

Classroom observations further supported these narratives. Throughout the observations, teachers were seen greeting students warmly, smiling frequently, encouraging students verbally before speaking activities, and modifying activities whenever students appeared uncomfortable. During pair-work activities, students interacted more actively and laughed naturally while practicing English. The researcher also observed that students who initially appeared reluctant gradually became more willing to speak after receiving encouragement from both teachers and classmates.

Taken together, the interview, observation, and student data demonstrate that managing speaking anxiety extended far beyond reducing nervousness during classroom presentations. Instead, it represented a continuous process of recognizing students' emotional

conditions, adapting instructional decisions, and building confidence through supportive interpersonal relationships.

More importantly, the narratives reveal that speaking anxiety was not viewed by the teachers as a weakness that students simply needed to overcome individually. Instead, anxiety became a shared responsibility requiring teachers to remain emotionally responsive, flexible, and reflective throughout the learning process. Teacher 2's description of the dilemma between achieving curricular targets and protecting students from psychological distress illustrates that effective English teaching often required difficult pedagogical decisions. Likewise, the consistent use of humor, religious encouragement, pair work, and gradual speaking activities demonstrates that emotional support was deliberately integrated into speaking instruction rather than functioning as an additional activity outside the curriculum.

These findings suggest that the implementation of social-emotional skills in English speaking learning involved more than helping students become confident speakers. It also required teachers to interpret students' emotional signals, regulate classroom pressure, and continuously balance academic expectations with students' psychological readiness. Within the context of the Islamic boarding school, emotional support was further strengthened through religious values such as *istighfar*, encouragement to maintain sincere intentions,

and reminders that personal worth was not determined by English proficiency alone. This integration illustrates a distinctive characteristic of social-emotional learning in the *pesantren* context, where emotional development, religious values, and language learning were closely interconnected.

d. Embedding *Pesantren* Values and Moral Support

The fourth finding revealed that teachers embedded *pesantren* values and moral support as an integral part of social-emotional learning during English speaking instruction. Rather than separating language learning from students' religious and moral development, the teachers consistently integrated Islamic values such as patience (*sabr*), sincerity (*ikhlas*), trust in Allah (*tawakkal*), positive thinking (*husnudzon*), brotherhood (*ukhuwah*), and proper manners (*adab*) into their teaching practices. These values were not merely delivered as religious advice but were intentionally used to strengthen students' emotional resilience, restore motivation, and help students interpret learning difficulties from a more meaningful perspective.

Teacher 1 explained that Islamic values became particularly important when students experienced frustration before English competitions. Rather than focusing solely on technical preparation, the teacher encouraged students to strengthen their relationship with Allah

through tahajjud prayer while reminding them about patience, sincerity, and husnudzon throughout the learning process.

"I advised him not only to make an effort, but also to get closer to Allah by regularly performing tahajjud. I emphasized the importance of patience, sincerity, and husnudzon. After that, he became calmer, trained more confidently, and finally achieved good results in the competition." (Teacher 1)

Similarly, Teacher 2 related students' struggles in learning English to a broader religious purpose. Instead of allowing students to view English merely as another school subject, he frequently reminded them that mastering English could become a valuable instrument for future da'wah.

"I often tell them, 'Imagine if one day Allah gives you the opportunity to study abroad and someone asks why Muslims pray five times a day. Will you answer only with sign language?' Their tiredness today is an investment so that Islam can be heard by the wider world." (Teacher 2)

Teacher 3 expressed a comparable perspective by consistently emphasizing what he called the "big picture." He encouraged students to see English not simply as a foreign language but as a tool for conveying Islamic values internationally.

"I always tell them that people outside the pesantren may not understand Arabic. If you want to explain the beauty of Islam to people abroad, English becomes your weapon for da'wah. Your tiredness today is preparation for that future mission." (Teacher 3)

Although the three teachers expressed these ideas differently, their narratives consistently demonstrate that students' emotional

resilience was strengthened by connecting English learning with meaningful religious purposes. Rather than motivating students through grades or academic achievement alone, the teachers encouraged students to view perseverance as part of their spiritual responsibility. This finding suggests that students' emotional endurance was reinforced through purpose-driven learning rather than external rewards alone.

The teachers also emphasized the importance of *ukhuwah* (brotherhood) in supporting students' speaking development. Teacher 1 encouraged students to view themselves as one team in which each student's success contributed to the success of the entire group.

"I built an atmosphere where students saw themselves as one team. I often told them that one person's success was also the success of the whole group. During speaking practice, I encouraged them to help and motivate one another rather than bringing each other down. Through this ukhuwah approach, the classroom became safer, and students became more willing to try speaking English." (Teacher 1)

Teacher 2 further developed this value by creating peer-tutoring groups within the dormitory.

"I told the stronger students that ukhuwah is not only about sharing food but also sharing knowledge. Finally, students who were more capable felt morally responsible for helping their roommates learn English." (Teacher 2)

Likewise, Teacher 3 implemented a room-responsibility system that encouraged students to prepare vocabulary together.

"If one student in the room failed to submit the vocabulary deposit, then the whole room had failed to maintain ukhuwah. Eventually, students naturally helped each other prepare before the deposit schedule." (Teacher 3)

These narratives demonstrate that brotherhood was intentionally transformed into an educational strategy rather than remaining solely as a religious value. Instead of encouraging competition among students, the teachers developed collaborative learning environments in which emotional support came naturally through peer relationships. Consequently, students were less afraid of making mistakes because responsibility for learning became collective rather than individual.

The teachers also integrated Islamic values to maintain respectful competition during English activities. Teacher 1 consistently reminded students that competition was intended for self-improvement rather than defeating others.

"I always emphasized from the beginning that the goal of the competition is to grow, not to bring others down. I set clear boundaries regarding manners, such as not underestimating or laughing at other students. In addition, I always appreciated students' effort, not only their final results, so that everyone still felt valued." (Teacher 1)

Teacher 2 implemented explicit classroom rules by reducing group points whenever students mocked or humiliated opponents during debates.

"They are allowed to challenge each other's arguments, but if someone laughs at or humiliates an opponent, I immediately reduce their group score. After every debate they must shake hands and hug." (Teacher 2)

Similarly, Teacher 3 emphasized that good manners always outweighed speaking performance.

"Knowledge is important, but adab is still number one in this pesantren. If arguments are excellent but manners are poor, I immediately reduce the score." (Teacher 3)

These findings indicate that emotional safety was not only maintained through supportive teacher–student relationships but also through explicit moral expectations governing peer interaction. Respect, empathy, and mutual appreciation became classroom norms that protected students from humiliation while encouraging healthy participation.

Interestingly, the narratives also reveal that moral and religious support was often more effective than direct English instruction itself. Teacher 1 recalled a student who remained afraid of speaking despite repeated language practice. Only after discussing intention (niyyah) and tawakkal did the student gradually become more confident in participating.

" I reminded the student that Allah values effort more than perfection. After discussing intention (niyyah) and tawakkal, the student gradually became more confident." (Teacher 1)

Teacher 2 described a student who wrote emotionally distressing diary entries and struggled with feelings of failure. Rather than correcting the student's English grammar, the teacher invited the student for a walk after dawn prayer and shared stories about scholars who experienced hardship while seeking knowledge.

"What Allah values is not how fluent you are but how hard you try." (Teacher 2)

Teacher 3 also recounted a student who frequently skipped English classes. Instead of giving disciplinary punishment, he invited the student to visit the grave of the *pesantren* founder and reflected together on the importance of seeking blessed knowledge.

"No matter how smart you are, if your teacher is disappointed because you keep skipping class, your knowledge will not bring benefit." (Teacher 3)

These narratives illustrate that students' learning difficulties often originated from emotional or motivational barriers rather than limited English ability alone. Consequently, the teachers prioritized rebuilding students' emotional and spiritual readiness before returning to language instruction. This finding suggests that social-emotional support within the *pesantren* context was closely connected with students' religious identity and personal meaning.

However, the findings also demonstrate that religious approaches were not applied rigidly. Teacher 3 acknowledged that

directly quoting Qur'anic verses was not always the most effective strategy.

"Honestly, I do not always use verses directly. Sometimes it is easier for students to understand simple conversations about patience, effort, and tawakkal than formal religious evidence."
(Teacher 3)

This narrative is particularly important because it reveals that the teachers did not perceive religious values as fixed teaching formulas. Instead, they continuously adapted their approaches according to students' emotional needs and levels of understanding. Religious support therefore functioned as a flexible pedagogical resource rather than a standardized intervention.

Classroom observations further confirmed these findings. During speaking lessons, teachers were observed reminding students to respect one another before presentations, encouraging cooperation during pair and group activities, and consistently praising effort rather than only successful performance. The researcher also observed that teachers frequently integrated simple Islamic expressions such as *Bismillah*, *Insyallah*, *Alhamdulillah*, and *MasyaAllah* during classroom interaction, creating a learning atmosphere where religious values naturally accompanied English instruction rather than interrupting it.

The students' narratives strengthened these findings. Student 1 explained that teachers often reminded students that learning English was part of preparing themselves to become useful Muslims and future contributors to society.

"The leader often reminded us with verses from the Qur'an and Hadith. It made me realize that after hardship comes ease, so I became more motivated to continue learning." (Student 1)

Similarly, Student 2 described nearly withdrawing from the English program after being discouraged by negative comments from peers outside the program. However, after discussing the issue with the teacher, the student began to understand English as a means for future da'wah rather than simply a foreign language.

"He explained that English is a tool for defending Islam internationally. After that conversation, I became proud of my decision to stay in the program." (Student 2)

Taken together, the interview, observation, and student data demonstrate that embedding *pesantren* values extended beyond delivering religious advice during English lessons. Instead, Islamic values became a foundation for supporting students emotionally, strengthening perseverance, promoting mutual care, and helping students assign deeper meaning to the challenges of learning English.

More importantly, the findings reveal that social-emotional learning in this *pesantren* context possessed characteristics that differed from general SEL implementation. Emotional support was consistently

intertwined with religious beliefs, moral education, communal responsibility, and the long-term vision of preparing students for da'wah. Rather than functioning as separate dimensions, language learning, emotional development, and Islamic values were experienced by both teachers and students as one integrated educational process. This integration represents one of the distinctive contributions of the present study to understanding the implementation of social-emotional learning within Islamic boarding school settings.

Research Question 2: What challenges do teachers face in integrating social-emotional skills into English speaking learning?

To answer the second research question, the data were analyzed and grouped into four themes: Addressing Students' Deeply Rooted Emotional Barriers, Tension Between Discipline and Empathy in the English-Only Rule, Institutional and Workload Challenges, and Maintaining Teachers' Emotional Well-being. The findings for each theme are presented below.

a. Addressing Students' Deeply Rooted Emotional Barriers

The first finding regarding the challenges experienced by teachers in implementing social-emotional skills revealed that students' emotional barriers often extended beyond ordinary speaking anxiety. Although the teachers consistently attempted to create emotionally supportive learning environments, they acknowledged that some

students' fear of speaking originated from previous traumatic experiences, bullying, family-related problems, or deeply rooted negative beliefs about their own abilities. Consequently, emotional encouragement alone was not always sufficient to support students' participation in English speaking activities. Instead, teachers were often required to redesign their instructional approaches, build trust gradually, and accept that emotional recovery demanded considerably more time than linguistic improvement.

Teacher 1 explained that he encountered students whose fear of making mistakes remained unchanged despite repeated encouragement. Rather than immediately concluding that these students lacked motivation, he gradually realized that emotional safety had to be built through very small learning experiences.

"I have met students who were really afraid of making mistakes and did not want to speak at all, even though I had encouraged them many times. Every time they were asked to speak, they immediately lowered their heads and remained silent. Honestly, I felt stuck because the usual empathy approach was not enough. Finally, I stopped forcing them to speak in front of the class and started with very small things, such as asking them to answer with only one word or even just giving a nod. It was a long process, but eventually they slowly began to feel safe. The moment they finally dared to say one simple sentence became a very meaningful turning point." (Teacher 1)

Teacher 2 described a similar experience but discovered that the student's silence was rooted in childhood trauma rather than classroom anxiety alone.

"I stopped expecting quick results and allowed him to practice speaking only with me privately for several months until he gradually became comfortable." (Teacher 2)

Likewise, Teacher 3 encountered a student whose previous experiences of being ridiculed by peers prevented him from speaking English confidently.

"There was a student who had been severely mocked by students from another program whenever he tried to speak English. Every time I asked him to speak, he broke into a cold sweat and stared blankly. My encouragement and motivation did not work. Finally, I allowed him not to speak in front of the class. Instead, he wrote a diary and slowly read it aloud only to me in the dormitory." (Teacher 3)

These narratives demonstrate that the greatest obstacle faced by the teachers was not students' limited English proficiency but the emotional experiences that students carried into the classroom. Fear of speaking frequently originated from experiences that had occurred long before students entered the English program, including repeated humiliation, bullying, and negative educational experiences. As a result, conventional classroom encouragement was often insufficient because teachers were not simply addressing language difficulties but also responding to long-standing emotional wounds. This finding suggests that implementing social-emotional learning required teachers to recognize that emotional recovery could not always progress at the same pace as academic instruction.

Interestingly, the narratives also reveal that these situations affected the teachers emotionally. Teacher 1 admitted that he felt "stuck" when his usual supportive strategies failed, while Teacher 2 openly stated that he felt he had failed as a teacher because none of his encouragement immediately changed the student's condition. Rather than presenting themselves as professionals who always possessed effective solutions, the teachers acknowledged their own frustration, uncertainty, and limitations. Such reflections illustrate that implementing social-emotional learning also demanded emotional resilience from teachers themselves. They were required to regulate disappointment, abandon expectations of immediate success, and accept that building students' confidence was often a gradual and unpredictable process.

Another challenge described by all three teachers involved students who displayed passive resistance during English lessons. Rather than actively refusing to participate, these students remained silent, avoided eye contact, or appeared emotionally withdrawn, making it difficult for teachers to determine whether the behaviour reflected laziness, anxiety, or personal problems.

Teacher 1 explained that his initial frustration gradually changed after he began approaching students individually outside the classroom.

"At first, of course, there was frustration because it felt like there was no response from the students. However, I realized that it was not necessarily laziness. They might simply have felt uncomfortable or under pressure. Therefore, instead of forcing them, I approached them personally outside the classroom and talked about everyday life before discussing the lesson." (Teacher 1)

Similarly, Teacher 2 admitted that passive resistance initially caused him to question his own teaching practices.

"However, experience taught me that children showing passive resistance usually carry a heavy emotional burden. Later I discovered that many of them were dealing with family problems or conflicts with friend." (Teacher 2)

Teacher 3 described a comparable experience after discovering that one student's silence was caused by homesickness rather than unwillingness to learn.

"I discovered that the student was homesick and missed his mother. After I slowly approached him, talked with him, and even bought him hot tea, he gradually became willing to participate again." (Teacher 3)

These accounts demonstrate that the teachers gradually reconstructed their understanding of students' silence. Initially interpreted as passive behaviour or lack of engagement, prolonged observation and personal interaction led the teachers to recognize silence as a possible indicator of emotional distress. Consequently, rather than responding through punishment or pressure, they increasingly relied on personal conversations, informal mentoring, and

relationship-building to identify the underlying causes of students' behaviour.

The findings were also supported by classroom observations. During several speaking activities, the researcher observed that some students consistently lowered their heads, avoided eye contact, hesitated before responding, or relied heavily on peers before speaking. Rather than immediately correcting these behaviours, the teachers generally approached students calmly, provided additional waiting time, or continued conversations after the formal lesson had ended. These observations reinforced the interview findings that emotional barriers were frequently expressed through subtle classroom behaviours instead of explicit verbal communication.

Taken together, these findings suggest that one of the greatest challenges in implementing social-emotional learning involved addressing emotional difficulties that originated beyond the English classroom itself. Trauma, bullying, homesickness, negative self-beliefs, and previous educational experiences often shaped students' willingness to participate more strongly than their actual English ability. Consequently, teachers were required to move beyond the traditional role of language instructors and become patient mentors who continuously adapted their strategies according to each student's emotional condition. More importantly, these narratives reveal that

implementing social-emotional learning was not simply about applying supportive teaching techniques but about sustaining long-term relationships built on trust, patience, and emotional understanding. Such experiences illustrate the complexity of teachers' work in the *pasantren* context, where supporting students' emotional well-being became inseparable from facilitating their language development.

b. Tension Between Discipline and Empathy in the English-Only Rule

The second finding revealed that one of the greatest challenges experienced by teachers was balancing emotional support with the disciplinary expectations of the English program. While teachers were expected to enforce the English-only policy and maintain language discipline within the dormitory, they simultaneously recognized that strict enforcement could unintentionally damage students' confidence and emotional well-being. Consequently, the teachers frequently experienced professional dilemmas in deciding when rules should be enforced consistently and when compassion should take priority over discipline.

The teachers first described the challenge of protecting junior students who were reluctant to speak English because they feared being ridiculed by senior students. Rather than blaming the junior students for

their silence, all three teachers redirected their attention toward changing the behaviour of senior students.

Teacher 1 explained that he intentionally created a classroom environment where students felt psychologically safe regardless of their English ability.

"I created the classroom as a safe zone where there should be no mockery or negative judgment. I also reminded everyone that we were all still learning and encouraged positive interactions between seniors and juniors." (Teacher 1)

Similarly, Teacher 2 believed that improving the learning climate required changing seniors from evaluators into mentors.

"Instead of blaming the juniors, I gathered the senior student leaders and told them, 'You are the face of this language program. If juniors dare to speak English and you laugh at them, you have failed as older brothers.'" (Teacher 2)

Teacher 3 shared a comparable experience by emphasizing that senior students should become protectors rather than sources of fear.

"This has become a hereditary problem in the dormitory. Instead of scolding the juniors, I called the senior dormitory managers and reminded them that they were responsible for protecting younger students, not embarrassing them. If juniors were mocked because of their English, the penalty was given to the seniors. Gradually, seniors became tutors instead of bullies." (Teacher 3)

These narratives demonstrate that the teachers recognized that students' fear was not created solely by classroom instruction but also by the broader social environment within the boarding school. Rather than interpreting silence as students' personal weakness, the teachers

understood that peer relationships strongly influenced students' willingness to communicate. Consequently, addressing emotional barriers required changing the surrounding social culture in addition to supporting individual students.

Another challenge emerged from the implementation of the English-only policy. Although the regulation was designed to encourage continuous language practice, the teachers acknowledged that students sometimes violated the rule because they were emotionally overwhelmed rather than intentionally refusing to speak English.

Teacher 1 explained that violations often occurred when students became confused or panicked outside the classroom.

"I often found students speaking Indonesian outside the classroom. I did not immediately scold them. Instead, I approached them and helped them repeat the sentence in English. It became a learning opportunity rather than merely a language violation." (Teacher 1)

Teacher 2 described an incident involving a student who had lost his wallet containing an entire month's allowance.

"A new student lost his wallet and became extremely panicked. He shouting for help in Indonesian. The language discipline team wanted to record a violation, but I immediately stopped them. I said, 'This is an emotional emergency.' At that moment, we had to be human beings first before becoming rule enforcers." (Teacher 2)

Teacher 3 experienced a similar situation when a student lost a valuable personal belonging.

"A student lost his favourite thing, which had been a gift from his mother. He was crying and shouting in Indonesian when the language patrol wanted to punish him. I immediately stopped them and said, 'The child has lost something valuable. This is not the time to think about grammar.' During an emotional crisis, humanity must come before language rules." (Teacher 3)

These accounts reveal that teachers did not apply language rules mechanically. Instead, they continuously interpreted students' emotional conditions before deciding whether disciplinary action was appropriate. Emotional crises such as panic, grief, or distress were viewed as exceptional situations in which maintaining students' psychological well-being became more important than immediate compliance with language regulations.

The teachers also acknowledged experiencing considerable inner conflict when they were required to impose sanctions on students who had only recently developed the confidence to speak English.

Teacher 1 admitted that applying punishment sometimes felt as though he was undoing the student's progress.

"Honestly, it is often a dilemma. On one hand, I have to maintain fairness and uphold the rules. On the other hand, I know the student has only just begun to gain confidence. It feels as though I am breaking the progress that we have worked so hard to build. Therefore, I prefer constructive consequences, such as additional speaking practice rather than humiliating punishment." (Teacher 1)

Teacher 2 described an even stronger emotional conflict.

"There was a very shy student who finally dared to speak English, but accidentally switched to Indonesian while buying iced tea. According to the rules, I had to punish him. Honestly, my heart hurt because I knew he might become silent again the next day. After the punishment, I bought him the iced tea he originally wanted and told him, 'The punishment is finished. Tomorrow you must keep speaking English.' I tried to neutralize the emotional impact of the punishment." (Teacher 2)

Likewise, Teacher 3 experienced similar feelings whenever students who had just begun speaking English received disciplinary sanctions.

"My mind is often conflicted. There are shy students who finally dare to speak, but then they are caught violating the language rule and have to receive punishment. I know that this may cause them to become silent again. Therefore, I usually accompany them during the punishment, joke with them, and stay nearby so they do not feel abandoned." (Teacher 3)

These narratives illustrate that discipline was not emotionally neutral for the teachers themselves. Rather than simply enforcing regulations, they frequently experienced guilt, hesitation, and internal conflict because they understood that punishment could undermine students' developing confidence. Consequently, teachers continuously searched for ways to preserve the educational purpose of discipline while minimizing its emotional consequences.

Perhaps the most striking finding concerns the dual professional identities described by all three teachers. Throughout the interviews, they repeatedly explained that they were expected to function both as strict disciplinary officers and as compassionate mentors.

Teacher 1 reflected,

"I once had to reprimand a student publicly because of a language violation, even though I knew he was facing personal problems. Afterwards, I approached him privately, listened to his story, and gave him support. From that experience, I learned that being firm in public and caring in private are equally important." (Teacher 1)

Teacher 2 admitted that constantly changing between these two roles was emotionally exhausting.

"During the day I had to become the strict dormitory chairman who punished students. That night, the same student came to my room crying. I listened to him, hugged him, and even cooked instant noodles for him. Managing the emotional switch from someone students feared into someone they trusted was truly exhausting." (Teacher 2)

Teacher 3 expressed almost identical feelings.

"In the afternoon I had to wear the face of a strict officer, but in the evening I became someone who made listened to students' problems. Making these extreme role changes within the same day was mentally draining." (Teacher 3)

These narratives reveal that one of the most significant challenges in implementing social-emotional learning was not simply deciding how to respond to students but managing the teachers' own professional identities. The participants continually shifted between maintaining institutional discipline and providing emotional care, often within the same day. Rather than viewing these roles as contradictory, they gradually learned to balance firmness with compassion according to students' emotional circumstances.

The findings were further supported by classroom observation. During the observation, one student unintentionally used Indonesian because of difficulty expressing ideas in English. Instead of immediately imposing a sanction, the teacher first helped the student find the appropriate English vocabulary before asking the student to repeat the sentence in English. This observation confirms that teachers attempted to balance language discipline with students' emotional needs.

More importantly, the findings demonstrate that effective implementation of social-emotional learning within the *pesantren* context did not require abandoning discipline altogether. Instead, the teachers consistently attempted to humanize disciplinary practices by considering students' emotional readiness, modifying sanctions, and providing personal support after formal disciplinary actions had been completed. This suggests that the teachers perceived discipline not as an end in itself but as a means of fostering students' character while simultaneously protecting their emotional well-being. Such experiences illustrate the complex reality of implementing social-emotional learning in a boarding school environment, where educational values, institutional regulations, and students' emotional needs must be negotiated continuously rather than treated as separate aspects of teaching.

c. Institutional and Workload Challenges

The third finding revealed that implementing social-emotional skills was also constrained by institutional conditions and teachers' workload within the Islamic boarding school. Although the teachers recognized the importance of providing continuous emotional support, they acknowledged that limited instructional time, a demanding boarding school schedule, curriculum expectations, large numbers of students, and environmental conditions often restricted their ability to respond to students' emotional needs. Consequently, teachers were frequently required to prioritize between institutional responsibilities and individualized emotional support.

The teachers first described how the intensive daily schedule in the *pesantren* often interrupted opportunities to provide immediate emotional assistance to students. Teacher 1 explained that there were occasions when students clearly needed someone to listen to them, yet institutional routines forced him to postpone the conversation.

"I once saw a student who looked very upset after the speaking session. He was silent, lowered his head, and clearly needed someone to talk to. I really wanted to accompany him longer, but the schedule had to continue to the next activity. I only had enough time to calm him briefly and promised that we would continue talking later. It made me realize that sometimes the intention to help has to be postponed because of the system."
(Teacher 1)

Similarly, Teacher 2 described feeling emotionally uncomfortable when he had to leave a student who wanted to share personal problems because another teaching session was about to begin.

"After class, one student came to me with sadly face and asked if he could talk for a while. I really wanted to sit and listen, but the bell rang and I had to teach another class in a different dormitory. I could only hold his shoulder and promise to meet him later that evening. Sometimes, by the time evening came, the student had already lost the mood to talk." (Teacher 2)

Teacher 3 experienced a similar dilemma when religious obligations conflicted with students' emotional needs.

"Once a student looked as though he was about to cry after my speaking class and wanted to talk. However, the bell for Maghrib prayer had already rung (Adzan), and I was responsible for leading students to the mosque. I could only tell him to meet me after the evening prayer. It was painful to postpone giving emotional support simply because of such a strict schedule." (Teacher 3)

These narratives demonstrate that teachers' willingness to provide emotional support was not always matched by sufficient time to do so. Rather than reflecting a lack of concern, the delayed responses resulted from institutional routines that required teachers to fulfill multiple responsibilities throughout the day. Consequently, emotional support often depended not only on teachers' intentions but also on the availability of time within the boarding school schedule.

The teachers also identified daily academic targets as another challenge in creating emotionally supportive learning environments.

Teacher 1 explained that students often became more concerned with meeting vocabulary memorization targets than enjoying the learning process.

"Daily targets sometimes make the atmosphere feel rushed. Students focus on memorizing vocabulary instead of enjoying the learning process. I often insert games or light reviews to reduce the pressure, but balancing both remains difficult."
(Teacher 1)

Teacher 2 similarly observed that students were strongly influenced by the pressure of compulsory vocabulary deposits.

"Sometimes it feels like a factory chasing production quotas. Even when I want to make learning enjoyable through games, students themselves ask me not to spend too much time because they are worried about their afternoon vocabulary deposit."
(Teacher 2)

Teacher 3 expressed the same concern.

"Every afternoon students must memorize ten vocabulary items. I want to teach through stories or games, but students often remind me that they have not prepared for the vocabulary deposit yet. The daily target sometimes leaves very little room for enjoyable learning." (Teacher 3)

These accounts suggest that institutional performance targets sometimes unintentionally increased students' learning pressure. Although such targets were intended to strengthen language development, they occasionally reduced opportunities for teachers to create more relaxed and emotionally supportive classroom experiences. As a result, teachers continuously negotiated between achieving

institutional expectations and maintaining students' emotional comfort during learning.

The participants further explained that curriculum expectations occasionally exceeded students' emotional readiness. Teacher 1 observed that some students were expected to participate in debate activities before they had developed sufficient confidence in basic speaking.

"There was a time when students had already entered the debate stage even though some of them were still hesitant to speak simple sentences. I felt the curriculum was moving too quickly, so I added extra stages before introducing more demanding activities." (Teacher 1)

Teacher 2 shared a similar experience when students were expected to complete argumentative presentations despite having limited grammatical foundations.

"The curriculum required students to write argumentative essays and give academic presentations, but many still struggled with basic grammar. I noticed that some students eventually gave up and copied their friends' work. Finally, I simplified the task into an ordinary discussion because they were emotionally overloaded." (Teacher 2)

Likewise, Teacher 3 deliberately modified the curriculum when it coincided with students' *pesantren* examinations.

*"Students were supposed to deliver scientific presentations during the same week as their *pesantren* examinations. I realized that if I insisted on following the curriculum, they would collapse emotionally. Therefore, I changed the lesson into a relaxed short-story activity instead." (Teacher 3)*

These narratives demonstrate that teachers did not always implement the curriculum exactly as planned. Instead, they continuously adapted instructional demands according to students' emotional readiness. This finding indicates that curriculum flexibility became an important aspect of implementing social-emotional learning, allowing teachers to prioritize students' psychological well-being without abandoning learning objectives entirely.

Another challenge involved the limited opportunities to provide individualized emotional support because of the large number of students living in each dormitory. Teacher 1 acknowledged that time constraints prevented teachers from accompanying every student personally.

"With so many students, it is impossible to provide intensive emotional support to all. I have to decide which students need immediate attention and which ones must wait." (Teacher 1)

Teacher 2 expressed even stronger feelings of guilt.

"Sometimes I feel guilty because I only have enough energy to help students whose problems are the most visible. Meanwhile, students who suffer quietly often escape my attention. I have to admit that there are still students whom I have never had the opportunity to accompany personally.." (Teacher 2)

Teacher 3 described a similar limitation.

"One dormitory can contain thirty students with different personalities. I usually notice students whose problems are obvious, but those who struggle silently are often overlooked. This is the limitation that makes me feel most guilty as a leader." (Teacher 3)

These findings reveal that teachers recognized an important limitation within their own practice. Although they attempted to care for every student, institutional realities prevented them from providing equal emotional attention to all learners. Rather than ignoring this limitation, the participants openly acknowledged feelings of guilt and professional regret, suggesting that implementing social-emotional learning also required teachers to accept the boundaries of what could realistically be achieved within their working conditions.

Finally, the teachers identified physical facilities and the boarding school environment as additional obstacles. Teacher 1 explained that noisy learning spaces sometimes reduced students' concentration during speaking practice.

"Sometimes the environment is too crowded for students to concentrate, especially during speaking activities that require confidence. I often have to divide students into smaller groups or look for quieter places, although the options are limited." (Teacher 1)

Teacher 2 pointed to limited learning resources and negative attitudes from students outside the English program.

"Students are not allowed to bring mobile phones, so it is difficult to keep learning materials updated. Sometimes students from outside the English program also mock English as a foreign or unnecessary language, which reduces students' motivation." (Teacher 2)

Teacher 3 similarly emphasized environmental limitations.

"The dormitory is often noisy, the lighting is poor, and students sometimes have to study English outside at night under brighter lights while dealing with mosquitoes. The environment is not always ideal for language learning that requires concentration." (Teacher 3)

The findings were also supported by classroom observation. During the observation, the researcher noted that speaking activities occasionally had to be concluded earlier because they approached the scheduled congregational prayer time. As a result, not every student received individual feedback from the teacher. The researcher also observed that several students appeared more concerned with preparing vocabulary for the afternoon memorization session than actively participating in speaking activities, indicating that institutional schedules and academic targets sometimes limited opportunities for teachers to provide extended emotional support.

Taken together, these findings suggest that many of the challenges experienced by teachers originated not from their willingness to implement social-emotional learning but from institutional conditions surrounding the learning process. Time constraints, demanding academic targets, curriculum expectations, large class sizes, and environmental limitations frequently reduced teachers' opportunities to provide individualized emotional assistance. Nevertheless, rather than abandoning social-emotional practices, the teachers consistently adapted their instructional strategies, modified

learning activities, and prioritized students' emotional well-being whenever possible. These experiences illustrate that implementing social-emotional learning within the *pesantren* context required teachers not only to possess emotional competence but also to continuously negotiate between institutional expectations and students' emotional needs.

d. Maintaining Teachers' Emotional Well-being

The fourth finding revealed that implementing social-emotional learning also required teachers to continuously manage their own emotional well-being. Beyond supporting students' emotional development, the participants described experiencing emotional exhaustion, role overload, limited professional preparation for handling psychological crises, and the challenge of balancing institutional responsibilities with their own personal needs. These narratives demonstrate that social-emotional learning was not only emotionally demanding for students but also for the teachers who were responsible for providing continuous emotional support.

The participants first described how continuously listening to students' personal struggles gradually affected their own emotional energy. Teacher 1 explained that regularly accompanying students through learning difficulties and personal problems eventually became emotionally exhausting.

"There was a period when students came almost every day to share their learning problems, feelings of inferiority, and personal difficulties. At first I tried to be fully present for them, but over time I felt emotionally exhausted. I realized that if I did not take care of my own mental condition, I would no longer be able to help students effectively." (Teacher 1)

Similarly, Teacher 2 openly admitted experiencing emotional fatigue after repeatedly absorbing students' emotional burdens.

"Almost every night students came to my room asking for advice. Eventually I experienced what I now understand as compassion fatigue. I felt like a sponge absorbing everyone else's problems. I continued teaching, but I realized my emotional energy was no longer the same. Sometimes I became moody and easily irritated even though the problems were not my own." (Teacher 2)

Teacher 3 shared a comparable experience.

"Listening to students who missed their parents, were bullied, or struggled with memorization felt like constantly absorbing dirty water. Eventually I became emotionally exhausted and easily irritated over very small things. That was when I realized my emotional energy had been drained by carrying other people's problems." (Teacher 3)

These narratives reveal that providing continuous emotional support also exposed teachers to emotional exhaustion. Rather than simply acting as providers of emotional care, the participants themselves gradually became emotionally affected by the problems they encountered every day. This finding suggests that implementing social-emotional learning requires teachers not only to regulate students' emotions but also to recognize and manage their own emotional limits.

Without maintaining their own well-being, teachers believed that the quality of emotional support they provided would inevitably decline.

To restore their emotional energy, all three teachers described intentionally engaging in various forms of self-care. Teacher 1 explained that he often withdrew temporarily from daily activities through worship, reflection, and conversations with fellow teachers.

"After emotionally exhausting days, I usually take time to reflect, perform sunnah prayers, recite dhikr, and sometimes talk with fellow teachers. These simple activities help me regain emotional stability." (Teacher 1)

Teacher 2 relied on hobbies and informal conversations with colleagues.

"When I feel emotionally overwhelmed, I usually play football, read novels, or simply spend time talking with my friends. Those activities help me recover before facing another day." (Teacher 2)

Teacher 3 similarly emphasized the importance of temporarily distancing himself from his leadership responsibilities.

"I usually go to the library during lunch break or sit alone with a cup of coffee in the canteen. For a while, I try to stop thinking about being a Leader and simply become myself again." (Teacher 3)

These experiences indicate that maintaining teachers' emotional well-being was not viewed as a personal luxury but as a professional necessity. The participants recognized that caring for themselves enabled them to continue caring effectively for their students,

highlighting the reciprocal relationship between teacher well-being and the successful implementation of social-emotional learning.

The teachers also acknowledged feeling professionally unprepared when students experienced serious psychological crises. Teacher 1 admitted that some situations exceeded his own abilities and required support from more experienced individuals.

"I have faced students with very complex emotional problems. At those moments I felt stuck because the usual approach was no longer enough. I realized my own limitations, so I sought help from people with more experience rather than trying to solve everything by myself." (Teacher 1)

Teacher 2 described a frightening experience involving a student experiencing an emotional breakdown in the middle of the night.

"A student suddenly became hysterical and started throwing furniture. Honestly, I panicked because I am only a student leader, not a psychologist. I realized that good intentions alone were not enough without proper knowledge about handling psychological crises. The next morning I immediately asked the boarding school caregiver for professional help." (Teacher 2)

Teacher 3 experienced an even more complex psychological emergency.

"One student hid under his bed believing that his roommates wanted to poison him. I honestly became completely blank because I had never been trained to handle symptoms like paranoia or hallucinations. That experience taught me that empathy alone is not enough. Some situations require professional expertise." (Teacher 3)

These narratives demonstrate that teachers clearly distinguished between providing emotional support and managing serious

psychological disorders. Rather than attempting to solve every problem independently, they recognized the importance of referring students to individuals with greater expertise. Such reflections illustrate professional humility and suggest that implementing social-emotional learning also requires institutional support, including appropriate training and referral systems for teachers who encounter complex psychological situations.

The participants further described occasions when institutional demands caused them to neglect their own emotional needs. Teacher 1 acknowledged that his own well-being was sometimes overlooked because of continuous responsibilities.

"There were times when I continued carrying out my responsibilities even though I was mentally exhausted. Eventually I realized that taking care of myself was not selfish but necessary if I wanted to continue supporting my students."
(Teacher 1)

Teacher 2 described the difficulty of balancing his dual responsibilities as both a student and a dormitory supervisor.

"I was still expected to memorize the Qur'an, prepare for my own examinations, teach every evening, supervise the dormitory, and care for sick students. Sometimes I became so overwhelmed that I forgot the last time I had genuinely rested."
(Teacher 2)

Teacher 3 shared perhaps the most emotionally powerful narrative of the study.

"On the same day that I received news that my father had passed away, I was also serving as the chief organizer of a major English competition in the boarding school. I smiled throughout the event while hiding my grief. Only after my supervisor noticed my condition was I finally allowed to return home. That experience reminded me that teachers also need space to grieve, even while carrying institutional responsibilities." (Teacher 3)

These stories reveal that teachers often placed students' needs and institutional responsibilities ahead of their own emotional well-being. Rather than presenting themselves as emotionally invulnerable, the participants openly acknowledged moments of grief, exhaustion, and personal sacrifice. Such narratives highlight that implementing social-emotional learning within a boarding school context requires considerable emotional labour, where teachers continually regulate not only students' emotions but also their own personal struggles.

Finally, all three teachers emphasized the importance of peer support among fellow Leaders. Teacher 1 explained that sharing experiences with colleagues helped reduce emotional burdens and provided new perspectives for solving problems. Teacher 2 described how fellow Leaders collaboratively discussed students' difficulties and even created simple observation notes to identify appropriate interventions. Likewise, Teacher 3 explained that fellow Leaders had developed an informal support system in which they temporarily replaced one another whenever someone felt emotionally overwhelmed. Rather than facing difficult situations individually, the teachers relied

on mutual trust and shared responsibility to maintain both their own emotional well-being and the quality of support provided to students.

The findings were also supported by classroom observation. During the observation, the researcher noted that teachers frequently had to divide their attention between managing classroom activities, maintaining discipline, and responding to students' emotional needs within limited instructional time. These observations reinforce the interview findings that providing emotional support required considerable emotional energy while teachers simultaneously fulfilled multiple institutional responsibilities.

Taken together, these findings suggest that sustaining teachers' emotional well-being constitutes an essential yet often overlooked aspect of implementing social-emotional learning. The participants' experiences demonstrate that effective emotional support for students depends not only on teachers' empathy and interpersonal skills but also on their ability to regulate their own emotions, recognize personal limitations, seek support when necessary, and maintain their own psychological well-being. This finding extends the understanding of social-emotional learning by illustrating that the successful implementation of SEL in the *pesantren* context requires emotional care for both students and teachers, rather than focusing exclusively on learners' social and emotional development.

B. Discussion

This section discusses the findings of the research in relation to the theories presented in Chapter II and the previous studies relevant to social-emotional skills, English speaking learning, and Islamic boarding school education. The discussion is arranged based on the themes found in the findings section. The purpose of this discussion is not only to restate the findings, but also to interpret their meaning and explain how the teachers' experiences reflect the application of social-emotional skills in English speaking learning at Al-Falah Islamic Boarding School Banjarbaru.

1. Teachers' Application of Social-Emotional Skills in English Speaking Learning

The first research question of this study focuses on how teachers in the English program at Al-Falah apply social-emotional skills in English speaking learning. The findings show that the teachers applied social-emotional skills through four main practices: building trust and emotional safety, giving scaffolding and supportive correction, managing speaking anxiety and performance pressure, and embedding *Pesantren* values as moral support. These findings indicate that English speaking learning in the *Pesantren* context is not only a linguistic activity, but also a social, emotional, and spiritual process.

a. Building Trust and Emotional Safety

The first findings indicate that creating emotional safety constituted the primary foundation of teachers' implementation of Social-Emotional Learning in English speaking instruction. Rather than immediately emphasizing linguistic accuracy, the participants consistently prioritized building trust, reducing students' anxiety, and establishing supportive teacher–student relationships before expecting active oral participation. This suggests that emotional readiness was viewed as a prerequisite for successful language learning, allowing students to participate more confidently without excessive fear of making mistakes.

These findings support Hoffman's (2009) Social-Emotional Learning framework, which emphasizes that students learn more effectively when they are able to recognize and regulate emotions while developing positive relationships with others. Similarly, Helaluddin and Alamsyah (2019) argue that SEL strengthens emotional regulation, communication, and social awareness, enabling learners to engage more confidently in classroom activities. The teachers' practices of greeting students warmly, acknowledging their emotions, and creating supportive interactions demonstrate the practical application of these principles in English speaking learning. The findings also align with Goleman's (2009) theory of emotional intelligence, particularly

teachers' ability to recognize students' anxiety and respond with empathy rather than pressure. Instead of ignoring students' emotions, teachers deliberately helped them regain confidence before encouraging language production.

The findings are further consistent with Vygotsky's (1980) sociocultural theory and Krashen's (1982) Affective Filter Hypothesis. Vygotsky explains that learning develops through supportive interaction with more knowledgeable individuals, while Krashen argues that anxiety and low confidence reduce language acquisition. In this study, emotional support functioned as a form of scaffolding that enabled students to participate gradually in speaking activities. By lowering students' affective filters through encouragement, humour, and reassurance, teachers created conditions that allowed students to communicate despite limited vocabulary or imperfect grammar. Likewise, MacIntyre et al. (1998) suggest that willingness to communicate is influenced not only by language proficiency but also by learners' psychological readiness, which was consistently reflected in the participants' experiences.

The findings are consistent with previous studies demonstrating that supportive teacher–student relationships encourage greater confidence and classroom participation. Fitratullah (2023) found that teachers' empathy and positive communication increase students'

engagement in English learning, while Lavenda et al. (2025) reported that Social-Emotional Learning contributes to students' emotional competence and academic development. However, this study extends previous research by demonstrating that emotional safety within the *pesantren* context is constructed not only through classroom interaction but also through continuous relationships in dormitory life. This finding also reflects Bronfenbrenner's (1979) Ecological Systems Theory, as students' emotional development was influenced by interconnected environments, including classrooms, dormitories, peer relationships, and religious activities. Consequently, Social-Emotional Learning in this study emerged as a holistic educational process integrating language learning, emotional development, character education, and Islamic values.

b. Scaffolding, Mistakes, and Supportive Correction

The findings demonstrate that teachers perceived corrective feedback as an emotionally supportive process rather than merely a linguistic intervention. Instead of immediately correcting grammatical or pronunciation errors, the participants intentionally delayed correction, provided subtle guidance, and encouraged students to complete their ideas before offering feedback. This suggests that mistakes were viewed as a natural part of language learning, while

emotional protection and language development were treated as equally important educational goals.

These findings strongly support Vygotsky's (1980) sociocultural theory, particularly the concept of scaffolding, which emphasizes that learners develop more effectively through gradual guidance from more knowledgeable individuals. Rather than interrupting students' speech, teachers provided keywords, guiding questions, gestures, and sentence reformulation that enabled students to continue speaking independently. The findings also align with Krashen's (1982) Affective Filter Hypothesis, as delayed correction, humour, and positive reinforcement reduced students' anxiety and encouraged continued participation in speaking activities. This indicates that corrective feedback became effective because it addressed students' emotional readiness before focusing on linguistic accuracy.

The participants' practices also reflect Hoffman's (2009) Social-Emotional Learning framework and Goleman's (2009) theory of emotional intelligence. Teachers consistently considered students' emotional conditions before deciding how and when feedback should be delivered, while also regulating their own emotions when students repeatedly made mistakes or initially rejected correction. Furthermore, Bandura's (1977) Social Learning Theory helps explain how teachers modelled respectful communication, constructive responses to

mistakes, and supportive classroom interactions, allowing students to learn not only language forms but also appropriate attitudes toward making and correcting errors.

These findings are consistent with previous studies emphasizing the importance of supportive feedback in English language learning. Dörnyei (2001) argues that constructive feedback strengthens learners' motivation and confidence, while Fitratullah (2023) found that empathetic teacher behaviour encourages students to participate more actively in speaking activities. However, this study extends previous research by demonstrating that supportive correction within the *pesantren* context served not only to improve linguistic accuracy but also to develop emotional resilience, respectful peer relationships, and positive character. Consequently, corrective feedback became a holistic educational practice integrating language learning, Social-Emotional Learning, and Islamic values.

c. Managing Speaking Anxiety and Performance Pressure

The findings indicate that managing students' speaking anxiety constituted another essential aspect of teachers' implementation of Social-Emotional Learning in English speaking instruction. Rather than interpreting students' silence as a lack of ability or motivation, the participants consistently viewed behaviours such as avoiding eye contact, trembling, remaining silent, and refusing to speak as emotional

responses requiring immediate support. Consequently, teachers adapted learning activities by incorporating pair work, group discussions, humour, role plays, and emotional reassurance before expecting students to perform individually. These findings suggest that emotional readiness was considered a prerequisite for successful oral communication rather than expecting students to overcome anxiety independently.

These findings strongly support Krashen's (1982) Affective Filter Hypothesis, which explains that anxiety, fear, and low self-confidence can inhibit second-language acquisition. Likewise, Horwitz et al. (1986) argue that fear of negative evaluation and communication apprehension frequently prevent learners from participating in foreign language classrooms. Rather than maintaining rigid lesson plans, the participants deliberately modified speaking activities after recognizing students' emotional conditions, demonstrating the principles of Hoffman's (2009) Social-Emotional Learning framework. Teachers' ability to recognize signs of anxiety and respond with patience, reassurance, and flexible instruction also reflects Goleman's (2009) concept of emotional intelligence, particularly emotional awareness and relationship management.

The findings are also consistent with Vygotsky's (1980) sociocultural theory and MacIntyre et al.'s (1998) Willingness to

Communicate framework. Pair work, small-group discussions, and collaborative speaking activities provided students with opportunities to rehearse ideas, receive peer support, and gradually build confidence before speaking individually. These collaborative interactions functioned not only as cognitive scaffolding but also as emotional scaffolding, increasing students' willingness to communicate by reducing the psychological risks associated with public speaking. The participants therefore demonstrated that effective speaking instruction required balancing language objectives with students' emotional readiness rather than focusing solely on speaking performance.

The findings are consistent with previous studies showing that emotionally supportive learning environments reduce speaking anxiety and encourage greater classroom participation. Dewaele and MacIntyre (2014) reported that positive classroom emotions increase learners' willingness to communicate, while Li (2023) found that supportive teacher–student relationships strengthen students' confidence in foreign language learning. However, this study extends previous research by demonstrating that anxiety management in the *pesantren* context continued beyond classroom instruction through dormitory supervision, informal interactions, and religious activities. This finding suggests that Social-Emotional Learning within an Islamic boarding school represents a holistic process in which emotional regulation, language

learning, character education, and the broader educational environment work together to support students' speaking development.

d. Embedding *Pesantren* Values and Moral Support

The findings demonstrate that the implementation of Social-Emotional Learning in English speaking instruction extended beyond developing students' emotional competencies by integrating Islamic values and the educational culture of the *pesantren*. The participants consistently connected English learning with concepts such as patience (*ṣabr*), sincerity (*ikhlaṣ*), trust in Allah (*tawakkul*), brotherhood (*ukhuwah*), and good manners (*adab*). Rather than presenting English solely as an academic subject, teachers framed language learning as part of students' moral, spiritual, and personal development. These findings suggest that emotional support within the *pesantren* context was inseparable from religious values, resulting in a holistic approach that simultaneously nurtured students' linguistic competence, emotional well-being, and Islamic character.

These findings support Hoffman's (2009) Social-Emotional Learning framework, which emphasizes that education should foster empathy, responsible decision-making, and positive interpersonal relationships alongside academic achievement. Likewise, Helaluddin and Alamsyah (2019) argue that Social-Emotional Learning develops communication skills, collaboration, and emotional awareness through

meaningful educational experiences. In the present study, these competencies were strengthened through religious advice, daily moral practices, and communal living in the boarding school environment. The findings also reflect Goleman's (2009) theory of emotional intelligence, as teachers encouraged students to regulate emotions through Islamic practices such as istighfar, prayer, and reflection on their learning intentions. Rather than separating emotional regulation from religious practice, the participants viewed spiritual guidance as an effective way to strengthen students' emotional resilience during English learning.

The findings further align with Bandura's (1977) Social Learning Theory and Bronfenbrenner's (1979) Ecological Systems Theory. Teachers consistently modelled patience, humility, respect, and emotional self-control, allowing students to learn these values through everyday interactions rather than through instruction alone. At the same time, students experienced continuous reinforcement of these values across classrooms, dormitories, religious activities, and peer relationships, demonstrating how the broader *pesantren* environment contributed to both emotional and character development. These findings also reinforce the teachers' roles discussed in Chapter II, showing that they functioned not only as language instructors but also

as mentors, moral educators, and role models who integrated English learning with Islamic values and character education.

The findings are consistent with previous studies emphasizing the relationship between Islamic values and social-emotional development. Bahagia et al. (2022) argue that Islamic education strengthens empathy, responsibility, and self-control, while Hasibuan (2021) and Sarwadi and Raihan (2023) found that integrating Islamic values into English language teaching enhances both students' motivation and moral development. However, this study extends previous research by demonstrating that Islamic values were not merely integrated into lesson content but became practical strategies for reducing speaking anxiety, strengthening motivation, and fostering supportive peer relationships. Consequently, Social-Emotional Learning within the *pesantren* context emerged as a holistic educational process integrating language learning, emotional development, Islamic values, and character formation through students' everyday academic and residential experiences.

2. Challenges Faced by Teachers in Integrating SES into English Speaking Learning

The second research question focuses on the challenges teachers face in integrating social-emotional skills into English speaking learning. The findings show that teachers faced four main challenges: Addressing Students' Deeply

Rooted Emotional Barriers, Tension Between Discipline and Empathy in the English-Only Rule, Institutional and Workload Challenges, Maintaining Teachers' Emotional Well-being. These challenges indicate that applying social-emotional skills in English speaking learning is meaningful, but not simple.

a. Addressing Students' Deeply Rooted Emotional Barriers

The first findings indicate that one of the major challenges teachers encountered in implementing Social-Emotional Learning was students' persistent emotional barriers during English speaking activities. Although teachers consistently provided encouragement, emotional reassurance, and gradual speaking opportunities, several students remained reluctant to participate because of fear of making mistakes, previous negative experiences, low self-confidence, and anxiety. These findings suggest that emotional barriers cannot always be resolved through short-term classroom interventions, as students often bring psychological experiences that continue to influence their willingness to communicate.

This finding supports Krashen's (1982) Affective Filter Hypothesis, which explains that anxiety and low self-confidence can prevent learners from effectively acquiring and producing language. Likewise, Horwitz et al. (1986) argue that fear of negative evaluation frequently discourages students from participating in foreign language

communication. The participants' experiences also reflect Hoffman's (2009) Social-Emotional Learning framework, particularly teachers' efforts to demonstrate empathy, relationship skills, and responsible decision-making by adapting instruction according to students' emotional conditions rather than focusing solely on language performance. Furthermore, Goleman's (2009) concept of emotional intelligence helps explain how teachers recognized students' emotional difficulties and regulated their own responses by remaining patient and supportive throughout the learning process.

The present findings are consistent with previous studies showing that emotional support plays an important role in reducing speaking anxiety. Dewaele and MacIntyre (2014) reported that positive classroom emotions increase learners' willingness to communicate, while Allahyarova (2025) found that supportive teacher behaviour helps students participate more confidently in English speaking activities. However, this study extends previous research by demonstrating that emotional barriers within the *pesantren* context often originate from experiences beyond the classroom, including previous bullying, negative self-perceptions, and the unique social environment of boarding school life.

An important contribution of this study is the finding that overcoming students' emotional barriers required continuous support

that extended beyond classroom instruction. Because teachers also served as dormitory supervisors, they were able to accompany students through repeated emotional experiences in both academic and residential settings. This suggests that implementing Social-Emotional Learning in an Islamic boarding school is a continuous process that integrates language learning, emotional development, and daily interpersonal relationships rather than limiting emotional support to formal classroom activities.

b. Tension Between Discipline and Empathy in the English-Only Rule

The second findings indicate that another significant challenge faced by teachers was balancing the enforcement of the *pesantren's* English-only policy with students' emotional well-being. Although language discipline was considered essential for improving students' English proficiency, the participants acknowledged that rigid enforcement sometimes conflicted with students' emotional needs. Teachers frequently encountered situations in which students violated language rules because they panicked, experienced emotional distress, or lacked sufficient English vocabulary to express themselves. Rather than responding immediately with punishment, the participants often adapted disciplinary practices by prioritizing emotional recovery before gradually guiding students back to the English-only policy. These

findings suggest that effective discipline in English speaking learning requires flexibility and emotional sensitivity rather than strict rule enforcement alone.

These findings support Hoffman's (2009) Social-Emotional Learning framework, which emphasizes that responsible decision-making requires educators to consider students' emotional conditions before determining appropriate responses. Similarly, Goleman's (2009) theory of emotional intelligence highlights the importance of empathy and emotional regulation in managing interpersonal relationships. Instead of applying sanctions mechanically, the participants demonstrated emotional awareness by considering the reasons behind students' language violations and selecting responses that protected students' confidence while maintaining institutional discipline. Furthermore, Bronfenbrenner's (1979) Ecological Systems Theory helps explain these findings, as teachers' decisions were influenced not only by individual students but also by the broader boarding school environment, including institutional rules, senior–junior relationships, and the culture of the English Area.

The findings are consistent with previous studies emphasizing that emotionally supportive learning environments encourage greater participation and confidence in language learning. Hasibuan (2021) argues that English learning in Islamic educational settings should

balance academic expectations with character development and students' emotional well-being. Likewise, Fitratullah (2023) found that empathetic teacher responses contribute to students' confidence and willingness to communicate. However, the present study extends previous research by demonstrating that teachers in the *pesantren* context continuously negotiated between institutional discipline and emotional support, particularly when students experienced emotional crises or unintentionally violated language regulations.

An important contribution of this study is the finding that the implementation of Social-Emotional Learning within an Islamic boarding school requires teachers to function simultaneously as discipline enforcers and emotional mentors. Rather than viewing these roles as contradictory, the participants integrated both responsibilities by maintaining language discipline while remaining responsive to students' emotional conditions. This finding suggests that successful implementation of Social-Emotional Learning in the *pesantren* context depends not only on fostering students' emotional development but also on teachers' ability to balance institutional expectations with compassionate educational practices.

c. Institutional and Workload Challenges

The third findings indicate that the implementation of Social-Emotional Learning was influenced not only by students' emotional

conditions but also by institutional constraints within the *pesantren*. The participants explained that the intensive daily schedule, vocabulary memorization targets, curriculum demands, large numbers of students, and limited learning facilities often reduced opportunities to provide individualized emotional support. Consequently, teachers were frequently required to modify lesson plans, simplify learning activities, or postpone emotional assistance because of institutional responsibilities. These findings suggest that implementing Social-Emotional Learning depends not only on teachers' competence but also on the educational environment in which teaching and learning occur.

These findings are closely related to Bronfenbrenner's (1979) Ecological Systems Theory, which argues that students' learning and development are shaped by interactions between individuals and their surrounding educational environment. In the present study, teachers' instructional decisions were influenced by multiple contextual factors, including boarding school routines, congregational prayer schedules, English-only regulations, and institutional learning targets. Likewise, Vygotsky's (1980) sociocultural theory emphasizes that learning occurs within specific social and cultural contexts. The participants continuously adapted instructional strategies, such as modifying speaking activities and reducing task difficulty, to accommodate students' emotional readiness while responding to institutional

expectations. These findings also reflect Hoffman's (2009) view that effective Social-Emotional Learning requires flexible learning environments that support students' emotional development alongside academic achievement.

The findings support previous studies emphasizing that contextual factors influence the effectiveness of Social-Emotional Learning. Holandyah (2024) argues that learning environments, classroom conditions, and institutional support significantly affect students' confidence in English speaking activities. Similarly, Habibi (2022) found that teachers often need to adjust instructional practices to respond to contextual challenges within Islamic educational institutions. However, this study extends previous research by demonstrating that teachers in the *pesantren* context continuously negotiated between institutional expectations and students' emotional needs throughout both classroom and dormitory activities.

An important contribution of this study is the finding that institutional conditions should not be viewed solely as obstacles but also as factors requiring teachers to become more adaptive and reflective practitioners. Rather than implementing Social-Emotional Learning through fixed instructional procedures, the participants continuously adjusted their teaching strategies according to students' emotional conditions while considering the realities of boarding school life. This

finding suggests that successful implementation of Social-Emotional Learning in Islamic boarding schools depends on teachers' ability to balance pedagogical goals, institutional responsibilities, and students' emotional well-being within a complex educational environment.

d. Maintaining Teachers' Emotional Well-being

The fourth findings indicate that implementing Social-Emotional Learning not only required teachers to support students' emotional development but also demanded continuous management of their own emotional well-being. The participants described experiencing emotional exhaustion after repeatedly listening to students' personal problems, balancing multiple responsibilities as teachers and dormitory supervisors, and handling situations that exceeded their professional expertise. Despite these challenges, they actively sought emotional recovery through religious practices, personal reflection, hobbies, and support from fellow teachers. These findings suggest that teachers' emotional well-being is an essential factor influencing their ability to sustain supportive relationships and effectively implement Social-Emotional Learning.

These findings support Goleman's (2009) theory of emotional intelligence, particularly the competencies of self-awareness and self-management. Throughout the study, the participants recognized signs of their own emotional exhaustion and deliberately adopted strategies

to restore their emotional balance before continuing their educational responsibilities. Similarly, Hoffman's (2009) Social-Emotional Learning framework emphasizes that educators' social-emotional competencies play a central role in creating emotionally supportive learning environments. The findings also reflect Bronfenbrenner's (1979) Ecological Systems Theory, as teachers' emotional well-being was shaped not only by individual experiences but also by institutional responsibilities, boarding school routines, and the multiple social roles they performed within the *pesantren* community.

The findings are consistent with previous studies highlighting the importance of teachers' emotional well-being in educational practice. Fitratullah (2023) argues that teachers' emotional competence contributes significantly to the successful implementation of Social-Emotional Learning because emotionally healthy teachers are better able to establish positive relationships with students. Likewise, Helaluddin and Alamsyah (2019) emphasize that Social-Emotional Learning should involve not only students but also educators, since teachers' emotional conditions directly influence classroom interactions and learning experiences. However, the present study extends previous research by demonstrating that teachers in the *pesantren* context face additional emotional demands arising from their simultaneous roles as

language teachers, dormitory supervisors, mentors, and moral educators.

An important contribution of this study is the finding that sustaining teachers' emotional well-being is a fundamental component of implementing Social-Emotional Learning within Islamic boarding schools. Unlike previous studies that primarily focus on students' emotional development, this research demonstrates that teachers also require emotional support, opportunities for self-care, collaboration with colleagues, and institutional recognition of their emotional workload. The findings therefore suggest that successful implementation of Social-Emotional Learning should be understood as a reciprocal process in which both students' and teachers' emotional well-being are nurtured simultaneously. In the *pesantren* context, supporting teachers' emotional resilience is not merely beneficial for educators themselves but also essential for maintaining consistent, compassionate, and sustainable emotional support for students throughout the learning process.