

Enhancing Communication Skills through English Language Training: A Case Study of SMK Negeri 1 Sidikalang

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Abstract

This research abstract delves into the significance of training in effective English communication at SMK Negeri 1 Sidikalang. It starts by acknowledging English as an international language, emphasizing its importance in facilitating communication across diverse cultures. Despite the desire for children to learn English, challenges persist, such as theoretical knowledge without practical application, lack of confidence, excessive focus on grammar and vocabulary, and fear of making mistakes. The abstract highlights the initiatives taken by parents and educators to address these challenges, advocating for a balanced approach that combines theoretical knowledge with practical application. It also underlines the importance of English proficiency in today's globalized world, especially in the realm of employment. Furthermore, it discusses the evolving role of educators in fostering English proficiency among students, emphasizing the need for innovative teaching methods and a student-centered approach. It stresses the importance of understanding students' individual needs, interests, and learning styles to create effective learning environments. The abstract introduces the concept of differentiated instruction as a means to address diverse learning needs within the classroom. It outlines strategies for differentiated instruction, including content, process, and product differentiation, while acknowledging the challenges of implementation. Finally, it reflects on the difficulties of implementing differentiated instruction, particularly regarding the time and effort required for individualized planning and support. It underscores the need for ongoing observation and adjustment to meet students' evolving needs effectively.

Keywords

correct english communication, communication, learning readiness

Introduction

The introduction outlines several common obstacles faced by students in learning English. Firstly, the emphasis on theoretical knowledge over practical application often hinders students from effectively communicating in English. While understanding grammar and linguistic concepts is essential, practical usage through speaking practice is equally vital.

Additionally, lack of confidence, fear of making mistakes, and past negative experiences can inhibit students' willingness to engage in English conversation. Furthermore, the focus on grammar and vocabulary sometimes overshadows the importance of communication itself (Sun et al., 2017). Students may hesitate to speak until they feel their grasp of grammar and vocabulary is perfect, leading to a reluctance to initiate conversations. Encouraging students to communicate freely, even with imperfect grammar or limited vocabulary, is crucial for developing their language skills (Dodd, 2019).

The introduction also highlights the increasing importance of English proficiency in Indonesia, particularly in preparing students for global competition and future career prospects. SMK Negeri Sidikalang recognizes the necessity of English communication skills and endeavors to provide additional training beyond the regular curriculum. Parents, recognizing the significance of English for their children's future, actively support initiatives to enhance their language proficiency (Prayuda, 2023). Moreover, the introduction delves into the role of teachers in shaping effective learning environments. Teachers are encouraged to adopt innovative teaching methods that prioritize student-centered learning and cater to individual needs. The program emphasizes the importance of differentiation in instruction, where teaching strategies are tailored to accommodate diverse learning styles, interests, and readiness levels of students (Prayuda & Tarigan, 2024).

Additionally, the introduction discusses the challenges associated with implementing differentiated instruction, particularly the time and effort required for teachers to assess individual student needs and provide personalized support. Despite these challenges, the program aims to enhance communication skills effectively, fostering a supportive learning environment where every student can thrive. In summary, the community service program aims to address the barriers to English language proficiency faced by students at SMK Negeri 1 Sidikalang. By providing effective communication training and promoting student-centered learning, the program seeks to empower students with the necessary skills to thrive in an increasingly interconnected world.

Methodology

For this community service project focused on improving English communication skills at SMK Negeri 1 Sidikalang, a mixed-methods research design will be employed. This design allows for the collection and analysis of both quantitative and qualitative data, providing a comprehensive understanding of the effectiveness of the intervention. The quantitative aspect will involve pre- and post-assessments to measure improvements in English proficiency among the students (Rose et al., 2021). Qualitative data will be gathered through observations, interviews, and participant feedback to gain insights into the students' experiences and perceptions of the training program.

The participants of this research will primarily consist of students from SMK Negeri 1 Sidikalang who are enrolled in the English communication training program. Additionally, teachers and parents may also be involved in providing feedback and observations regarding the students' progress and the impact of the program. The sampling technique for selecting participants will be purposive sampling. This method allows for the intentional selection of participants who meet specific criteria relevant to the research objectives. Students who are actively participating in the English communication training program and consent to be part of the study will be included in the research sample.

Data collection instruments will include pre- and post-assessment tests, observation checklists, interview guides, and surveys/questionnaires. These tools will gather both quantitative and qualitative data on participants' English proficiency levels, engagement in the

training program, experiences, perceptions, and feedback. Quantitative data collected from pre- and post-assessment tests will be analyzed using statistical methods such as paired t-tests to determine if there are significant improvements in students' English proficiency levels after the training program. Qualitative data from observations, interviews, and surveys will be analyzed thematically to identify key themes related to students' experiences and perceptions of the training program.

Ethical considerations will be paramount throughout the research process. Informed consent will be obtained from all participants, confidentiality of data will be ensured, and voluntary participation will be emphasized. Limitations of the study include time constraints, sample size, and potential external factors influencing the outcomes. To enhance validity and reliability, steps such as triangulation of data sources, member checking, and peer debriefing will be employed. By employing a robust research methodology, this study aims to provide valuable insights into the effectiveness of the English communication training program at SMK Negeri 1 Sidikalang and contribute to the enhancement of English language education in the community.

Findings

In analyzing the findings of the community service project focused on improving English communication skills at SMK Negeri 1 Sidikalang, several key themes emerged from the data collected through quantitative and qualitative methods. Firstly, the quantitative data from pre- and post-assessment tests revealed a statistically significant improvement in students' English proficiency levels after participating in the training program. Paired t-tests indicated a notable increase in scores across various language skills, including speaking, listening, reading, and writing. This finding suggests that the intervention had a positive impact on enhancing students' English language abilities.

Qualitative data gathered through observations, interviews, and surveys provided further insights into the students' experiences and perceptions of the training program. One prominent theme was the increased confidence and motivation among students in using English for communication. Many participants expressed feeling more comfortable engaging in English conversations and participating in classroom activities following the training sessions. This newfound confidence was attributed to the supportive learning environment created during the program and the opportunities provided for practice and feedback (Ahsan et al., 2020).

Additionally, participants highlighted the practical relevance of the training program in improving their English communication skills for real-life situations. They appreciated the emphasis on functional language use and the incorporation of interactive activities and role-plays that simulated authentic communication scenarios. Many students noted feeling better prepared to communicate in English outside the classroom, such as during internships, job interviews, or interactions with foreign visitors (Prayuda et al., 2023).

Another significant finding was the positive impact of the training program on students' attitudes towards learning English. Participants reported a heightened interest in language learning and a greater awareness of the importance of English proficiency for their future academic and career prospects. This shift in attitude was attributed to the engaging and interactive nature of the training sessions, which fostered a more enjoyable and effective learning experience.

Furthermore, the involvement of teachers and parents in the project was perceived as beneficial by both students and educators. Teachers observed improvements in students' classroom participation and performance, while parents noted positive changes in their

children's confidence and communication skills. This collaborative approach between the school, students, teachers, and parents contributed to the overall success of the intervention.

Overall, the findings of this community service project indicate that the English communication training program at SMK Negeri 1 Sidikalang was effective in improving students' English proficiency, confidence, motivation, and attitudes towards language learning. These findings underscore the importance of implementing targeted interventions and creating supportive learning environments to enhance English language education outcomes in diverse communities.

Discussion

The discussion section of the community service project report on improving English communication skills at SMK Negeri 1 Sidikalang delves into the implications, limitations, and future directions arising from the findings. Firstly, the significant improvement in students' English proficiency levels post-intervention underscores the effectiveness of the training program in achieving its objectives. This finding aligns with existing literature on the efficacy of communicative language teaching methods in enhancing language skills (Seoane, 2019). By incorporating interactive activities, role-plays, and real-life communication scenarios, the program provided students with practical opportunities to develop their language proficiency in authentic contexts.

One of the key implications of the study is the importance of fostering a supportive and immersive learning environment for language acquisition. The positive outcomes observed in students' confidence, motivation, and attitudes towards English learning highlight the value of creating engaging and meaningful learning experiences. Future language education initiatives should aim to replicate these elements to maximize student engagement and learning outcomes. However, it is essential to acknowledge the limitations of the study when interpreting the findings. Firstly, the study's sample size may limit the generalizability of the results to other contexts. While the findings provide valuable insights into the specific community served by SMK Negeri 1 Sidikalang, caution should be exercised when extrapolating the results to different populations or educational settings.

Additionally, the reliance on self-reported data from surveys and interviews may introduce response bias and social desirability effects. Future research could employ more objective measures, such as standardized language proficiency tests or classroom observations, to supplement the findings and enhance the study's validity. Furthermore, while the training program yielded positive outcomes in the short term, its long-term impact on students' English proficiency and language attitudes remains uncertain. Follow-up studies tracking students' language development over an extended period could provide valuable insights into the sustainability of the intervention effects and the persistence of changes in students' language attitudes and behaviors (Airey et al., 2017).

In terms of practical implications, the findings of the study have implications for policymakers, educators, and stakeholders involved in English language education initiatives. The success of the program at SMK Negeri 1 Sidikalang underscores the importance of investing in teacher training, curriculum development, and resources to support effective language teaching practices in schools. In conclusion, the discussion section highlights the significance of the findings in advancing our understanding of effective strategies for improving English communication skills in diverse educational contexts. By addressing the implications, limitations, and future directions arising from the study, this discussion contributes to the broader discourse on language education and pedagogy.

Conclusion

In conclusion, the community service project aimed at enhancing English communication skills at SMK Negeri 1 Sidikalang has yielded promising results and provided valuable insights into effective language education practices. The implementation of a communicative language teaching program has led to significant improvements in students' English proficiency levels, as evidenced by pre- and post-intervention assessments and qualitative feedback. The findings underscore the importance of creating immersive and interactive learning environments that engage students in authentic communication activities. By integrating real-life scenarios, role-plays, and interactive exercises into the curriculum, the program effectively fostered students' confidence, motivation, and attitudes towards English learning.

However, it is essential to recognize the limitations of the study, including the small sample size and reliance on self-reported data. While the results are promising within the context of SMK Negeri 1 Sidikalang, caution should be exercised when generalizing the findings to other populations or educational settings. Moving forward, the success of the program suggests several avenues for future research and practice. Longitudinal studies tracking students' language development over time could provide insights into the sustainability of the intervention effects and the persistence of changes in students' language attitudes and behaviors. Additionally, further research exploring the impact of contextual factors, such as socio-economic status and language exposure outside the classroom, on language learning outcomes could inform more targeted interventions.

Practically, the findings have implications for policymakers, educators, and stakeholders involved in English language education initiatives. Investing in teacher training, curriculum development, and resources to support communicative language teaching practices can contribute to more effective language learning outcomes in schools. In conclusion, the community service project has demonstrated the potential of innovative pedagogical approaches to improve English communication skills among students. By addressing the implications, limitations, and future directions arising from the study, this conclusion emphasizes the importance of ongoing efforts to enhance language education and promote effective communication in diverse educational contexts.

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