

## Enhancing Students' Vocabulary Learning Motivation Through an English Corner: A Cross-Sectional Study at MIN 3 Aceh Barat Daya, Aceh Province

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### ABSTRACT

This cross-sectional study investigated the effect of English Corner on students' motivation and vocabulary development at MIN 3 Aceh Barat Daya. This initiative aims to create an English-rich environment that increases students' exposure and interest in English vocabulary, particularly on the theme "Professions Around Us." Using a descriptive qualitative design, data were collected through observations and semi-structured interviews involving students, teachers, and the principal over a three-week period. Using thematic analysis, it answers the research question that English Corner has an effect on (1) Enhanced environmental support and exposure to English for Increased interest and (2) enjoyment in learning English vocabulary (3) Improved vocabulary recall and recognition (4) Positive attitudes toward English learning activities. This study shows that the use of English Corner is effective in fostering motivation, vocabulary development, and collaboration between students and teachers. The implementation of English Corner can be a practical and sustainable strategy to promote English language habits at the elementary school level, including in madrasah environments.

Keywords: English Corner, Vocabulary, Learning Motivation, Young Learners, Visual Aids

### INTRODUCTION

Language is one of the most essential means of communication, which enables people to share ideas, thoughts, and emotions. In Indonesia, English is taught as a foreign language and has become part of the curriculum from the primary to high school levels, both in public and private, including in religious settings such as madrasahs. English learning at primary levels mainly focuses on introducing basic vocabulary and simple expressions to build students' communicative competence. English learning at primary levels mainly focuses on introducing basic vocabulary and simple expressions to build students' communicative competence. However, the process of teaching English at the primary level often encounters challenges, such as limited exposure, low motivation, and a lack of opportunities for students to use English in meaningful contexts. Motivation plays a crucial role in second language acquisition. Recent research confirms that motivated learners persist more and adopt more strategic behaviour. English Corner using creative work is beneficial to use and it can be a booster and supplement to support participants' English performance (Etika, 2023).



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Therefore, to foster both motivation and vocabulary mastery, teachers should design learning spaces that provide comprehensible input in low-anxiety, enjoyable environments and scaffold learner autonomy, curiosity, and interaction. An English Corner is a creative initiative designed to address these challenges. It is a designated space in the school that provides visual materials, reading resources, posters, flashcards and interactive displays to encourage students to explore English vocabulary independently. The students benefit from learning that is visual, contextual, and meaningful. The English Corner provides such an environment, allowing students to learn vocabulary incidentally through daily exposure while also stimulating their intrinsic motivation to learn (Cameron, 2001).

According to (Nation, 2001), repeated exposure to vocabulary in multiple contexts is essential for long-term retention, and creating an English-rich environment can significantly enhance vocabulary acquisition. This initiative also aligns with the constructivist view of learning, which highlights the importance of interaction between learners and their environment. When students actively interact with visual and tangible English materials, such as posters, flashcards, or word displays they engage in deeper cognitive processing that helps them construct meaning and retain vocabulary more effectively (Hu & Zhang, 2025).

Based researcher's observation during teaching activities the MIN 3 Abdya environment's has not yet fully supported the habituation of using English in daily interactions. There is no special program or facility, such as an English Corner that can help students practice and become familiar with English words in their daily school life. This absence of environmental support contributes to students' low motivation to learn and use English vocabulary effectively.

After being three months in the research site as the only English teacher in the school, the researcher came up with an idea to create a visual media that can help students be more familiar with English. The idea was to motivate them to learn English, particularly the vocabulary. The process began with the preparation of essential information to be shared, such as the objectives, benefits, and general overview of the English Corner. During this activity, teachers and students were invited to take part in the planning and creation of the English Corner by sharing ideas, providing support, and participating directly in its implementation. It was an important activity to create a sense of belonging, particularly among students.

First, for the preparation, the researcher designed and set up the English Corner with the theme "*Professions Around Us*" using posters of occupations (e.g., teacher, doctor, farmer, police officer, pilot), flashcards, and short word labels. Then, for the implementation, the students were introduced to the English Corner and encouraged to visit during breaks or after lessons. They participated in short vocabulary activities such as matching words to pictures or identifying professions from posters. Meanwhile, the researcher used observational sheets to observe how students interacted with the English Corner materials and noted their reactions, curiosity, and motivation (observation stage).

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The question to be addressed in this study as “What are the effects of the English Corner in increasing vocabulary learning motivation among students at Madrasah Ibtidaiyah Negeri (MIN) 3 Aceh Barat Daya?” This research is expected to show that the English Corner program can be adopted as a model by other schools to develop a supportive language environment that enhances students’ motivation and confidence in learning English.

## RESEARCH METHOD

To address the research question and meet the research objective, this cross-sectional study employed a descriptive qualitative design as the method of inquiry. According to (Lambert & Lambert, 2012), qualitative descriptive research seeks to describe participants’ experiences and perspectives in their natural settings, emphasizing accurate and straightforward representation rather than deep theoretical analysis. This design was chosen because the study sought to describe how students, teachers, and the principal perceive the English Corner as a medium that promotes an English-friendly environment and enhances students’ enthusiasm for learning vocabulary, particularly related to professions in everyday contexts.

Participants were purposively selected, and consisted of seven students who are experienced in using English Corner materials related to professions, two classroom teachers who taught non-English subjects, but often observed students’ motivation and learning behaviour, and the school principal who provided managerial support and supervision of the English Corner activities. The data were collected over a three-week period during the first semester of the 2025/2026 academic year. The stages included preparation, implementation, observation, and interview.

Following the preparation phase, the researcher recorded students’ engagement and behaviour while interacting with English Corner materials, especially with posters, word cards, and other visual materials about different professions. Then, semi-structured interviews were conducted with participants. The purpose was to gather in-depth opinions and perceptions of the participants. Students were asked about their enjoyment, interest, and learning experience when studying profession-related vocabulary through the English Corner. Teachers (non-English) were asked about their observations of changes in students’ motivation and participation in English learning activities. The principal was interviewed regarding school support, policy, and the perceived impact of the English Corner.

The collected data were analysed qualitatively using a thematic analysis framework adapted from recent qualitative research models (Ahmed et al., 2024; Kakar et al., 2023). The process involved three main stages. First, data reduction was conducted by selecting and organizing relevant information from observations and interviews that focused on students’ motivation, engagement, and responses toward profession-related vocabulary. Second, data display was carried out by presenting the findings in thematic descriptions and tables to highlight recurring patterns across participants. Finally,

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conclusion drawing and verification were performed by interpreting the results, identifying emerging themes, and cross-checking them with different data sources to ensure consistency and accuracy. This analytical process provided a clear understanding of how the English Corner contributed to enhancing students' motivation and vocabulary mastery.

To ensure the credibility and dependability of the findings, triangulation of sources was applied by comparing data from students, teachers, and the principal, while triangulation of methods was achieved through the use of observation and interviews. These strategies enhanced the study's credibility and ensured that the findings authentically represented participants' real experiences and perceptions of the English Corner program, particularly its role in enhancing motivation to learn English vocabulary about professions.

## **LITERATURE REVIEW**

### **Providing an English Corner**

Language Environment is include everything the learners hears and sees in the new language and affects the language communication process (Dulay, 1982). Consistent exposure to English through environmental print and classroom interactions increased vocabulary acquisition and student motivation. As students encounter English vocabulary in their everyday school environment, they subconsciously practice recognizing and remembering it, thus increasing familiarity and comfort in using the language (Yusfiah, 2024). English corner is a place or area who students will learn and practice the English Materials before they come to their class. The English corner contains basic English material. The materials in the English corner will be made beautifully so that the students are interested in seeing the English corner and they will enjoy in learning English (Rahmadania, 2023).

The availability of an English Corner in elementary schools assists students in developing their vocabulary and fosters a positive, enjoyable learning environment. It enables teachers to guide students in learning the language in a simple and enjoyable manner.

### **Learning Motivation in Language Acquisition**

Motivation is a key factor that determines the success of second or foreign language learning. In learning contexts, motivation, is "one's motive to make certain academic decisions, participate in classroom activities, and persist in pursuing the demanding process of learning" and pertains to "students' primary impetus for initiating learning as well as the reason for continuing the prolonged and tedious process of learning". It influences how much effort learners will invest and how persistently they will engage with the target language, which in the end, enormously influences their learning outcomes (Kirkpatrick, Kirkpatrick, & Derakhshan, 2024).

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The motivation acts as a dynamic force that initiates, directs, and sustains learners' behaviour over time (Dörnyei, 2025). In English as a Foreign Language (EFL) contexts, where exposure t outside the classroom is limite, motivation becomes one of the most critical psychological factors influencing learners' performance and engagement (Adventi, 2025); (Wijayanti, 2024)

Students' motivation in learning can generally be categorised into two types: "intrinsic motivation and extrinsic motivation" (Kirkpatrick, 2024). Intrinsic motivation comes from a learner's internal desire to learn in performing academic tasks and activities, which is for their own sake, interest, and enjoyment. Extrinsic motivation is academic activities performed and driven by external rewards or recognition, such as from teachers and parents. Students' motivation to learn has been discovered to be significantly related to their academic engagement, academic achievement, and academic success. Indicates that Indonesian EFL students are motivated both by intrinsic factors (such as curiosity and enjoyment) and extrinsic ones (like teacher encouragement and exams), with intrinsic motivation showing a stronger long-term effect on achievement (Firmansyah, 2023); (Wijayanti, 2024).

Hu & Zhang (2025) revealed that contextual support and interactive learning spaces can enhance vocabulary learning and intrinsic motivation through meaningful engagement. Building a supportive and stimulating environment such as an English Corner can thus act as an external motivator that promotes curiosity, autonomy, and frequent use of English in natural contexts (MDPI, 2025).

Motivation has a significant impact on learning outcomes. Therefore, teachers need to pay attention to the environmental factors that encourage and support students. Teacher creativity, learning motivation, media, as well as both internal and external support, help students recognize the importance of learning English. Meaningful and enjoyable learning can take place not only inside the classroom but also in the surrounding school environment.

### **Vocabulary Learning in EFL Contexts**

Vocabulary knowledge is central to language proficiency. It serves as an important language element that helps language learners communicate effectively with others, both in spoken and written contexts. There are two types of vocabulary: receptive and productive vocabulary. Receptive vocabulary refers to those that learners recognize and understand through reading and listening, but they cannot use them in speaking and writing. On the other hand, productive vocabulary is what learners understand and are able to use in speaking and writing. However, both receptive and productive vocabulary connect students' ability to master the four English language skills: reading, writing, listening, and speaking (Hidayatulloh, 2025). Vocabulary forms the foundation of communicative competence (Nation, 2001).

For young learners, vocabulary development demands continuous exposure, repetition, and meaningful use (Cameron, 2001). It is important to note that in teaching

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vocabulary, teachers need to pay attention to word meaning, word form, and the use of words. In this case, teachers need to make sure that students understand a word's precise definition, contextual implications, and cultural nuances, and they can explore connotations and synonyms. In addition, students need to be taught the structural characteristics of words, including pronunciation, spelling, grammatical categories, and morphological variations, and teachers teach them how words can change across different parts of speech. Meanwhile, teachers help students develop the skills to apply the vocabulary they possess in the practical application in real-world communication in various social situations, including collocations and idiomatic expressions to enhance their communicative competence (Hidayatulloh, 2025)

However, in EFL settings, vocabulary is often taught in isolation from real-life use, which limits learners' ability to retain and apply it (Webb & Nation, 2017). To overcome this issue, contextualized and interactive methods such as visual aids have been widely recommended (Rizki, 2016); (Kainta, 2019). These approaches help students associate new words with images, activities, and experiences, thus enhancing retention and motivation simultaneously. Teaching vocabulary using objects, including visual aids, is particularly important for young learners. It helps strengthen their memory by leveraging their ability to recall visual representations, especially for nouns (Hidayatulloh, 2025).

Visual aids are known as those tools that can be in the form of pictures, diagrams, videos, and infographics, which can be used to pass information graphically (Numonova, 2024). The integration of vocabulary learning with environmental exposures such as posters, wall charts, and English-labelled corners has been shown to positively influence both mastery and motivation.

## **FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION**

### **Findings**

The data from observations and interviews were analysed to identify recurring themes related to students' motivation and the role of the English Corner in learning English vocabulary about professions "Professions Around Us". To support the successful implementation of the English Corner program in the madrasah, a management team was established, consisting of selected representatives from grades 6, 5, and 4. These students were chosen because they were considered capable of engaging in discussions, accepting responsibilities, and actively participating in various activities. The management team was responsible for assisting teachers in preparing, organizing, and maintaining the materials displayed in the English Corner. In addition, the team was tasked with ensuring the neatness and continuity of the program so that the English Corner remained attractive and beneficial for all members of the school community.

Materials for the English Corner by gathering various relevant references about profession around us that aligned with the chosen display theme. the researcher designed the content and layout of the English Corner using AI-based (Artificial Intelligence) design tools, which assisted in producing visually appealing, neat, and customized displays.

These AI design applications enable the creation of posters, vocabulary cards, illustrations, and bulletin board layouts quickly and creatively. The designs were incorporating bright colours, educational icons, and easy-to-read typography. In this way, the English Corner functioned not only as a learning medium but also as an aesthetic and innovative space that encouraged students' interest in learning English in a more enjoyable way. Afterward, the researcher assigned students to rewrite the prepared materials to make them appear tidier and more engaging. This process was carried out in two ways: by handwriting with clear and neat lettering or by typing using a computer to produce a uniform and readable display. The content displayed in the English Corner was not only visually appealing but also supported the gradual improvement of the vocabulary.

To present all the material more comprehensively, proportionally, and in a way that's easier for students to understand, another bulletin board was added as additional space. The overall appearance of the English Corner is more balanced and attractive, enhancing its function as an effective vocabulary learning tool. The final product looks more appealing.

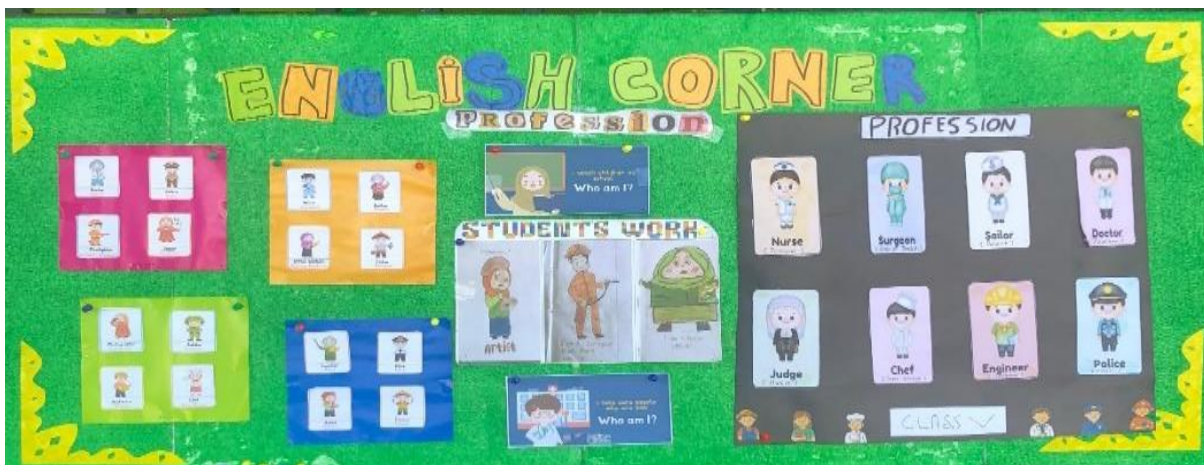


Figure 1. The final appearance of the first theme of the English Corner

The impact of the English Corner on enhancing students' motivation and vocabulary acquisition is described as follows

### **Enhanced environmental support and exposure to English**

The establishment of the English Corner created a visible and accessible learning environment that supported daily vocabulary exposure. Teachers reported that students often gathered around the English Corner area during breaks, pointing at the posters and discussing the English names of professions. The establishment of the English Corner created a visible and accessible learning environment that supported daily vocabulary exposure. Teachers reported that students often gathered around the English Corner area during breaks, pointing at the posters and discussing the English names of professions. One of the classroom teachers (Teacher A) noted: *“Even though I don't teach English, I*

*often see my students reading the posters and trying to pronounce the English words. They are very active.”* The principal also observed that the English Corner helped create a positive school atmosphere: *“The English Corner makes the school more colourful and motivating. It reminds students every day that English is important and fun.”*

These comments highlight that the English Corner functioned not only as a visual learning tool but also as an environmental reinforcement that encouraged continuous language exposure beyond the classroom setting.

### **Increased interest and enjoyment in learning English vocabulary**

Interviews with students revealed that most participants found the English Corner attractive. They were interested in the visual materials about professions such as teacher, doctor, farmer, and police officer. Students expressed that learning English words through pictures and posters was “fun” and “easy to remember.” A Grade 2 student said: “I like the English Corner because I can see many jobs and their English names. I can say ‘doctor’ and ‘teacher’ now.” A Grade 5 student added: “It’s interesting. I can read and know new English words every day.”

These findings indicate that the visual and interactive design of the English Corner stimulated students’ curiosity and intrinsic motivation. They showed enthusiasm not only in memorizing vocabulary but also in using English words spontaneously in conversations with peers.



Figure 2. Students were enjoying the English Corner

### **Improved vocabulary recall and recognition**

The students were able to recall and identify profession-related vocabulary more easily after regular exposure to the English Corner. During informal conversations, students often used English words for occupations correctly. For example, one Grade 4 student pointed at a poster and said: “My father is a farmer,” while another added, “I want to be a police officer.”

In addition, a Grade 5 student expressed, *“I like the English Corner because I can learn new words every week,”* indicating that the visual and thematic displays helped increase vocabulary retention and learning motivation. Another Grade 5 student mentioned, *“I can read the words and pictures, and I try to say them with my friends,”*

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showing that the English Corner also encouraged peer interaction and active language use.

Meanwhile, a Grade 6 student commented, *“Now I can remember the spelling of difficult words like ‘engineer’ and ‘photographer’ because I see them every day,”* suggesting that frequent visual exposure supported long-term memory of vocabulary. Such expressions suggest that the English Corner contributed to contextual vocabulary learning, where students connected English words to their personal experiences and aspirations. The English teacher observed that students showed greater enthusiasm and confidence when using English in class, particularly when learning about topics related to daily life. She noted that *“students now pay more attention to new words and are more eager to use them in sentences.”* Another teacher commented that *“the English Corner helps to create an English atmosphere in the classroom, making students more familiar with English expressions.”*

Several teachers mentioned that the English Corner had become a useful visual tool to support English learning across subjects. One teacher stated that *“students often discuss the posters and pictures even during break time, which means the English Corner successfully creates a learning environment beyond the classroom.”* Overall, both students’ responses and teachers’ observations indicated that the English Corner had a positive impact on students’ engagement, vocabulary mastery, and motivation to use English in their daily school interactions.

### **Positive attitudes toward English learning activities**

Overall, both students and teachers expressed positive attitudes toward the English Corner initiative. Teachers mentioned that students appeared more confident and less hesitant to speak English words, even outside English lessons. The English Corner encouraged collaboration among teachers in promoting English language learning. Several students also expressed their enthusiasm toward the *profession* theme displayed on the English Corner. One Grade 5 student commented, *“I like learning about jobs because I can tell my dream in English,”* while another said, *“I want to be a nurse, and I learned how to say it from the English Corner.”* A Grade 6 student added, *“The pictures and words help me remember the jobs easily. I like looking at them every day.”* These statements reflected the students’ growing interest and personal connection to the vocabulary presented.

The principal explained, *“Before, students were shy to say English words, but now they often say ‘teacher,’ ‘doctor,’ or ‘pilot’ when we talk about jobs. It’s a good start.”* The principal also shared a positive response, noting that the English Corner had created a more engaging English-learning environment. He stated, *“The English Corner gives students new motivation to learn. The profession theme is very relevant because it helps them think about their future while learning English.”* The principal further emphasized that such initiatives supported the madrasah’s goal of fostering a habit of using English in daily activities through contextual and enjoyable exposure.

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## Discussion

The findings indicate that the English Corner not only supported vocabulary acquisition but also fostered a more positive and confident attitude toward English learning in general. Cameron's (2001) theory that vocabulary learning among young learners is more effective when connected to meaningful contexts.

The findings of this study are consistent with recent research emphasizing the importance of creating an English-rich environment to enhance students' motivation and language learning (Wattimena, 2022); (Maya, 2024). In teaching vocabulary, teachers can teach vocabulary by using objects, and they can teach through drilling, spelling, and active involvement. Both are prominent in teaching vocabulary of a foreign language to young learners (Hidayatulloh, 2025).

Another perspective states that although language teaching practices involve memorization, drills, and emphasis on linguistic structures, with the advancement of multimedia and technology, teachers must incorporate various methods and media in teaching that suit today's generation with diverse learning styles and habits in the classroom. In this regard, the first and most important role in which visual aids have proven to be very effective is the development and learning of the lexicon. The use of images, videos, infographics, and multimedia presentations is inseparable in today's language learning process (Numonova, 2024)

We might be aware that students have one-of-a-kind learning styles. Some are exceptionally visual; some are chiefly auditory; and some are an aggregate of touch, taste, and smell. For the visual learning style students in particular, the use of images, pictures, colors, and different visual aids, as in the use of the English Corner, helps them learn more effectively. This does not mean to disregard children with other learning styles. Kinesthetic students can learn while participating in preparing content for the English Corner by creating shapes, designing visual appearance, cutting or sticking pictures on the English Corner, while auditory students learn through spelling and pronouncing activities to master the vocabulary posted on the English Corner. Learning English, including learning vocabulary through the English Corner, has aided in the development of positive learning activities in children's behavior settings where they collaboratively share in group learning as they attend the English Corner, which may be the main advantages through skills and the investigation of novel possibilities in their learning habits (Baskota, 2021)

The English Corner, with its specific-themed visual displays, provided contextual and visual stimulation that increased students' interest and engagement in learning English vocabulary. The use of visual media such as posters, flashcards, and picture cards has been shown to significantly enhance young learners' vocabulary acquisition and classroom participation (Ramadhan, 2023); (Maya, 2024)). These findings also align with Deci and Ryan's (2000) Self-Determination Theory, which posits that learners are more motivated when learning activities relate to their interests and real-world experiences. From the teachers' and principal's perspectives, the English Corner also fostered a

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positive school culture toward English by promoting incidental learning—students acquired new vocabulary naturally through exposure and interaction. The English Corner has provided students with more opportunities to learn English, especially learning vocabulary, in a more natural and interesting way. Baskota (2021) reminded us that students will learn better and do better at school if they are taught in a way that fits their interests, their learning habits, and their patterns of abilities.

The use of bright and contrasting mixed colours in the English Corner makes it visible and interesting for students, attracting their interest, attention, and motivation to come and visit the media. Visual media with striking shapes and colors improve students' ability to remember words, word meanings, and shapes (Hidayatulloh, 2025). There are several advantages of using visual media in mastering vocabulary, namely (1) the use of picture media can help students understand and use new vocabulary, (2) the use of pictures can help students develop new vocabulary and (3) the use of pictures can help students expand and improve their vocabulary mastery (Baskota, 2021)

Overall, the discussion demonstrates that the English Corner program, particularly with its specific-themed vocabulary, successfully increased students' attention, motivation, engagement, and vocabulary knowledge. It fostered collaboration between students, teachers of various subjects, and also contributed to the development of an English-supportive school environment at MIN 3 Aceh Barat Day. By creating a supportive environment that enables meaningful, self-directed learning, the English Corner contributes to students' linguistic growth and motivation, as seen in the implementation at MIN 3 Abdy.

## CONCLUSION

English has been taught in grades 4 through 6 since the implementation of the Independent Curriculum at MIN 3 Southwest Aceh. English learning faces challenges from low motivation and vocabulary mastery. Teachers must be creative in providing meaningful and enjoyable experiences through strategic approaches to ensure the learning process is engaging, effective, and enjoyable. It is hoped that student learning outcomes will also align with the targeted objectives.

The implementation of the English Corner program at MIN 3 Aceh Barat Daya has had a positive impact on students' motivation and vocabulary development, particularly in learning English words related to professions. The English Corner created an attractive and supportive learning environment that encouraged students to engage with English words every day, both inside and outside the classroom. Through colourful posters and visuals about occupations, students were exposed to English vocabulary in a fun and meaningful way. The students felt more interested and confident in learning English. They began to use English words spontaneously in daily conversations. Teachers observed that the English Corner helped their students become more active and curious about English. The principal also viewed the program as an effective initiative to create an English-friendly school atmosphere. Thus, the English Corner can be considered an effective

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strategy for; (1) enhanced environmental support and exposure to English for Increased interest (2) enjoyment in learning English vocabulary, (3) improved vocabulary recall and recognition, (4) positive attitudes toward English learning activities fostering an English. Furthermore, based on the findings of this study, some recommendations are proposed, as follows:

1. Teachers are encouraged to make use of visual and environmental learning media such as English Corners to stimulate students' interest. Even teachers who do not specialize in English can integrate simple English exposure into their classroom routines for example, by referring to the posters or greeting students in English.
2. The school should continue supporting and maintaining the English Corner as a sustainable program. The materials displayed can be updated periodically with different themes (e.g., animals, fruits, daily activities) to provide continuous exposure and avoid boredom. Collaboration among teachers, especially between English and non-English teachers, should be strengthened to ensure the English Corner remains active and interactive.
3. Students should be encouraged to explore the English Corner regularly and practice saying the words they learn in daily interactions. Small activities such as word games or quizzes can be held to reinforce their vocabulary learning.
4. Further research could examine the long-term effects of English Corner programs on students' language proficiency or compare different thematic English Corners (e.g., environment, hobbies, or technology). Future studies might also include more systematic data collection, such as vocabulary tests, to measure learning outcomes quantitatively.

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