

INTEGRATION OF LOCAL CULTURE INTO COMMUNICATIVE LANGUAGE TEACHING METHOD TO IMPROVE SPEAKING ABILITY OF EXTRACURRICULAR STUDENTS OF SMPN 15 BEKASI

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Abstract:

The Community Service Program (PKM-PM) at SMPN 15 Bekasi City, which ran from 30 April to 18 July 2024, aimed to improve students' speaking skills through *wayang* performances in English. By applying the Communicative Language Teaching (CLT) method, the program combined the structural and functional aspects of language with local culture through shadow puppets and folklore in seven meetings that included material explanation, demonstration of puppet movements, and role play. The evaluation showed students' enthusiasm and significant progress in speaking skills, with 15 students successfully performing a *wayang* performance in English with improved vocabulary, confidence and speaking skills. To ensure the sustainability of the program, regular training for teachers, integration of the program in the extracurricular curriculum, development of a puppet-based learning module, involvement of alumni and parents, and periodic evaluations to measure effectiveness are recommended. In addition, seeking collaborations with other educational institutions, cultural organizations, and providing additional resources such as books and online materials will support the future success of the program.

Keywords:

Speaking; CLT;
Extracurricular;
Culture



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INTRODUCTION

SMPN 15 Bekasi is located on Jalan Cempaka Raya Rt. 005 / Rw. 011 Kranggan Permai, Kec. Jatisampurna, Bekasi City, West Java 17433. The school is located in the middle of a residential area which makes the location quite difficult to access by public transportation. SMPN 15 Bekasi students come from middle-income backgrounds with parents who mostly work as civil servants, traders, and entrepreneurs. The school has a fairly large building with three buildings facing each other. Despite the large number of teachers, their English Club activities are only attended by 30 students, with a low attendance rate every Tuesday meeting. There is only one teacher in charge, a temporary substitute who does not have a background in English education. This activity is recognized by teachers and participating students as less than optimal.

The English Club at SMPN 15 Bekasi faces a big challenge in attracting students. Although the school has hundreds of students, only 30 are actively participating in this activity. Interviews with the teacher in charge show that the lack of interest is due to negative perceptions of English, which is considered a daunting and disliked subject by most students. In addition, many of them do not have a foundation in English from primary school and lack confidence when speaking in English. This makes them passive participants who often feel embarrassed or bored during this extracurricular activity. Evaluation in the field also showed that the learning methods and media used were less interesting for students.

However, the community service team collaborates with partners to try to find solutions to the problems that exist in the English Club. The solution we offer is speaking learning by applying the Communicative Language Teaching (CLT) method. This approach combines structural and functional aspects of language, focusing on developing communication competence through interactive activities such as pairing, role-playing, and project work (Richards, 2006). To make learning more interesting and relevant, the team will integrate CLT with local culture, namely *wayang* art as a teaching medium. These methods and media are expected to not only increase students' interest in English Club, but also enrich their learning experience with cultural values and better English language skills.

METHOD

Pre-Implementation Stage

The pre-implementation stage includes activities carried out at the time before the PKM-PM program is carried out, the stages referred to regarding the pre-implementation stage are:

1. Problem Mapping Stage

At this stage, the team identified the conditions and needs of students at SMPN 15 Bekasi City by analyzing the general problems faced by schools and their potential to then develop solutions to these problems

2. Partnership Survey

Discussion of the solutions proposed by the PKM-PM team to SMPN 15 Bekasi City through involving related parties, signing a cooperation agreement, and looking for alternative program implementation.

Implementation Phase

This activity is carried out based on Communicative Language Teaching, which is a language teaching approach that focuses on the main objective of developing students' communicative abilities through learning assistance, which is the type of activity that will be carried out and grouped into four types of activities, as for the types of activities in question are:

1. Observation

In the observation phase, the PKM-PM team noticed that students at SMPN 15 Bekasi City had difficulty speaking English. Most of the students did not have a basis in English because they had never learned English from elementary school. Students who have become participants also lack confidence in practicing English. This is a consideration for the PKM-PM team to organize activities that are expected to be able to help partner problems.

2. Designing Materials and Teaching Media

Prior to implementation, the PKM-PM team designed teaching materials and media used in learning and mentoring carried out to make the program a success. In addition to this, the teaching media used to make the program successful are puppets, speakers, cloth, flashlights, Power Point, projectors, and others.

3. Implementation

In the implementation method, the PKM-PM team used Communicative Language Teaching (CLT) with role play as a way to improve students' speaking skills through puppet performances. We guided students in combining how to read the script text to improve vocabulary and speaking skills, as well as using puppets as elements of the puppet performance.

4. Reporting and Documentation

Documentation of activities by the PKM-PM team at SMPN 15 Bekasi City is very important as evidence of the implementation of activities. Apart from being a memento, documentation also helps in improving assessment and cooperation with other parties. All documented activities are the basis for reporting activities, so that it can be evaluated to what extent the activities are carried out properly according to the specified time.

Program evaluation

The program evaluation stage covers the implementation and evaluation of mastery of training materials by students. To conduct the evaluation, we apply the observation method, which is an effective program evaluation approach in collecting data directly through observation of the ongoing program (Husnullail et al., 2024). By making direct observations of program processes or outcomes, evaluators can obtain accurate and in-depth information about program performance, as well as identify areas that need to be improved or enhanced. Thus, the observation method can help in developing appropriate recommendations to improve the effectiveness and efficiency of the program (Hani, 2019). The team's observations showed that the students were very enthusiastic about the program. Their enthusiasm to learn English increased due to the application of the selected methods and media. Their speaking skills also improved along with the increase in vocabulary and pronunciation accuracy. Their self-confidence also increased due to the improvement of these skills.

A concrete example of this improvement can be seen in one student, let's call them Student A, who was only able to convey two sentences in English with unclear pronunciation during the pre-test. After participating in the program, Student A was able to express five sentences in English with better pronunciation and a richer vocabulary, demonstrating significant progress (Leong & Ahmadi, 2017).

The team's observations also indicated that students were very enthusiastic about the program. Their enthusiasm for learning English increased due to the implementation of the chosen methods and media. Their speaking skills also improved in line with the increase in vocabulary and pronunciation accuracy. Their confidence also grew thanks to these skill improvements.

These observational results are supported by the survey we conducted before and after the program's implementation. The survey results align with the observations, showing

that students were very pleased with the program we carried out and felt greatly assisted by it. They gained new experiences in learning English.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Results

In the PKM-PM team's service process which aims to improve speaking skills in SMPN 15 Bekasi City students by staging puppets using English, the PKM-PM Team collaborates with partners to create a safe, comfortable and conducive learning environment for English Club extracurricular students. The meetings were held starting from April 30, 2024 to end on July 18, 2024 with a total of 7 meetings.

In learning, the method used was Communicative Language Teaching which involved explaining the puppet material with the help of power point media, demonstration of puppet movements, and role play with students playing puppet roles using English. The team demonstrated their ability in puppet performance and gave examples of puppet movements according to the given guidelines (Apriani, 2019). Students then learned to imitate the movements of the puppets and make their voices quite loud. They were also trained in puppet movements using puppet media so that the message conveyed became clearer and smoother. The use of *wayang gunung* was also introduced to increase students' sensitivity to the atmosphere displayed. The illustration of the success of the program is as follows:

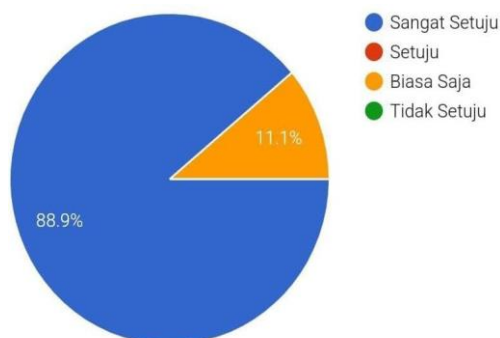


Figure 1 Graph of the success of the program in increasing confidence in public speaking using English language

The graph is the result of a questionnaire distributed to members of the extracurricular English club of SMPN 15 Bekasi who participated in the Community Service Student Creativity Program (PKM-PM). In the questionnaire, 88.9% strongly agreed with the statement that the Student Creativity Program for Community Service (PKM-PM) can increase self-confidence in public speaking using English and another 11.1% agreed with the statement. The implications of this increase in self-confidence are very important for English teaching at SMPN 15 Bekasi. High self-confidence can encourage students to speak English more often, both inside and outside the classroom. Thus, they will become more skilled in communication, which is one of the main goals of language learning (Handayani et al., 2020).

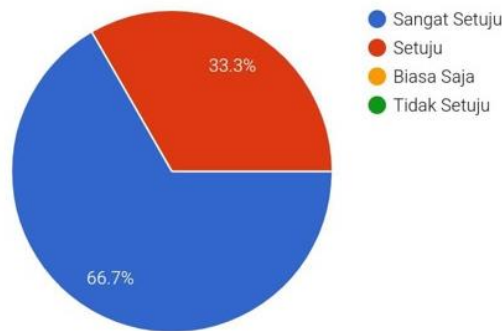


Figure 2 Graph of the success of the program in improving the speaking skills of students of the English Club extracurricular of SMPN 15 Bekasi.

The graph is the result of a questionnaire distributed to members of the extracurricular English club of SMPN 15 Bekasi who participated in the Community Service Student Creativity Program (PKM-PM). In the questionnaire, 66.7% strongly agreed to the statement that the Community Service Student Creativity Program (PKM-PM) can improve the speaking skills of SMPN 15 Bekasi English Club extracurricular students and another 33.3% agreed to the statement. The improvement in speaking skills indicates that students not only feel more confident but also become more capable of using English effectively (Songsiri, 2007). This can influence the way English is taught at SMPN 15 Bekasi, encouraging teachers to use more methods that involve speaking practice, such as group discussions, presentations, and other creative activities. Additionally, teaching that focuses on speaking skills helping students prepare for exams and real-life situations where communication skills are essential.

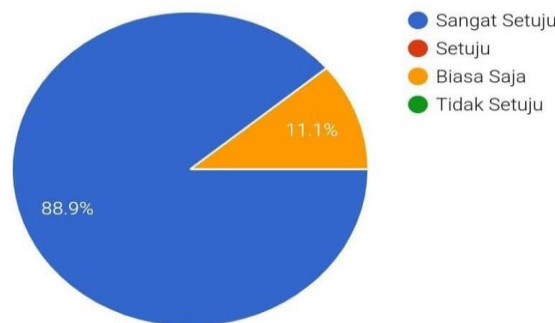


Figure 3 Graph of program sustainability feedback

The graph is the result of a questionnaire distributed to members of the extracurricular English club of SMPN 15 Bekasi who participated in the Community Service Student Creativity Program (PKM-PM). In the questionnaire, 88,9% strongly agreed on the statement of the Student Creativity Program for Community Service (PKM-PM) feedback on the sustainability of the program for students of the English Club extracurricular of SMPN 15 Bekasi and the other 11,1% Ordinary on the statement. The implication of this feedback is the importance of maintaining and developing similar programs in the future. By continuing activities that have proven effective, SMPN 15 Bekasi can continue to enhance the quality of English teaching and student participation in extracurricular

activities. Ongoing programs will not only strengthen students' speaking skills but also potentially increase their motivation to learn English as a whole.

Discussion

From the results of a questionnaire conducted on members of the English Club extracurricular of SMPN 15 Bekasi who participated in the Community Service Student Creativity Program (PKM-PM), there are several significant findings that show the positive impact of this program.

First, regarding the increase in confidence in public speaking using English, 88.9% of respondents strongly agreed that PKM-PM played an important role in this regard. This figure reflects how effective the program is in building students' confidence when speaking in public. Students' English speaking skills can improve as their confidence increases. Conversely, if students do not have consistent confidence in their English speaking ability, this can result in poor speaking skills (Syafitri et al., 2019).

Secondly, the questionnaire results showed that 66.7% of the respondents strongly agreed that PKM-PM successfully improved their speaking skills, while the other 33.3% also agreed. This shows that the program not only boosts self-confidence, but also makes a real contribution to the mastery of speaking skills in English (Losi & Muslim Nasution, 2022). Thus, students not only feel more confident, but also more capable of using English well.

Furthermore, in terms of program sustainability feedback, 88.9% of respondents strongly agreed that PKM-PM had a positive impact on the sustainability of English Club extracurricular activities. While the other 11.1% felt normal. This shows that students feel the ongoing benefits of the program, which can increase their participation and motivation to continue learning and practicing.

Overall, the results of this questionnaire reflect the very positive effect of the PKM-PM on the student members of the English Club of SMPN 15 Bekasi. The program successfully improved students' confidence in public speaking as well as their speaking ability in English. In addition, the positive feedback on the sustainability of the program shows good potential for future development of this activity. This is certainly a motivation for program organizers to continue to innovate and improve the quality of activities held, for better achievements in the future. Thus, PKM-PM can be considered as a successful and exemplary initiative in developing students' communication skills in schools. These positive results are expected to serve as an impetus for similar programs elsewhere, in order to improve students' English language skills and confidence in communicating.

On the other hand, in the role-play sessions, students are divided into small groups and given scripts containing dialogues in English. They are taught to understand the characters they are portraying and how to express emotions and body movements that align with those characters. Through collaborative practice, students discuss and provide feedback to one another regarding pronunciation, intonation, and appropriate facial expressions.

This method creates a collaborative learning environment where students feel more comfortable exploring and practicing speaking. Additionally, the use of puppets in role-play helps students to become more visually and emotionally engaged, making the learning experience more profound. They are not only speaking but also physically interacting with the puppets, which enriches their learning experience.

Although this method has many benefits, students also face several challenges. One of the main challenges is anxiety when speaking in public. Even though they are portraying puppet characters, there is still a sense of nervousness when having to speak in English in front of their peers. Additionally, some students struggle to understand and remember the dialogues they need to deliver, especially if the dialogues contain new vocabulary or complex sentence structures. Another challenge faced is the limitation in using English in everyday situations. Some students feel less confident using English outside the context of the performance, which can hinder their ability to communicate effectively.

After each role-play session, the PKM-PM team collects feedback from students regarding their experiences. This feedback includes aspects they enjoyed, difficulties they faced, and suggestions for improvement. The process is conducted through group discussions and anonymous questionnaires to ensure that all students feel comfortable sharing their opinions.

The feedback received is then analyzed to identify patterns or recurring issues. For example, if many students express difficulty with the pronunciation of certain vocabulary, the PKM-PM team can design additional sessions focused on pronunciation and practice of that vocabulary. Additionally, feedback is also used to adjust scripts and learning materials (Jaiboonlue, 2023; Soufiane et al., 2023). If students show a high interest in certain characters or themes in the performance, the team can modify the scripts to incorporate those elements, making students more engaged and motivated to participate. By processing and integrating student feedback, the PKM-PM team not only enhances the quality of the program but also fosters a sense of ownership and responsibility among students. They feel that their voices are heard and valued, which in turn increases their motivation to learn and practice English.

CONCLUSION

The Community Service Program (PKM-PM) at SMPN 15 Kota Bekasi successfully improved students' speaking skills through a puppet show in English. Conducted from April 30 to July 18, 2024, the activity involved 7 sessions using the Communicative Language Teaching method, which included material explanations, demonstrations, and role play. As a result, students showed high enthusiasm and significant progress in their speaking abilities, with 15 students successfully performing the puppet show in English. Surveys conducted before and after the program indicated improvements in the students' English language skills, including vocabulary and confidence in speaking. To ensure the success of this program can be implemented in other schools, here are some recommendations:

1. Curriculum Adaptation: Other schools can adapt a curriculum that includes Communicative Language Teaching methods and puppet performances. It is important to tailor the teaching materials to the local context and the needs of the students, making the program relevant and easily accepted.

2. Teacher Training: Conduct training for English teachers to introduce this teaching method. The training can include techniques for using puppets as teaching aids, as well as strategies to enhance student interaction during learning activities.
3. Use of Media and Resources: Schools are encouraged to utilize various media and resources, such as educational videos, interactive applications, and teaching aids, to enrich students' learning experiences. The use of diverse media can increase student interest and support their understanding of English.
4. Community Involvement: Engaging the local community, including puppet artists or educational organizations, can provide additional support and expand collaboration networks. Collaborative activities, such as art festivals or open performances, can enhance student and community engagement.
5. Evaluation and Feedback: Implement a continuous evaluation system to measure the effectiveness of the program. Conducting surveys and interviews with students and teachers after each session can provide useful feedback for future program improvements.

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