

Empowering Islamic Boarding School Students through English Public Speaking Training to Enhance Their Self-Confidence

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ABSTRAK

Program pengabdian kepada masyarakat ini bertujuan untuk meningkatkan kepercayaan diri santri melalui pelatihan public speaking berbahasa Inggris di Dayah Jamiah Al-Aziziyah Bireuen, Aceh. Permasalahan utama yang dihadapi santri meliputi rendahnya kepercayaan diri dalam berbicara di depan umum serta keterbatasan keterampilan komunikasi dalam bahasa Inggris. Kegiatan dilaksanakan melalui beberapa tahapan, yaitu analisis kebutuhan, penyusunan materi, pelatihan interaktif, praktik langsung, serta evaluasi. Metode yang digunakan adalah pendekatan partisipatif dengan teknik role-playing, diskusi kelompok, dan presentasi individu yang terintegrasi dengan nilai-nilai keislaman. Hasil kegiatan menunjukkan adanya peningkatan signifikan dalam kepercayaan diri, keberanian tampil di depan umum, serta kemampuan menyampaikan gagasan secara sistematis dalam bahasa Inggris. Selain itu, santri juga mengalami peningkatan motivasi belajar, partisipasi aktif, serta kemampuan berpikir kritis dan komunikatif. Dampak jangka panjang dari program ini adalah terbentuknya karakter santri yang lebih mandiri, adaptif, dan siap menghadapi tantangan global. Secara praktis, kegiatan ini

memberikan kontribusi terhadap penguatan kualitas sumber daya manusia di lingkungan dayah, sekaligus menjadi model alternatif pembelajaran berbasis keterampilan komunikasi yang relevan untuk diterapkan pada lembaga pendidikan Islam lainnya.

ABSTRACT

This community service program aims to enhance students' self-confidence through English public speaking training at Dayah Jamiah Al-Aziziyah Bireuen, Aceh. The primary challenges faced by the students include low confidence in public speaking and limited English communication skills. The program was implemented through several stages, including needs assessment, material development, interactive training sessions, practical exercises, and evaluation. A participatory approach was employed using techniques such as role-playing, group discussions, and individual presentations integrated with Islamic values. The results demonstrate a significant improvement in students' self-confidence, willingness to speak in public, and ability to deliver ideas systematically in English. Furthermore, students exhibited increased learning motivation, active participation, and improved critical and communicative thinking skills. The broader impact

of this program lies in fostering independent, adaptive, and globally competitive students. In addition, this initiative contributes to strengthening human resource quality within Islamic boarding school environments and offers a practical model for communication-based skill development. Therefore, English-based public speaking training can serve as an effective and sustainable strategy to empower students and enhance both their linguistic competence and character development in Islamic educational institutions.

INTRODUCTION

Islamic boarding schools (*pesantren/dayah*) in Indonesia play a significant role in shaping students' moral, spiritual, and intellectual development. Traditionally, these institutions emphasize religious instruction, character formation, and communal values rooted in Islamic teachings. In recent years, however, *pesantren* have been challenged to adapt to the demands of globalization, particularly in equipping students with communication and language skills necessary for broader social engagement. Despite the strong foundation in character education, many students still face limitations in expressing ideas confidently, especially in foreign languages such as English. This gap highlights the need for integrative educational approaches that combine religious values with modern competencies, including public speaking skills as a means of enhancing students' self-confidence and communication abilities (Nurhabibi et al., 2025; Ubaidillah, 2024).

Previous studies have demonstrated that public speaking activities such as *muhadharah* play a crucial role in improving students' communication skills within Islamic boarding schools. For instance, structured speech training and regular practice sessions have been shown to significantly enhance students' speaking abilities and confidence levels. Research also indicates that participation in public speaking programs contributes to the development of critical thinking, organization of ideas, and verbal fluency. Moreover, the integration of communicative and participatory learning approaches has proven effective in fostering active student engagement and reducing anxiety in speaking contexts. These findings suggest that public speaking training is not only a linguistic exercise but also a transformative learning process that supports students' personal growth and social interaction skills (Fadholi et al., 2024; Hilwa et al., 2024; Setiawati, 2024; Yosepin & Husna, 2023; Muttaqin et al., 2025).

In addition to communication skills, the broader context of Islamic education emphasizes the importance of holistic development, including emotional, spiritual, and character formation. Studies have shown that integrating emotional and spiritual intelligence into educational practices enhances students' self-awareness, confidence, and resilience. Furthermore, *pesantren* education is increasingly oriented toward addressing contemporary challenges, such as environmental awareness, multicultural understanding, and character building in the digital era. These developments indicate a shift toward more innovative and adaptive educational models that balance traditional values with modern competencies. However, the specific integration of English public speaking training within this framework remains underexplored, particularly in the context of community service programs (Andrei, 2023; Jamilah et al., 2023; Ali & Bahtera, 2024; Zarkasyi et al., 2024; Sofiatil et al., 2024).

Despite the growing body of research on public speaking and Islamic education, there is still a significant gap in the implementation of structured English-based public speaking training tailored to the needs of *santri* in traditional *dayah* settings. Most existing programs focus on native language speech or religious discourse, with limited emphasis on English as a global communication tool. Furthermore, previous studies tend to emphasize theoretical or institutional perspectives rather than practical, community-based interventions that directly engage students.

This gap underscores the urgency of developing innovative training models that integrate English language learning with public speaking practices while maintaining the cultural and religious identity of the students (Hizbullah, 2023; Taufiqurrohman, 2025; Syafei et al., 2025).

The novelty of this community service program lies in its integrative approach, combining English public speaking training with Islamic values and participatory learning methods in a *dayah* context. Unlike conventional programs, this initiative emphasizes experiential learning through interactive workshops, role-playing, and performance-based evaluation, enabling students to actively practice and internalize communication skills. Additionally, the program is designed to foster not only linguistic competence but also self-confidence, leadership, and character development. By situating the training within the socio-cultural environment of *Dayah Jamiah Al-Aziziyah Bireuen*, this program offers a contextualized and sustainable model for empowering students through language and communication skills (Furqon, 2020; Sipuan et al., 2022; Ulfah et al., 2023).

Therefore, this community service aims to enhance students' self-confidence through English public speaking training at *Dayah Jamiah Al-Aziziyah Bireuen, Aceh*. Specifically, it seeks to (1) improve students' ability to communicate effectively in English, (2) increase their confidence in public speaking situations, and (3) foster active participation and character development through interactive learning methods. The outcomes of this program are expected to contribute not only to students' language proficiency but also to their overall personal and social development, making them better prepared to engage in both local and global contexts.

METHOD OF COMMUNITY SERVICE

This community service program was conducted at *Dayah Jamiah Al-Aziziyah Bireuen, Aceh*, using a participatory and practice-oriented approach to enhance students' self-confidence through English public speaking training. The implementation consisted of several systematic stages designed to ensure effectiveness and sustainability.

The first stage was a needs assessment, carried out through informal interviews and observations to identify students' initial abilities, challenges, and learning needs related to English communication and public speaking. The findings revealed that most students experienced anxiety, limited vocabulary, and lack of confidence when speaking in English.

The second stage involved the preparation of training materials and modules. The materials were designed to be simple, contextual, and relevant to students' daily experiences, integrating Islamic values and themes to maintain cultural appropriateness. The modules covered basic public speaking techniques, speech structure, pronunciation, body language, and confidence-building strategies.

The third stage was the implementation of the training sessions. The training was conducted through interactive workshops using various methods such as short lectures, demonstrations, role-playing, group discussions, and individual practice. Students were encouraged to actively participate by delivering short speeches, practicing dialogues, and performing in front of their peers. Trainers provided direct guidance, motivation, and constructive feedback to help students improve gradually.

The fourth stage was evaluation and reflection. Students' progress was assessed through performance-based evaluation, focusing on confidence, fluency, clarity of ideas, and delivery style. Reflection sessions were also conducted to gather students' feedback and identify areas for improvement.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The Role of English Public Speaking in Enhancing Students' Self-Confidence

English public speaking plays a crucial role in enhancing students' self-confidence, particularly within the context of Islamic boarding schools where traditional learning approaches often emphasize passive knowledge acquisition. In such environments, students may possess strong religious understanding but face challenges in articulating ideas, especially in a foreign language. Public speaking in English provides a platform for students to actively express thoughts, engage with audiences, and develop communicative competence. This process gradually builds confidence as students become more accustomed to speaking in front of others and managing linguistic and psychological barriers simultaneously (Fadholi et al., 2024; Hizbullah, 2023).

The relationship between public speaking and self-confidence is inherently psychological. Confidence emerges through repeated exposure, practice, and positive reinforcement during speaking activities. When students participate in structured public speaking exercises, they learn to overcome fear, manage anxiety, and develop a sense of self-efficacy. This aligns with the concept of emotional and spiritual intelligence, which emphasizes self-awareness and emotional regulation as key factors in personal development. In Islamic educational settings, strengthening these dimensions contributes significantly to students' ability to present themselves confidently in both academic and social contexts (Andrei, 2023; Nurhabibi et al., 2025).

Furthermore, the integration of English into public speaking activities adds an additional layer of cognitive and communicative challenge. Students are required not only to organize their ideas effectively but also to translate them into a foreign language, which enhances both linguistic competence and confidence. This dual engagement encourages active learning and fosters a sense of achievement when students successfully deliver speeches in English. The communicative approach, which prioritizes interaction and real-life communication, further supports this process by creating meaningful learning experiences that build students' confidence progressively (Syafei et al., 2025; Pramudya & Safrul, 2022).

In the context of pesantren education, traditional activities such as muhadharah or khitobah have long been used to develop students' speaking skills. These activities provide structured opportunities for students to practice delivering speeches, often in religious or moral contexts. However, the incorporation of English into these practices expands their scope and relevance, enabling students to engage with global discourse. Empirical studies have shown that participation in muhadharah significantly improves students' public speaking abilities, including clarity of expression, confidence, and audience engagement (Hilwa et al., 2024; Setiawati, 2024; Yosepin & Husna, 2023).

Moreover, English public speaking contributes to the development of broader competencies such as critical thinking, leadership, and interpersonal communication. When students prepare and deliver speeches, they must analyze topics, organize arguments, and respond to audience feedback. These processes enhance cognitive skills and encourage independent thinking. In modern Islamic boarding schools, such competencies are increasingly important as students are expected to become agents of change who can contribute to society at both local and global levels. Therefore, public speaking training serves not only as a language-learning activity but also as a means of holistic development (Zarkasyi et al., 2024; Sofiatil et al., 2024).

Another important aspect is the alignment of public speaking training with Islamic values and character education. Confidence in Islam is closely related to qualities such as courage, honesty, and responsibility. By integrating these values into public speaking activities, students

are encouraged to develop not only technical skills but also moral character. This approach ensures that confidence is not merely performative but grounded in ethical principles. Islamic boarding schools have a long tradition of character education, and the inclusion of English public speaking within this framework strengthens their role in producing well-rounded individuals (Muhsinin, 2013; Ubaidillah, 2024).

Additionally, the multicultural and global dimension of English public speaking fosters openness and adaptability among students. Exposure to diverse topics and perspectives through English materials broadens students' horizons and enhances their ability to interact with different cultures. This is particularly relevant in the era of globalization, where communication across cultural boundaries is essential. By engaging in English public speaking, students develop not only confidence but also intercultural competence, which is a key component of modern education (Sipuan et al., 2022; Furqon, 2020).

From a practical perspective, the effectiveness of English public speaking in enhancing self-confidence is closely linked to the use of interactive and participatory learning methods. Techniques such as role-playing, group discussions, and performance-based assessments create a supportive learning environment where students feel encouraged to express themselves. Continuous feedback from instructors and peers further reinforces students' confidence and helps them identify areas for improvement. These experiential learning strategies ensure that students actively engage in the learning process and gradually build their confidence through practice (Taufiqurrohman, 2025; Muttaqin et al., 2025).

Finally, the role of English public speaking in enhancing students' self-confidence can be understood as part of a broader effort to modernize Islamic education while preserving its core values. As pesantren continue to evolve, the integration of language and communication skills becomes increasingly important in preparing students for future challenges. English public speaking training represents a strategic approach to bridging the gap between traditional education and contemporary needs, enabling students to become confident, articulate, and socially responsible individuals. This transformation not only benefits the students themselves but also contributes to the advancement of Islamic educational institutions in a globalized world.

Implementation of English Public Speaking Training at Dayah Jamiah Al-Aziziyah Bireuen

The implementation of English public speaking training at Dayah Jamiah Al-Aziziyah Bireuen was designed as a structured and participatory program aimed at enhancing students' self-confidence and communication skills. This program was grounded in the understanding that pesantren education requires adaptive strategies to integrate traditional values with modern competencies. Therefore, the training model combined communicative language teaching with character-based education to ensure both linguistic development and moral reinforcement. The program was implemented through systematic stages, beginning with planning and continuing through execution and evaluation, ensuring a comprehensive and sustainable learning process (Ubaidillah, 2024; Nurhabibi et al., 2025).

The initial stage of implementation involved a needs assessment to identify students' baseline abilities, challenges, and expectations. This process was conducted through observation, informal interviews, and direct interaction with students and teachers. The findings indicated that most students experienced anxiety when speaking in English, had limited vocabulary, and lacked confidence in delivering ideas publicly. These challenges are consistent with previous findings in Islamic boarding schools, where students often excel in religious knowledge but have limited exposure to communicative language practices. Therefore, the training program was tailored to

address these specific needs by focusing on both language skills and confidence-building strategies (Hizbullah, 2023; Fadholi et al., 2024).

Following the needs assessment, the second stage involved the development of training materials and learning modules. The materials were designed to be contextual, interactive, and relevant to students' daily lives, integrating Islamic themes to maintain cultural and religious alignment. Topics such as introducing oneself, delivering short speeches, storytelling, and expressing opinions were included to provide a gradual progression of difficulty. Additionally, the materials emphasized key elements of public speaking, including pronunciation, intonation, body language, and speech organization. This approach reflects the importance of curriculum development in Islamic education that balances religious values with practical skills required in contemporary society (Nst et al., 2024; Ulfah et al., 2023).

The third stage focused on the implementation of the training sessions through interactive and student-centered learning methods. The training adopted a communicative and experiential learning approach, where students actively participated in various activities such as role-playing, group discussions, speech demonstrations, and individual presentations. These methods were chosen to create an engaging and supportive learning environment that encourages students to express themselves without fear of judgment. Cooperative learning techniques were also applied to foster collaboration and peer support, allowing students to learn from one another and build confidence collectively (Syarifuddin, 2011; Syafei et al., 2025).

In addition to classroom-based activities, the training incorporated elements of traditional pesantren practices such as muhadharah and khitobah, which were adapted into English-speaking contexts. This integration allowed students to connect new learning experiences with familiar practices, making the training more accessible and meaningful. Students were given opportunities to deliver short speeches in English during these sessions, gradually increasing their confidence and fluency. Empirical studies have shown that such practices significantly improve students' public speaking skills and enhance their ability to communicate effectively in both formal and informal settings (Hilwa et al., 2024; Setiawati, 2024; Yosepin & Husna, 2023).

The role of trainers in the implementation process was also critical in ensuring the success of the program. Trainers acted not only as instructors but also as facilitators and motivators who guided students throughout the learning process. They provided constructive feedback, encouragement, and personalized support to help students overcome their fears and improve their performance. This aligns with the concept of emotional and spiritual intelligence in education, where supportive learning environments contribute to students' confidence and personal growth. The presence of empathetic and responsive trainers played a key role in creating a positive and empowering learning atmosphere (Andrei, 2023).

Furthermore, the training emphasized the integration of character education and Islamic values throughout the learning process. Students were encouraged to deliver speeches on topics related to morality, social responsibility, and environmental awareness, reflecting the broader goals of Islamic education. This approach ensured that the development of communication skills was accompanied by the cultivation of ethical values and social awareness. Islamic boarding schools have long emphasized character formation, and this program reinforced that tradition by aligning public speaking activities with moral and spiritual development (Ali & Bahtera, 2024; Jamilah et al., 2023).

The evaluation stage of the program involved performance-based assessment and reflective activities to measure students' progress and identify areas for improvement. Students were evaluated based on criteria such as confidence, fluency, clarity of ideas, pronunciation, and

overall delivery. Reflection sessions were conducted to allow students to share their experiences, challenges, and achievements during the training. This process not only provided valuable feedback for program improvement but also helped students develop self-awareness and a sense of accomplishment. Continuous evaluation is essential in ensuring the effectiveness and sustainability of educational programs in pesantren settings (Pramudya & Safrul, 2022).

Finally, the implementation of this training program demonstrates the potential of integrating English public speaking into Islamic boarding school education as a strategy for holistic student development. By combining traditional practices with modern pedagogical approaches, the program successfully created a dynamic learning environment that fosters confidence, communication skills, and character development. This initiative reflects the ongoing transformation of pesantren as institutions that are responsive to contemporary challenges while maintaining their core values. As such, the implementation of English public speaking training at Dayah Jamiah Al-Aziziyah Bireuen serves as a practical model for similar programs in other Islamic educational institutions.

Impact and Outcomes of the Training on Students' Confidence and Communication Skills

The implementation of English public speaking training at Dayah Jamiah Al-Aziziyah Bireuen has generated significant impacts on students' self-confidence and communication skills. One of the most observable outcomes is the increased willingness of students to speak in front of an audience. Initially, many students exhibited hesitation, anxiety, and reluctance to participate in speaking activities. However, through continuous practice and exposure to structured speaking opportunities, students gradually developed the courage to express their ideas publicly. This transformation reflects the effectiveness of experiential learning in reducing psychological barriers and fostering self-confidence among learners (Fadholi et al., 2024; Hizbullah, 2023).

In addition to increased confidence, students demonstrated notable improvements in their English communication skills. These improvements include better pronunciation, enhanced vocabulary usage, and greater fluency in delivering speeches. Students became more capable of organizing their ideas logically and presenting them coherently in English. This development is particularly important in the context of Islamic boarding schools, where English is not always the primary medium of instruction. The integration of public speaking training into the learning process has therefore provided students with practical opportunities to apply their language skills in meaningful contexts (Hilwa et al., 2024; Setiawati, 2024; Yosepin & Husna, 2023).

Another important outcome of the training is the enhancement of students' emotional and psychological readiness in communication. Through repeated speaking practice, students learned to manage anxiety, control nervousness, and maintain composure during presentations. This aligns with the concept of emotional and spiritual intelligence, which emphasizes the importance of self-regulation and confidence in educational development. As students became more comfortable with public speaking, they also developed a more positive self-image and greater belief in their abilities, which are essential components of long-term personal growth (Andrei, 2023).

Furthermore, the training contributed to the development of critical thinking and cognitive skills. When preparing speeches, students were required to analyze topics, structure arguments, and present ideas clearly. This process encouraged deeper engagement with learning materials and promoted independent thinking. In modern Islamic education, the ability to think critically and communicate effectively is increasingly valued, as students are expected to engage with complex social and intellectual challenges. Therefore, the integration of public speaking

training has played a significant role in enhancing students' intellectual capacities (Zarkasyi et al., 2024; Sofiatil et al., 2024).

The program also had a positive impact on students' participation and engagement in the learning process. Students who were previously passive became more active in class discussions and collaborative activities. The use of interactive and participatory methods created a supportive learning environment that encouraged students to share their ideas without fear of judgment. This increased engagement not only improved their communication skills but also fostered a sense of belonging and motivation to learn. Such outcomes highlight the importance of learner-centered approaches in promoting active participation and confidence (Pramudya & Safrul, 2022; Syarifuddin, 2011).

In the context of character education, the training reinforced important values such as courage, responsibility, and discipline. Students were encouraged to prepare their speeches carefully, respect their audience, and deliver their messages with sincerity and confidence. These values are deeply rooted in Islamic teachings and are essential for the holistic development of students. By integrating character education into public speaking activities, the program ensured that students' confidence was grounded in ethical principles and social responsibility (Muhsinin, 2013; Ubaidillah, 2024).

Moreover, the outcomes of the training extended beyond individual development to include social and interpersonal skills. Students learned to interact with their peers, provide constructive feedback, and collaborate in group activities. These experiences enhanced their ability to communicate effectively in social settings and build positive relationships with others. In a multicultural and increasingly interconnected world, such interpersonal skills are crucial for students' success both within and beyond the pesantren environment (Sipuan et al., 2022; Furqon, 2020).

The integration of traditional practices such as muhadharah and khitobah into the training program also contributed to its effectiveness. By adapting these familiar practices into English-speaking contexts, students were able to build on their existing knowledge and experiences. This approach not only facilitated the learning process but also strengthened students' confidence by providing a sense of continuity and familiarity. Empirical evidence suggests that such practices are highly effective in improving public speaking skills and fostering confidence among santri (Muttaqin et al., 2025; Taufiqurrohman, 2025).

Another significant outcome is the alignment of the training with broader educational goals in Islamic boarding schools, particularly in preparing students for global engagement. The ability to communicate effectively in English enables students to participate in international discussions, access global knowledge, and represent their cultural and religious values on a wider stage. This aligns with the evolving role of pesantren as institutions that not only preserve tradition but also respond to contemporary challenges and opportunities (Irawan, 2022; Marpaung, 2023).

Additionally, the training supported the development of students' awareness of social and environmental issues through the selection of relevant speech topics. Students were encouraged to discuss themes such as environmental responsibility, social ethics, and community development, which are increasingly emphasized in Islamic education. This approach not only enhanced their communication skills but also fostered a sense of responsibility and awareness of contemporary issues, contributing to their development as socially conscious individuals (Ali & Bahtera, 2024; Jamilah et al., 2023).

The overall impact of the training demonstrates its effectiveness as a model for integrating language learning, character education, and skill development in Islamic boarding schools. The significant improvements in students' confidence and communication skills indicate that English public speaking training can serve as a powerful tool for empowering students. Moreover, the program contributes to the broader transformation of pesantren as dynamic educational institutions capable of addressing modern challenges while maintaining their core values. This holistic impact underscores the importance of innovative and contextually relevant educational interventions in shaping the future of Islamic education.

CONCLUSION

The implementation of English public speaking training at Dayah Jamiah Al-Aziziyah Bireuen has demonstrated a significant contribution to enhancing students' self-confidence and communication skills. Through a structured and participatory approach, students were able to gradually overcome anxiety, improve their ability to express ideas in English, and actively engage in public speaking activities. The integration of interactive learning methods, combined with Islamic values, created a supportive environment that fostered both linguistic competence and character development. As a result, students not only showed improved fluency and clarity in communication but also developed greater courage, self-assurance, and motivation to participate in learning processes.

This program highlights the importance of integrating modern communication skills into traditional Islamic education. English public speaking training serves as an effective strategy to bridge the gap between religious learning and contemporary global demands. By combining experiential learning with culturally relevant practices such as muhadharah, the program provides a sustainable model for empowering students in Islamic boarding schools. Ultimately, the outcomes of this initiative indicate that the development of communication skills and self-confidence is essential in preparing students to become competent, confident, and socially responsible individuals in both local and global contexts.

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