

BERANI BICARA BAHASA INGGRIS: INTERACTIVE ENGLISH CONVERSATION TRAINING TO BOOST SPEAKING CONFIDENCE AMONG CHILDREN IN PUBLIC HOUSING

Nurrahma Restia Fatkhiyati¹⁾, Tesaannisa²⁾, Rizdika Mardiana³⁾, Diyantari⁴⁾, Muthiya Kafa Syalika⁵⁾, Fasya Rakha Tsurayya⁶⁾, Rifa Andina Rahman⁷⁾

^{1,2,4,5,6,7} Sastra Inggris, Fakultas Bahasa dan Seni, Universitas Negeri Jakarta

³ Magister Pendidikan Bahasa Inggris, Fakultas Bahasa dan Seni, Universitas Negeri Jakarta

*Corresponding Author: nurrahma_fatkhiyati@unj.ac.id

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ABSTRACT

This community service program aimed to strengthen speaking confidence and mastery of emotion-expression vocabulary among 20 participants aged 9–14 years in the Jatinegara Kaum public rental flats. Employing a pre-experimental one-group pretest–posttest design, the two-day intervention (14–15 June 2025) combined student-centered learning, contextual teaching and learning, and communicative language teaching. The program not only introduced target vocabulary but also created a supportive environment for practicing oral interaction. Activities consisted of an Inside Out audiovisual prompt, vocabulary matching games, and role-plays focusing on greetings, apologies, asking for opinions, encouragement, and expressing concern. Data were collected through a vocabulary/expression pre- and post-test, rubric-based role-play assessments, a post-program survey, and qualitative classroom observations. Results showed participants' gains in recognizing and applying target expressions in simple sentences. Most were able to recall more than five new lexical items, while classroom notes indicated improved lexical accuracy, fluency, and willingness to speak. Learners became more active in collaborative tasks and demonstrated reduced hesitation when expressing themselves in English. In sum, the short communicative intervention proved feasible and promising for improving basic speaking readiness and thematic vocabulary. Longer-term studies with standardized measures and control groups are recommended to enhance causal inference and examine retention.

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INTRODUCTION

Jatinegara Kaum is one of the community development areas under the guidance of Universitas Negeri Jakarta (UNJ), located in a densely populated part of the city. The site includes a public rental housing complex (Rusunawa), established in 2015, which currently houses approximately 1,250 families (Tarijah & Supena, 2021). The majority of residents come from middle to low-income households, including survivors of evictions and fires. Consequently, socio-economic limitations have restricted children's access to education and training, particularly in the development of public speaking skills and character formation.

Initial observations and interviews with the subdistrict office indicate a lack of communication skills development programs and character education based on Pancasila values in the Jatinegara Kaum Rusunawa environment. This condition is related to the low self-confidence of elementary school-aged children when speaking in public, as well as the suboptimal formation of positive character for social interaction and future readiness (Ministry of Education and Culture of the Republic of Indonesia, 2017). Public speaking skills are an essential competency that needs to be developed early on to strengthen children's communication and character.

As part of the implementation of the Tridharma Perguruan Tinggi (Three Pillars of Higher Education), the English Literature Study Program at UNJ initiated a training program to encourage children at the Jatinegara Kaum public housing complex to speak English. The training uses an interactive-communicative approach through simulations, educational games, and structured discussions that are enjoyable, while instilling the values of courage, mutual cooperation, tolerance, and respect for differences (BK et al., 2024).

The use of interactive learning media has empirical evidence to increase the courage and speaking skills of elementary school children (BK et al., 2024). The combination of reading books and animated videos also increases reading interest and confidence in group communication (Utami & Ardi, 2023). In addition, English communication training with participatory strategies strengthens confidence and verbal communication skills (Mubarok et al., 2024). In fact, interactive storytelling methods are also effective in increasing the courage and language skills of early childhood (Bradah et al., 2024).

Based on this evidence, the urgency of implementing this training is inseparable from the need for children in the Jatinegara Kaum public housing complex to obtain adequate communication skills and strengthened self-confidence so that they are able to adapt and compete in a highly dynamic world. By strengthening communication skills and character from an early age, these children are expected to have strong social and emotional capital to face social changes and educational challenges in the future.

The objectives of this activity are: (1) to increase confidence and participation in public speaking, particularly in the process of communicating in English; (2) to improve children's English language skills through enjoyable communicative learning. In the future, achievements will be measured using standardized instruments before and after training to assess changes in skills and character.

METHODS

The community service activity used a single-group pretest–posttest pre-experimental design to evaluate the impact of English speaking skills training based on student-centered learning (Weimer, M; 2002), contextual teaching and learning (Bern and Erickson, 2001), and communicative language teaching (Richards, 2006) on children aged 9–14 years residing in Rusunawa Jatinegara Kaum, East Jakarta. The purpose of this method was to increase confidence and participation in public speaking and to strengthen English speaking skills through enjoyable and contextual communicative learning. The activity was carried out over two days (June 14–15, 2025). The materials and tools included educational videos (inspired by Inside Out), flashcards, worksheets, and role-play props. The implementation was structured in three stages:

1. Preparation, including planning meetings and task distribution, production of educational videos, development of cooperative mini games, and location surveys

2. Implementation, including:

Day 1: briefing and pre-test, educational video screening, contextual role-play practice based on CTL–CLT;
Day 2: brief reflection, role-play performance, storytelling, cooperative games, and post-test

3. Evaluation, including structured observation during sessions, brief satisfaction surveys, and comparative analysis of pre- and post-scores. Measurements included a conversation rubric used for role-play assessment.

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

The Community Service (PkM) activity of the Jakarta State University's Leading Development Area was held at the Jatinegara Kaum Public Housing Complex on June 14-15, 2025, attended by 20 children aged 9-14 years (grades 6 of elementary school (SD) to grade 2 of junior high school (SMP)). The main focus of this activity was training in speaking English, covering greetings, apologizing, asking for opinions, encouraging, and expressing concern. The media used included educational videos adapted from the film Inside Out, interactive emotion guessing games, and simple conversation exercises in the form of role-play.



Picture 1.1. Opening Ceremony

On the first day, the activity began with an opening speech by UPRS, followed by a brief orientation and a pre-test for participants to map their initial knowledge and confidence in using English. Next, the children watched an excerpt from the movie *Inside Out* featuring the characters Joy, Sadness, Anger, Fear, and Disgust to spark discussion; the facilitator guided the participants in identifying key vocabulary and their situational meanings. After that, participants learned through instructional videos that presented a list of phrases and example sentences (fixed expressions) to express feelings, such as: I feel..., I'm sorry for..., Don't worry, you can.... The exercise continued with a brief drilling and pronunciation modelling session. After the video screening, the resource person provides a brief explanation to reinforce understanding by describing the use of sentences in context, intonation/pronunciation emphasis, and appropriate response variations, followed by a short question and answer session and practical examples. To lighten the mood, an ice-breaking game called "Guess the Expression" was played (some participants acted out certain expressions while the other group guessed the name of the emotion in English), which encouraged participants to take risks in speaking without fear of making mistakes.

The activity continued with matching games, which involved matching cards with expressions to the appropriate vocabulary/sentences; at this stage, the facilitator provided quick formative feedback and encouraged collaboration among participants. The practice session then focused on simple role-plays (e.g., apologizing and encouraging) with a scaffolding sequence: short dialogue examples followed by guided pair practice and independent practice with variations in everyday contexts (school, family, neighbourhood). Each performance received brief feedback, and the session closed with a one-minute verbal reflection on the expressions that were most mastered or needed further practice. This series of activities maintains the principles of student-centered and communicative learning.



Picture 2.1. dan 2.2. Training Session with Participants

The second day began with a structured reflection session to review the vocabulary and expressions learned on the first day. The facilitator guided a brief review through prompting questions and concept-check questions (CCQs), followed by pronunciation drilling and choral reading to reinforce intonation and stress. The activity continued with advanced role-play exercises in small groups; participants composed

original dialogues based on the scenarios provided, such as comforting a sad friend or asking for opinions about a drawing, with scaffolding steps, such as:



Figure 1.1. Community Service Flows

During the process, the facilitator circulated around the room providing formative feedback on vocabulary choice, structural accuracy, and fluency, while peers used a simple peer feedback sheet to note what was good and suggestions for improvement. After that, each group performed a short play in front of the class; after the performance, a question and answer session was held to ensure understanding of the meaning of the words and the context of the expressions. Towards the end, the class played an emotion guessing flashcard game and sang the song “If You're Happy and You Know It” with emotional expressions as a kinaesthetic cool-down to reinforce vocabulary retention. The series of activities ended with a post-test to measure learning outcomes, a post-survey to assess participants' experiences, the distribution of prizes as an appreciation for their involvement, and a group photo session to document the activities.



Picture 3.1. dan 3.2. Roleplay Session with Facilitators

Based on the post-survey results, participants' understanding of emotional vocabulary in English improved, both in terms of recognition and usage in simple sentences. Participants were able to remember more than five new words and practice them in dialogues. Visual media such as films and interactive songs made the learning process easier, while game activities helped participants associate words with the appropriate expressions.



Picture 4.1. Ends of The Training Session

Based on classroom observations, facilitators' warm, communicative, and non-patronizing attitudes, including providing formative feedback, validating partial answers, and allowing wait time, were associated with an increased willingness among participants to try to speak without fear of making mistakes. The variety of learning strategies, ranging from audio-visual materials and cooperative games to classroom presentations, accommodated diverse learning preferences and provided many opportunities for structured practice. Overall, these formative findings indicate an increase in oral participation and use of target vocabulary. On the affective side, participants also showed greater confidence in communicating in everyday situations.

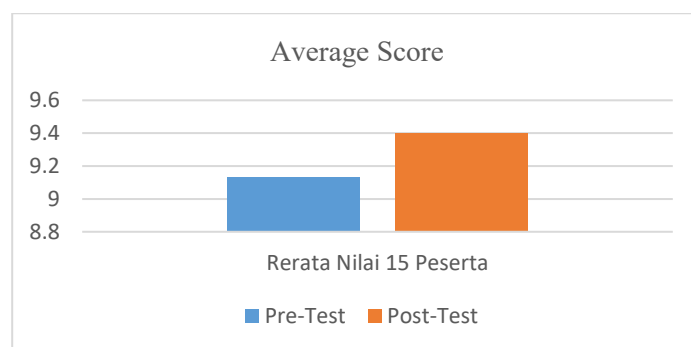


Table 1.1. Average Score of Participants

The effectiveness of the training can be seen from two aspects, namely quantitative improvement in learning outcomes and participants' perceptions of the learning process. The pre-test and post-test scores of 15 out of 20 participants showed a significant improvement. Five participants did not take the initial test because they only joined the activity on the second day. However, this already indicates that interactive training contributes positively to participants' English speaking skills in the short term.

In addition, qualitative findings from participant feedback reinforce these results. Participants stated that the training method, which emphasized direct practice speaking in front of peers, made them more accustomed to using English. They also found the training atmosphere enjoyable, which boosted their confidence to communicate. Some participants even emphasized that in two days of training, they not only gained language skills but also became more confident in speaking in public.

Thus, it can be concluded that this training not only has an impact on improving linguistic abilities, but also on affective aspects such as confidence in speaking. These two aspects complement each other and are important for successful foreign language learning, especially speaking skills.

CONCLUSION

This community service activity went well and received positive responses from the participants. The series of interactive learning activities that utilized audio-visual aids, instructional videos, games, and role-play provided many opportunities to practice language in functional contexts such as greetings, apologizing, asking for opinions, encouraging, and expressing concern.

Post-survey results and classroom observations showed an increase in vocabulary comprehension and the ability to use simple expressions in dialogue. The majority of participants were able to remember more than five new words and practice them in the scenarios provided. In addition, increased verbal participation and confidence in speaking were influenced by a supportive classroom climate, formative feedback, and a variety of strategies that accommodated different learning styles.

Thus, interactive student-centered English speaking training combined with structured practice proved effective in achieving short-term goals. However, the short duration of the intervention and the absence of a control group were limitations in this study. For sustainability and a stronger impact, it is recommended that similar programs be developed into multi-session cycles with standardized assessments and follow-ups to monitor retention.

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