



IMPROVING SPEAKING SKILLS THROUGH FLASH CARDS AT "BE SELF" ENGLISH COMMUNITY IN PACIRAN LAMONGAN

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<p>Info Article</p> <p>Received : 04 Agustus 2024</p> <p>Revised : 03 September 2024</p> <p>Accepted : 02 Oktober 2024</p> <p>Publication : 30 Oktober 2024</p> <p>Keywords: Speaking Skill, Flasch Card, Be Self, Lamongan, English Language.</p> <p>Kata Kunci: Keterampilan speaking, Flash card, Be Self, Lamongan, Bahasa Inggris</p> <p><i>Licensed Under a Creative Commons Attribution 4.0 International License</i></p> 	<p>Abstract: <i>This community service activity is designed to enhance the English language proficiency of members of the "Be Self" learning community in Paciran, Lamongan through the utilization of flash card learning media. The impetus for this initiative stems from the prevalent challenges encountered by English language learners in the region, namely a dearth of confidence, inadequate oral practice, and a paucity of engaging and applicable learning materials. The approach employed in this activity is a participatory one, utilizing interactive training that involves the provision of material, the demonstration of the use of flash cards, paired practice, and reflection sessions. The implementation of the activity was divided into several sessions, each of which was designed to cultivate participants' courage in using English orally in a conducive learning atmosphere. The findings of the activity demonstrated that the utilization of flash cards enhanced the participants' level of activity, confidence, and capacity to comprehend and employ English vocabulary in basic sentences. Furthermore, the participants exhibited a notable degree of enthusiasm for the method employed.</i></p> <p>Abstrak: Kegiatan pengabdian masyarakat ini bertujuan untuk meningkatkan keterampilan berbicara (speaking skills) dalam bahasa Inggris pada anggota komunitas belajar "Be Self" di Paciran, Lamongan melalui pemanfaatan media pembelajaran flash card. Latar belakang kegiatan ini didasarkan pada permasalahan umum yang dihadapi oleh pembelajar bahasa Inggris di daerah, yaitu kurangnya kepercayaan diri, minimnya praktik lisan, serta terbatasnya media belajar yang menarik dan aplikatif. Metode yang digunakan dalam kegiatan ini adalah pendekatan partisipatif melalui pelatihan interaktif yang melibatkan pemberian materi, demonstrasi penggunaan flash card, praktik berpasangan, dan sesi refleksi. Pelaksanaan kegiatan dibagi dalam beberapa sesi yang dirancang untuk membangun keberanian peserta dalam menggunakan bahasa Inggris secara lisan dalam suasana belajar yang menyenangkan. Hasil kegiatan menunjukkan bahwa penggunaan flash card mampu meningkatkan keaktifan, rasa percaya diri, dan kemampuan peserta dalam memahami serta menggunakan kosakata bahasa Inggris dalam kalimat sederhana. Selain itu, peserta menunjukkan antusiasme tinggi terhadap metode yang digunakan.</p>
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INTRODUCTION

English speaking is one of the most important skills in the globalization era, both for academic and professional purposes (Fransisca, 2024). English is widely used as a global language of communication, whether in international forums, the academic world, business, or digital media. The ability to speak English allows one to actively engage in interactions across cultures and countries. In the academic context, many scientific reference sources, online lectures, and international conferences use English as the main medium (Juliantina & Yuni Permatasari, 2024; Wirawan, 2022). Therefore, the ability to speak English is an important prerequisite for students and professionals to be able to access global knowledge and participate in scientific discussions (Hessel & Strand, 2023; Saville-Troike, 1984).

In the professional realm, these skills are needed to build effective communication in a multinational work environment. The ability to convey ideas, make presentations, and collaborate with colleagues from different countries relies heavily on fluency in speaking English (Putra, Yulia, & Ana, 2022). In addition, speaking skills also support one's international mobility, whether for the purpose of further study, student exchange, or career development abroad. English speaking skills also contribute greatly to personal development and self-confidence. Individuals who speak English tend to be more confident in cross-cultural interactions and have greater access to information, learning opportunities and global social networks (Akther, 2022; Butar, Yolanda, & Hasanah, 2024; Chaudhuri, Chakravorty, & Chowdhury, 2019). Within the framework of 21st century skills, speaking skills in English become an integral part of the competencies that must be possessed to face the challenges and opportunities in an increasingly connected global era (Bhuvish, 2024). However, this skill is often a challenge for many students in Indonesia, especially in rural areas, due to limited facilities, lack of practice, and low confidence in using English actively (Khudriyah, Munir, & Mujahidin, 2025; Maria Angelina Molo, Vensensus Januar Sole, & Innosensia E. Isavela Nd Satu, 2025; Tarsinih & Juidah, 2021).

Many English language learners, especially in areas such as Paciran, Lamongan, still experience difficulties in mastering this skill. The contributing factors include lack of hands-on practice, lack of interactive learning media, and lack of confidence in using English orally. Many English language learners, especially in areas such as Paciran, Lamongan, still experience difficulties in mastering speaking skills due to several interrelated factors. One of the main causes is the lack of opportunities for direct practice

in real situations. Language learning activities in schools or informal institutions often focus more on the reading and writing aspects, while active speaking practice is still very limited. This causes students' ability to express ideas orally to not develop optimally. In addition, the availability of interactive learning media is also still minimal. Many teachers or language learning facilitators have not utilized methods and media that can stimulate speaking activities, such as language games, vocabulary cards (flash cards), or conversation simulations. As a result, learning becomes monotonous and less interesting, so learners do not feel challenged to try speaking in English.

Many learners experience discomfort when compelled to speak in English, as they may be apprehensive about being corrected or derided by their peers. The absence of an environment conducive to foreign language acquisition further exacerbates this obstacle. Therefore, a learning approach that fosters an enjoyable learning atmosphere, encourages speaking, and provides media that supports participants' active involvement in oral communication is necessary. Therefore, it is important to present interactive and fun learning methods to increase participant engagement and learning effectiveness. One method that is proven to help develop speaking skills is the use of flash cards. This media is able to stimulate visual memory and encourage participants to actively speak through simple but effective visual triggers. Flash cards can also be used in a variety of pair or group activities that encourage verbal interaction between participants (Hamer & Rohimajaya, 2018; Lai, Jong, Hsia, & Lin, 2020; Tarusu & Harun, 2024). Therefore, this community service activity uses Flash Cards to improve speaking skills in the "Be Self" English community.

The "Be Self" English Community in Paciran, Lamongan, functions as a forum for individuals to enhance their English proficiency in an autonomous manner. However, preliminary observations suggest that a significant proportion of community members continue to encounter challenges in articulating their ideas verbally with the appropriate structure and vocabulary. The conventional and less varied learning methods that have been employed thus far have been ineffective in enhancing the speaking skills of the participants.

Based on these problems, this community service activity aims to apply flash cards as learning media in improving the English speaking skills of "Be Self" English Community members. Through participatory approach and hands-on practice, participants are expected to be more confident and skillful in communicating using English. In addition, this program is also expected to provide an alternative learning

method that is more interesting and effective for the community. This intervention is designed to provide applicable learning solutions and to strengthen the spirit of independent and collaborative learning in the community environment.

METHOD

This community service activity was carried out by Fiqh Aisyatul Farokhah and Eny Latifah from the Institut Agama Islam Tarbiyatut Tholabah Lamongan. This community service activity is carried out with a participatory-educative approach, which emphasizes the active involvement of participants in the English learning process, especially speaking skills. The targets of the activity are members of the “Be Self” community in Paciran, Lamongan, consisting of students and youth with an interest in learning English informally. The implementation of the activity is comprised of a series of stages (Latifah & Abdullah, 2023).

The preparatory phase was initiated with an assessment of the community’s requirements. The team initiated a series of visits to engage in discourse with the administration and members of the community to ascertain the particular challenges they encounter in the domain of verbal communication. As a result of the aforementioned discourse, it was determined that the majority of the members continued to encounter challenges in verbal expression, attributable to their limited vocabulary and the paucity of opportunities for practice. In light of the aforementioned findings, the team proceeded to develop a set of thematic flashcards encompassing pertinent subjects, including daily activities, hobbies, and social situations. The flash cards were designed to be visually appealing, with pictures and keywords to facilitate comprehension.

The Implementation Phase was conducted in three interactive sessions. The opening session focused on establishing a comfort zone through flash card-based ice-breaking games, such as vocabulary race where participants competed to name vocabulary words correctly. This successfully broke the ice and reduced speaking anxiety. In the core session, participants were invited to engage in various flash card-based activities. Subsequent to the training, participants receive assistance in utilizing the media autonomously and in their study groups. A post-activity reflection session is conducted to evaluate the effectiveness of the activity and to document the development of participants’ speaking skills.

Evaluation was conducted through observation of participants’ performance during speaking practice, feedback from participants, and group discussion. Follow-up is in the

form of handing over flash cards and usage guides to the community for sustainable use, as well as providing recommendations for further learning strategies. Through this method, it is expected that participants will not only gain improved speaking skills, but also have higher motivation and confidence in using English in everyday life.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Flash Cards as Language Learning Media

Flash cards are one of the visual learning media in the form of cards containing brief information, such as pictures, vocabulary, phrases, or sentences, which are used to help the learning process quickly and fun. This media is widely used in language learning because it is simple, easy to carry, and can be used in various interactive activities. In the context of English language learning, flash cards are very effective in strengthening vocabulary acquisition, improving visual memory, and encouraging students to develop spontaneous speaking skills. Each card usually features one key word or phrase accompanied by an illustration or usage example, so that learners can relate the word to its context of use more concretely (Susantini & Kristiantari, 2021).

The use of flash cards in learning to speak also facilitates interaction between participants (Ramadhianti, Somba, & Rosyada, 2023). Through various activities such as matching games, conversation simulations, group quizzes, or sentence-making exercises, flash cards can create a communicative and collaborative learning atmosphere. This is very important in foreign language learning, because successful mastery of speaking depends not only on mastery of theory, but also on how often students are exposed to direct practice in communicative situations. Another advantage of flash cards is their flexibility. Teachers or facilitators can easily customize the content of the cards according to the participants' ability level, learning theme, and local needs. It also allows for self-directed learning, as participants can use it to practice alone or with peers (Wani, Lubis, & Rizky, 2023).

The utilization of flash cards in English language learning has been demonstrated to be an effective method to improve vocabulary acquisition as well as oral speaking skills. Flash cards serve as visual aids, which have been demonstrated to facilitate the retention of new vocabulary and phrases by establishing associations between images and text. In practice, flash cards can be used for various communicative and interactive activities. First, flash cards serve as a medium for vocabulary recognition. The facilitator shows a picture card with the written vocabulary in English, then the participants imitate

the pronunciation together. This activity not only helps participants understand the meaning of the word, but also improves their pronunciation gradually (Saputri & Prasetyarini, 2024).

After vocabulary is introduced, flash cards are used in simple sentence building exercises. Participants are invited to combine several cards to form a complete sentence, such as using cards with “go”, “to”, and “market” to make the sentence “I go to the market.” This exercise trains participants to use words contextually and build basic sentence structures in conversation. In addition, flash cards are also very useful in fun language game activities, such as guessing games and role play. In a guessing game, a participant describes the contents of the card without mentioning the word, while the other participants guess. This game trains quick thinking skills in English as well as the courage to speak in front of friends. In role play, participants are given a card with the theme of a profession or everyday situation, then asked to act out a character based on the contents of the card. In this way, participants can practice the use of language in a real context (Supriatin & Rizkilillah, 2018).

Another advantage of flash cards is their flexibility. The facilitator can customize the content and type of cards according to the needs and ability level of the participants. Flash cards can also be made together by participants, making it part of a creative and participatory learning process. Through a communicative, fun and contextual approach, flash cards have proven effective in creating a learning atmosphere that supports the improvement of English speaking skills. This media is able to encourage participants to be more confident in using English orally, both in small groups and when performing in public (Bikalawan et al., 2024; Ramdhani, 2022).

Flash Cards to Improve English Speaking Skills

The community service activities carried out at the “Be Self” English Community Paciran, Lamongan took place during three main sessions, namely training sessions on the use of flash cards media, interactive practice sessions, and reflection sessions. Each session was attended by around twenty participants from students and youth who are members of the community. In the training session, participants were introduced to flash cards that had been designed according to their context and needs. These flash cards contain simple illustrations along with English vocabulary or phrases that are commonly used in daily conversations, such as daily activities, expressions of feelings, and conversations in public places.

Figure 4.1. Interview with participants about English learning difficulties



This activity began with an introduction to the material and the purpose of using flash cards to all participants. The facilitator explained that flash cards are not only used as a memorization tool, but also as a medium that can stimulate interaction and conversation in a relaxed and fun learning atmosphere. The flash cards used in this training have been contextually designed, featuring common vocabulary relevant to participants’ daily lives, such as activities at home, school activities, public places, and expressions of feelings. Each card contains a simple illustration and an English word or phrase. Participants are given the opportunity to observe, read, and pronounce the contents of the card in turn. The facilitator guides participants in pronouncing the words, emphasizing the sound, and correct intonation.

Figure 4.2. Speaking Training using Flash Cards.



Subsequently, the training proceeded with the implementation of flashcard exercises in pairs and small groups. Participants were instructed to construct simple sentences using words from the cards, or to explain the contents of the cards to their friends. The objective of this activity is to provide participants with an opportunity to

engage in active English use in a relaxed and unpressured environment. The facilitator's role encompasses the provision of illustrative examples, the facilitation of the discussion process, and the correction of errors pertaining to pronunciation and sentence structure.

The interactive practice session is the core of the training, where participants directly practice English speaking skills using flash cards. After the participants understand how the flash cards work and the content of the flash cards, the facilitator directs them to engage in various language activities that emphasize activeness, courage, and two-way communication. The practice starts with pair work, where participants are divided into small pairs. Each pair is given some cards with certain vocabulary or phrases. Their task is to make and say a sentence based on the word on the card. For example, if the card says "library," participants can make a sentence like "I go to the library every Saturday." The facilitator goes around, provides guidance, and corrects pronunciation or sentence structure if needed, while maintaining a comfortable and non-stressful atmosphere.

Once the participants had become proficient, the activity was transitioned to group games that were moderately competitive and promoted increased interaction. One of the games was a guessing game, where one participant holds a card without looking at the content, and the other participants give clues in English without mentioning the word in question. For instance, if the card indicates "doctor," other participants can provide clues such as "This person is employed in a hospital setting" or "Individuals seek their counsel when they are in a state of illness." The game has been developed to cultivate description skills, enhance listening abilities, and foster an understanding of contextual nuances in a natural manner.

Additionally, participants are invited to engage in a role-playing exercise based on the scenario delineated in the card. For instance, two participants might engage in a role-play scenario, reenacting a conversation between a buyer and a seller in a market, a teacher and a student, or a tourist and a guide. The utilization of flash cards, comprising images of locations, occupations, or expressions, serves as a foundational tool to facilitate the development of basic conversational skills. This activity has been designed to promote creativity in language and spontaneous responses among participants.

The reflection session was held at the end of the training series, aiming to provide space for participants to evaluate their learning experience, both individually and in groups. This reflection not only serves as an evaluative moment, but also as a form of reinforcement of participants' achievements and a medium to build awareness of the

importance of learning sustainability. The reflection activity began with the facilitator inviting participants to sit in a circle, creating an open and equal atmosphere. The facilitator then invited participants to reflect on the entire training process, from the introduction of flash cards, pronunciation exercises, sentence building, interactive games, to role-playing sessions. Participants were given time to think about what experiences were the most memorable, what vocabulary was the easiest or most difficult, and how they felt when speaking in English in front of friends.

Some participants volunteered to share their impressions and opinions. Some expressed happiness because they felt more confident, some admitted that they were initially afraid of speaking but then felt helped by the pictures and words in the flash cards. Some participants even expressed the desire to continue this practice at home or at the next community meeting. The facilitator starts by asking simple questions such as, “What did you like most about today’s activity?” or “How did you feel when you tried to speak English using the flash cards?” These questions provoke participants to speak honestly about their experiences. Some participants volunteer their opinions right away, while others are given the opportunity to take turns.

One participant, Rina (17 years old), said, *“At first I was afraid of being wrong and embarrassed to speak English. But when I played this card, I became braver. Because there are pictures, I know what the words mean.”* This testimony shows that visual media helps to reduce fear and facilitate understanding. Another participant, Ahmad (16 years old), added, *“I like the guessing game the most. My friend gives me clues and I can answer. It feels fun and like playing, but while learning.”* This expression shows that fun methods can increase participants’ involvement and active participation.

Meanwhile, Yuli (18 years old) shared a more in-depth reflection: *“I usually study by myself at home, but I get bored quickly. In this community, especially using flash cards, I feel more enthusiastic because I can practice speaking with my friends.”* From these quotes, it appears that the activities not only impacted on the cognitive, but also the social and affective aspects of the participants. These expressions are an indicator that the communicative and visual learning approach has succeeded in creating a positive impact, both affective and cognitive.

The facilitator then gave feedback on the participants’ participation during the activity, and appreciated their effort and courage. In this reflection, the facilitator also reminded the importance of consistency in practicing, encouraging participants to continue using English in everyday situations, no matter how small the context. In

addition, participants were also invited to jointly design further activities independently, so that the spirit of learning is maintained and the “Be Self” community becomes a space that continues to grow and be productive.

The reflection session was closed with a mutual agreement to continue supporting each other in learning English and to make flash cards one of the routine methods in future community meetings. The atmosphere of reflection was warm and meaningful, showing that this activity not only equips participants with technical skills, but also builds motivation and confidence as active and independent learners.

During the session, the class atmosphere was very dynamic. Participants were active, laughing, encouraging each other, and slowly showing increased courage in expressing their thoughts in English. The facilitator periodically provided positive reinforcement, appreciation for the participants’ courage, and built their confidence in speaking. At the first meeting, some participants still looked hesitant and awkward in expressing ideas verbally. However, after being introduced to the interactive flash cards method, their participation increased dramatically. Activities such as guessing game and role-play successfully triggered active discussions, with more than 85% of participants consistently involved in each session. Some participants who initially only answered with short sentences began to be able to compose 2-3 sentences fluently.

A notable indicator of this shift is the heightened level of engagement exhibited by participants in each session. During the training process, participants exhibited a combination of physical presence and emotional and cognitive engagement in each activity. The students demonstrated a high level of engagement during the role-playing activities, the quiz segment of the lesson, and the construction of sentences using the vocabulary from the flash cards. Another salient indicator is the heightened courage exhibited by participants in their use of English, both in small-group settings and during public performances before their peers. Initially, many participants exhibited signs of hesitation, shyness, and reluctance to contribute verbally. However, as the activity progressed, a noticeable enhancement in their confidence levels was observed. This can be observed from their initiative in responding to the facilitator’s inquiries, delivering straightforward sentences, and venturing to improvise during role-playing activities.

The participants’ ability to understand and use the vocabulary is also one of the benchmarks of success. Through the visual and contextual approach of the flash cards, participants found it easier to remember and use the words in everyday sentences. Some participants were even able to construct simple sentences without looking at the notes,

showing that this media successfully strengthened their memory and understanding of language structures. A notable positive response was observed among the participants regarding the utilization of flash card-based learning methodology.

In the post-intervention reflection session, the vast majority of participants attested to the significant efficacy of the flashcards in facilitating their learning. It was posited that the experience of learning was characterized by increased enjoyment, reduced tedium, and decreased stress when compared with conventional classroom settings. This pedagogical approach is regarded as particularly apt for individuals who embody a communal disposition, as they are inclined to acquire knowledge in an informal setting and demonstrate a predilection for experiential learning. Moreover, the efficacy of this initiative is underscored by the "Be Self" community's ongoing commitment to employ this methodology autonomously in their weekly gatherings. The participants even put forth the proposal of creating their own flashcards based on themes of their choosing, such as hobbies, food, or daily activities. This outcome indicates that the activity was not only effective in facilitating the transfer of skills; it was also successful in fostering a passion for learning and a sense of ownership of the learning process itself.

CONCLUSION

A community-based initiative involving the implementation of service projects by volunteers within the "Be Self" community in Paciran, Lamongan, has demonstrated that the incorporation of multimedia, specifically the utilization of flashcards, is a highly effective medium for enhancing the English language communication skills of participants. Utilizing a communicative, interactive, and hands-on approach, participants not only acquired new vocabulary but also developed the ability to organize it into coherent sentences and apply it in various simple contexts. The utilization of flashcards has been demonstrated to engender an enjoyable learning environment, alleviate trepidation during verbal interactions, and enhance participants' confidence in employing English proficiently.

From the evaluation of the implementation of the activities, it was found that most participants showed significant progress in active participation and speaking courage. Through observation during the training and reflection sessions, participants were able to identify improvements in their abilities independently. In addition, participants gave positive responses to the methods used, and the majority expressed a desire to continue this practice on an ongoing basis in the next community meeting. The evaluation also

showed that the time, materials and approach of the facilitators were considered appropriate to the needs and characteristics of the participants. Thus, this activity not only succeeded in improving technical skills in speaking English, but also had a positive impact on affective aspects, such as motivation and self-confidence. Flash cards can be recommended as an effective and applicable alternative learning media, especially in non-formal learning environments in participation-based communities.

Based on the results of the activities and evaluations that have been carried out, it is recommended that flash card-based learning methods can continue to be developed and used regularly in community learning programs, especially to improve speaking skills in English. For educational institutions or community service organizations, it is recommended to make this method one of the easy-to-implement and low-cost language skills training models. Collaboration between facilitators and community members also needs to be strengthened so that the learning process is not one-way, but grows in a participatory and sustainable manner.

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