

**IMPROVING CHILDREN'S SPEAKING AND VOCABULARY SKILLS THROUGH
DESCRIBING PEOPLE AND WORD MATCHING ACTIVITIES AT RUMAH
CAHAYA BARU ORPHANAGE**

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Abstract

English speaking and vocabulary skills are important for developing children's communication abilities and increasing their confidence in using English in everyday situations. This community service program aimed to improve children's speaking and vocabulary skills through Describing People and Word Matching activities at Rumah Cahaya Baru Orphanage. The program was carried out through four stages: needs observation, activity planning, implementation, and evaluation. The learning activities consisted of introducing vocabulary related to physical appearance and personality traits, guided speaking practice, interactive discussions, and Word Matching games designed to reinforce vocabulary retention in an enjoyable learning environment. The evaluation was conducted through direct observation of children's participation and performance during the activities. The implementation of the program showed that the children actively participated in all learning sessions, demonstrated better understanding of the target vocabulary, and became more confident in describing people using simple English expressions. The interactive activities also encouraged communication, collaboration, and enthusiasm for learning English. Overall, the program provided meaningful learning experiences and contributed to the development of children's speaking and vocabulary skills. These findings indicate that educational activities integrating Describing People and Word Matching can serve as an effective and engaging approach to English language learning for children in orphanage settings.

Keywords: *community service; speaking skills; vocabulary; describing people; word matching.*

Abstract

Kemampuan berbicara (speaking) dan penguasaan kosakata (vocabulary) merupakan aspek penting dalam pembelajaran Bahasa Inggris karena mendukung kemampuan komunikasi anak serta meningkatkan rasa percaya diri dalam menggunakan Bahasa Inggris pada situasi sehari-hari. Kegiatan pengabdian kepada masyarakat ini bertujuan untuk meningkatkan kemampuan speaking dan vocabulary anak melalui kegiatan Describing People dan Word Matching di Panti Asuhan Rumah

Cahaya Baru. Program dilaksanakan melalui empat tahapan, yaitu observasi kebutuhan, perencanaan kegiatan, pelaksanaan, dan evaluasi. Kegiatan pembelajaran meliputi pengenalan kosakata yang berkaitan dengan penampilan fisik dan karakter seseorang, latihan berbicara secara terbimbing, diskusi interaktif, serta permainan Word Matching yang dirancang untuk memperkuat penguasaan kosakata dalam suasana belajar yang menyenangkan. Evaluasi dilakukan melalui observasi langsung terhadap partisipasi dan kemampuan anak selama kegiatan berlangsung. Hasil pelaksanaan menunjukkan bahwa anak-anak berpartisipasi secara aktif dalam seluruh rangkaian kegiatan, memiliki pemahaman yang lebih baik terhadap kosakata yang dipelajari, serta menunjukkan peningkatan kepercayaan diri dalam mendeskripsikan seseorang menggunakan ungkapan sederhana dalam Bahasa Inggris. Selain itu, kegiatan interaktif yang diterapkan mampu meningkatkan komunikasi, kerja sama, dan antusiasme anak dalam belajar Bahasa Inggris. Secara keseluruhan, program ini memberikan pengalaman belajar yang bermakna serta berkontribusi terhadap peningkatan kemampuan speaking dan vocabulary anak. Dengan demikian, penerapan kegiatan Describing People dan Word Matching dapat menjadi pendekatan yang efektif dan menyenangkan dalam pembelajaran Bahasa Inggris bagi anak-anak di panti asuhan.

Kata kunci: pengabdian kepada masyarakat; kemampuan berbicara; kosakata; describing people; word matching.

A. INTRODUCTION

English has become one of the most important international languages used in education, science, technology, business, and global communication. In Indonesia, English is taught as a foreign language to equip learners with communication skills that support their academic development and future career opportunities. Therefore, English learning should not only focus on mastering grammatical rules but also emphasize learners' ability to communicate effectively in real-life situations. Developing English proficiency from an early age provides

children with opportunities to expand their knowledge, interact with people from different backgrounds, and improve their competitiveness in the global era.

Among the four language skills, speaking is regarded as one of the most challenging competencies for English as a Foreign Language (EFL) learners. Speaking requires learners to integrate vocabulary knowledge, pronunciation, grammar, and self-confidence simultaneously. However, many children are reluctant to speak English because they are afraid of making

mistakes, have limited vocabulary, and receive minimal opportunities to practice oral communication. Community service programs have shown that interactive and participatory learning environments, including language games, role-playing, songs, and guided conversations, can effectively improve learners' speaking confidence and communication skills by encouraging active participation throughout the learning process (Kamalia & Hadi, 2025).

Vocabulary mastery is another fundamental component of English language learning because it serves as the foundation for listening, speaking, reading, and writing skills. Learners who possess adequate vocabulary are better able to understand classroom instructions, construct meaningful sentences, and communicate their ideas effectively. Conversely, limited vocabulary often becomes a major obstacle that prevents learners from expressing themselves confidently. Previous community service activities demonstrated that introducing vocabulary through meaningful contexts, visual media, and communicative activities significantly improved children's vocabulary

acquisition, motivation, and participation in English learning (Ninsiana et al., 2024).

One topic that is highly appropriate for beginner English learners is Describing People because it introduces vocabulary closely related to children's daily lives. This topic enables learners to recognize and use adjectives describing physical appearance and personality traits, such as *tall*, *short*, *beautiful*, *handsome*, *kind*, and *friendly*. These vocabulary items help learners describe themselves, their family members, and friends using simple English expressions. Learning vocabulary through meaningful contexts allows children to associate new words with familiar experiences, making the learning process more engaging and easier to remember. Furthermore, practicing descriptive speaking activities encourages learners to apply newly acquired vocabulary directly in oral communication.

To create meaningful learning experiences, English instruction should adopt interactive and learner-centered approaches. Educational games are widely recognized as effective learning media because they increase learners'

motivation while reducing anxiety during classroom activities. Rather than memorizing vocabulary passively, children become actively involved in learning through observation, interaction, discussion, and problem-solving activities. One interactive activity that supports vocabulary retention is Word Matching, in which learners match vocabulary with pictures, meanings, or descriptive characteristics. This activity strengthens memory retention while encouraging learners to recognize vocabulary quickly and accurately. Previous community service conducted in orphanages also reported that combining vocabulary instruction with communicative activities and games successfully increased children's enthusiasm, confidence, vocabulary mastery, and speaking performance (Agustina et al., 2025).

Interactive English learning is particularly important for children living in orphanages because they often experience limited access to learning resources and opportunities to practice English outside formal education. Educational support in orphanages should therefore emphasize meaningful, enjoyable, and

participatory learning experiences that encourage children to communicate confidently while developing their language skills. Community service programs implemented in orphanages have demonstrated that contextual learning, educational games, and learner participation effectively improve children's English vocabulary, pronunciation, and self-confidence while creating a positive learning atmosphere (Norahmi et al., 2026; Basit & Qureshi, 2025).

Children living in orphanages require equal opportunities to develop their academic and communication skills despite facing various educational challenges. In addition to formal schooling, educational assistance through community service activities can provide valuable learning experiences that support children's language development. However, English learning in orphanage settings is often constrained by limited learning facilities, insufficient instructional media, and the lack of opportunities to practice speaking in authentic situations. These conditions frequently result in limited vocabulary mastery, low self-confidence, and hesitation when using English in daily communication.

Therefore, educational programs that provide interactive, enjoyable, and learner-centered activities are needed to encourage children's active participation while improving their English proficiency.

Several community service programs have attempted to improve children's English abilities in orphanages through different instructional approaches. Kamalia and Hadi (2025) reported that contextual and participatory English learning activities successfully improved children's motivation and basic communication skills by actively involving learners throughout the learning process. Likewise, Agustina et al. (2025) demonstrated that implementing the Communicative Language Teaching (CLT) and Total Physical Response (TPR) methods effectively increased children's vocabulary mastery and encouraged them to communicate more confidently in English. These findings indicate that interactive teaching strategies create meaningful learning experiences and facilitate children's language acquisition.

Other community service programs have also highlighted the importance of

vocabulary instruction supported by interactive learning media. Ninsiana et al. (2024) found that introducing English vocabulary together with pronunciation practice significantly improved children's vocabulary recognition and pronunciation accuracy. Similarly, Norahmi et al. (2026) reported that literacy-based activities combined with educational games increased children's enthusiasm and participation in learning English. These studies suggest that enjoyable learning environments positively influence children's motivation while helping them retain newly learned vocabulary more effectively.

Although previous community service programs have successfully enhanced children's English learning, most of them primarily focused on vocabulary acquisition, literacy activities, pronunciation practice, or communicative learning separately. Only a limited number of programs have integrated vocabulary learning directly with guided speaking practice using a specific communicative topic that is closely related to children's everyday experiences. Furthermore, few studies have combined vocabulary reinforcement through educational

games with speaking performance assessment in community service activities conducted in orphanage settings. Consequently, opportunities remain to develop English learning programs that simultaneously improve vocabulary mastery, speaking ability, pronunciation, confidence, and learner engagement through integrated instructional activities.

Based on these considerations, the present community service program offers a different approach by integrating Describing People and Word Matching activities into one comprehensive learning program. The topic Describing People was selected because it introduces practical vocabulary related to physical appearance, personality traits, adjectives, and simple descriptive expressions that children can immediately apply in real-life communication. Rather than merely memorizing vocabulary, participants were encouraged to describe themselves and their friends through guided speaking activities, allowing them to practice pronunciation, sentence construction, and oral communication simultaneously. This approach helped learners connect

vocabulary learning with authentic language use in meaningful contexts.

To reinforce vocabulary retention, the learning activities were complemented by Word Matching games conducted on the second day of the program. The games required participants to match words with pictures, meanings, and descriptive characteristics learned during the previous session. Quiz-based activities accompanied by rewards created an enjoyable learning atmosphere while encouraging healthy competition and active participation. In addition, speaking assessments, question-and-answer sessions, and pronunciation practice enabled the facilitators to observe children's language development throughout the program. These integrated activities not only strengthened vocabulary mastery but also enhanced learners' confidence and willingness to communicate in English.

The community service program was conducted at Yayasan Panti Asuhan Rumah Cahaya Baru, Medan, involving fifteen children aged between six and seventeen years from elementary to senior high school levels. Preliminary observations revealed that although

several participants were familiar with simple English words, most experienced difficulties in speaking because of limited vocabulary, inaccurate pronunciation, insufficient learning media, and low self-confidence. These findings formed the basis for designing learning activities that emphasized active participation, repeated vocabulary exposure, guided speaking practice, educational games, and positive reinforcement.

Therefore, this community service program aimed to improve children's speaking and vocabulary skills through Describing People and Word Matching

activities at Yayasan Panti Asuhan Rumah Cahaya Baru. It is expected that the implementation of interactive and enjoyable learning activities will provide meaningful learning experiences, improve children's confidence in speaking English, enrich their vocabulary mastery, and encourage them to use English more actively in everyday communication. Furthermore, this program is expected to serve as a practical reference for future community service initiatives that seek to promote English learning among children in orphanage settings through engaging and developmentally appropriate educational activities.

B. LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 English Language Learning

English is recognized as a global language that plays a significant role in international communication, education, science, technology, and economic development. As one of the most widely used foreign languages, English proficiency enables learners to access global information, pursue higher education, and communicate across different cultural backgrounds. Consequently, English instruction in

Indonesia aims not only to develop learners' linguistic knowledge but also to equip them with communicative competence that can be applied in authentic situations. Effective English learning emphasizes meaningful interaction, learner engagement, and opportunities to use the language in real-life contexts rather than focusing solely on grammatical accuracy (Kamalia & Hadi, 2025).

English language learning involves the integration of four fundamental language skills: listening, speaking, reading, and writing. These skills are interconnected and supported by language components such as vocabulary, pronunciation, and grammar. Among these components, vocabulary serves as the foundation for language acquisition because learners cannot communicate effectively without sufficient lexical knowledge. Therefore, English instruction should provide learning experiences that encourage learners to acquire vocabulary through contextualized activities, active participation, and continuous practice. Research has shown that introducing vocabulary through communicative and interactive approaches significantly improves learners' language competence and facilitates long-term retention (Ninsiana et al., 2024).

For young learners, English learning should be designed according to their developmental characteristics. Children learn more effectively when they participate in enjoyable, meaningful, and learner-centered activities. Interactive approaches such as games, songs, role-playing, storytelling, and collaborative tasks create positive

learning experiences that increase learners' motivation and confidence while reducing anxiety toward foreign language learning. These approaches also encourage children to become active participants rather than passive recipients of information, allowing them to construct knowledge through social interaction and direct experience (Iman, 2026).

Community service has become an important medium for extending English learning opportunities beyond formal educational institutions. Through community-based educational programs, children from disadvantaged backgrounds can receive additional language exposure in supportive and engaging learning environments. Several community service programs conducted in orphanages have demonstrated that interactive English instruction successfully improves children's vocabulary mastery, communication skills, and learning motivation. The use of participatory learning methods, visual media, educational games, and guided speaking practice enables children to learn English more confidently while fostering positive attitudes toward

language learning (Agustina et al., 2025; Basit & Qureshi, 2025).

Based on these perspectives, English language learning should emphasize meaningful communication, active learner participation, and contextual learning experiences that support children's cognitive and linguistic development. Integrating vocabulary instruction with interactive speaking activities provides learners with opportunities to use English in authentic situations while simultaneously improving their confidence and communication skills. Such an approach is particularly appropriate for community service programs conducted in orphanage settings, where enjoyable and participatory learning experiences can address children's limited exposure to English and encourage continuous language development.

2.2 Speaking Skills

Speaking is one of the four essential language skills that enables learners to express ideas, opinions, feelings, and information through oral communication. Unlike receptive skills

such as listening and reading, speaking is considered a productive skill because learners are required to produce meaningful language while simultaneously applying vocabulary, grammar, pronunciation, fluency, and comprehension. Therefore, speaking competence is often regarded as one of the primary indicators of successful English language learning.

For English as a Foreign Language (EFL) learners, speaking is frequently perceived as the most challenging language skill. Many learners experience difficulties due to limited vocabulary, incorrect pronunciation, grammatical errors, and anxiety about making mistakes in front of others. These challenges often reduce learners' willingness to participate in classroom communication and negatively affect their confidence. Consequently, English learning should provide supportive environments where learners are encouraged to communicate without excessive fear of making errors. Community-based English mentoring has demonstrated that continuous speaking practice in a relaxed atmosphere significantly improves learners' confidence and oral

communication abilities (Ekasani & Widhiarini, 2024).

Developing speaking skills requires regular opportunities to use English in meaningful situations. Interactive learning activities such as role-playing, storytelling, pair work, group discussions, games, and question-and-answer sessions allow learners to practice communication while receiving immediate feedback from instructors. These learner-centered activities not only improve fluency and pronunciation but also encourage active participation and collaborative learning. A community service program conducted at Muhammadiyah Orphanage in Mataram reported that systematic English mentoring successfully improved children's vocabulary, pronunciation, fluency, and speaking accuracy through observation, teaching, and evaluation stages (Ilham et al., 2024).

Educational games and communicative activities have also proven effective in enhancing children's speaking performance. Fun-based learning creates a positive classroom atmosphere, reduces language anxiety, and increases learners' motivation to

communicate in English. Activities such as role-playing, storytelling, singing, and language games enable children to practice speaking naturally while reinforcing vocabulary acquisition. A recent community service program conducted at Muhammadiyah Orphanage in Sumenep demonstrated significant improvement in learners' fluency, pronunciation, vocabulary use, and confidence after participating in enjoyable communicative activities (Faqih et al., 2025).

For children living in orphanages, speaking practice is particularly important because opportunities to communicate in English outside learning sessions are often limited. Additional English mentoring programs provide valuable opportunities for learners to practice oral communication in supportive environments while increasing their motivation to learn English. Similar findings were reported in a community service program at Nurul Jannah Orphanage, where regular English training improved children's speaking performance, reduced language errors, and encouraged positive attitudes toward learning English (Alfilail et al., 2023).

Based on these perspectives, speaking instruction should emphasize meaningful communication rather than memorization of language forms. Integrating communicative tasks, educational games, guided speaking practice, and positive reinforcement enables learners to develop fluency, pronunciation, vocabulary use, and self-confidence simultaneously. Such learner-centered approaches are particularly appropriate for community service programs implemented in orphanages because they create enjoyable learning experiences while encouraging children to communicate more actively in English. Furthermore, activities that combine vocabulary learning with speaking practice, such as Describing People, provide authentic opportunities for children to apply newly acquired vocabulary in meaningful oral communication, thereby supporting both language development and communicative competence.

2.3 Vocabulary Mastery

Vocabulary mastery is one of the most fundamental aspects of English language learning because it serves as the basis for developing listening,

speaking, reading, and writing skills. Learners who possess adequate vocabulary are better able to understand spoken and written texts, express ideas effectively, and participate confidently in communication. Conversely, limited vocabulary often becomes a major obstacle that prevents learners from communicating successfully in English. Therefore, vocabulary instruction should be considered an essential component of language learning, particularly for young learners who are beginning to develop their English proficiency (Ardayati & Ramasari, 2025).

Young learners acquire vocabulary more effectively when learning activities are meaningful, enjoyable, and closely related to their daily experiences. Rather than relying solely on memorization, vocabulary learning should involve interactive activities that encourage learners to actively use newly acquired words in authentic situations. Research has demonstrated that contextual learning supported by visual media, movement, and communicative interaction significantly improves vocabulary retention while increasing learners' motivation and

classroom participation. Furthermore, repeated exposure to vocabulary through engaging activities enables children to recall words more accurately and use them confidently in oral communication (Musfirah Jaya & Jabri, 2025b)

Educational games have become one of the most effective instructional strategies for improving vocabulary mastery among young English learners. Game-based learning creates an enjoyable learning environment that reduces anxiety while increasing learners' motivation and engagement. Through games, learners repeatedly encounter target vocabulary in meaningful contexts, allowing them to strengthen both comprehension and memory retention. A community service program conducted by Iman (2026) found that implementing word games significantly improved participants' English vocabulary mastery, demonstrating that interactive learning activities have a positive impact on vocabulary acquisition among children.

Similarly, communicative games encourage learners to apply vocabulary while interacting with teachers and peers. Instead of memorizing isolated

word lists, learners use vocabulary to solve problems, describe objects, answer questions, and participate in collaborative activities. Such learning experiences help children understand vocabulary meanings more deeply and develop greater confidence in using English. Likewise, the implementation of the Word Chain Game was found to significantly improve elementary school students' vocabulary mastery by promoting active participation and repeated vocabulary practice throughout the learning process (Putri et al., 2024).

Various instructional approaches have also been developed to facilitate vocabulary learning among children with different educational backgrounds. One approach that has demonstrated positive outcomes is the Suggestopedia Method, which creates a relaxed and enjoyable learning atmosphere through music, positive suggestion, and meaningful interaction. Research conducted with children in an orphanage revealed that this method significantly improved learners' English vocabulary achievement by reducing learning anxiety and increasing motivation to participate actively during instruction (Kusuma, 2022).

Based on these perspectives, vocabulary mastery should not be developed through memorization alone but through meaningful, interactive, and learner-centered learning experiences. Educational games, communicative activities, visual learning media, and contextual practice provide opportunities for children to acquire vocabulary naturally while strengthening their confidence and communication skills. Therefore, integrating vocabulary instruction with activities such as Describing People and Word Matching is expected to provide meaningful learning experiences that enhance children's vocabulary mastery and support the development of their English speaking skills.

2.4 Interactive Learning through Describing People and Word Matching Activities

Interactive learning is a learner-centered approach that actively involves students in the learning process through communication, collaboration, discussion, and educational games. Unlike conventional teacher-centered instruction, interactive learning

encourages learners to construct knowledge through direct participation and meaningful experiences. This approach has been widely recognized as an effective strategy for improving language learning because it increases learners' motivation, engagement, and confidence while reducing anxiety during classroom activities (Bonanza et al., 2024; Kamalia & Hadi, 2025).

One instructional topic that is highly suitable for young English learners is Describing People. This topic introduces vocabulary related to physical appearance, personality traits, and descriptive adjectives that learners frequently encounter in their daily lives. Vocabulary such as *tall, short, beautiful, handsome, kind, friendly, curly hair, and straight hair* enables learners to describe themselves and others using simple English sentences. Since the learning materials are closely connected to children's everyday experiences, learners are more likely to understand, remember, and apply newly acquired vocabulary in authentic communication.

Speaking activities based on the Describing People topic provide meaningful opportunities for learners to

practice oral communication while reinforcing vocabulary acquisition. Guided speaking tasks encourage learners to describe their classmates, family members, or themselves using simple descriptive expressions. Such activities simultaneously improve pronunciation, vocabulary usage, sentence construction, and speaking confidence. Interactive educational programs have demonstrated that combining vocabulary learning with communicative speaking activities significantly enhances learners' participation and language performance in English learning (Bonanza et al., 2024).

Another interactive activity that effectively supports vocabulary learning is the Word Matching game. In this activity, learners match words with pictures, meanings, or descriptive characteristics, allowing them to recall previously learned vocabulary while strengthening long-term memory retention. Compared with traditional memorization techniques, Word Matching encourages learners to think actively, recognize vocabulary more quickly, and understand word meanings within meaningful contexts. Research has shown that matching

games significantly improve learners' vocabulary mastery because they provide repeated exposure to target vocabulary through enjoyable and engaging learning experiences (Ardayati & Ramasari, 2024; Iman, 2026).

Educational games also contribute to children's emotional and social development during language learning. Learning through games creates a relaxed classroom atmosphere where learners feel comfortable participating without excessive fear of making mistakes. In addition, game-based learning encourages cooperation, healthy competition, problem-solving, and communication among learners. Community service activities that integrated word games into English vocabulary instruction reported significant improvements in learners' vocabulary mastery, classroom participation, and motivation to learn English (Iman, 2026).

Interactive learning activities become even more effective when they are combined with quizzes, immediate feedback, and positive reinforcement. Reward-based learning motivates learners to participate actively,

complete learning tasks enthusiastically, and develop positive attitudes toward English learning. Games such as Word Matching, Vocabulary Bingo, Picture–Word Association, and role-playing have been found to increase learners' vocabulary retention while simultaneously improving communication skills and learning motivation (Bonanza et al., 2024; Ardayati & Ramasari, 2024; Iman, 2026).

Therefore, integrating Describing People and Word Matching activities provides a comprehensive learning experience that combines vocabulary instruction, speaking practice, educational games, and learner interaction within a single instructional program. This integrated approach enables learners not only to acquire new vocabulary but also to apply it directly through meaningful oral communication. Consequently, interactive learning through Describing People and Word Matching is considered an appropriate strategy for improving children's vocabulary mastery, speaking skills, confidence, and motivation in community service

programs conducted in orphanage settings.

2.5 Community Service-Based English Learning in Orphanages

Community service is one of the essential responsibilities of higher education institutions in Indonesia, aiming to apply academic knowledge to address community needs and contribute to social development. In the field of education, community service provides opportunities for lecturers and university students to implement innovative teaching strategies that support learning among underserved communities. One important target of these programs is children living in orphanages, who often experience limited access to supplementary educational resources, particularly in learning foreign languages such as English. Therefore, community service programs can serve as an effective medium for improving children's language competence while promoting meaningful learning experiences.

English learning in orphanages should emphasize learner-centered and participatory approaches that

encourage children to become actively involved throughout the learning process. Unlike formal classroom instruction, community service activities generally adopt flexible teaching methods that combine games, discussions, simulations, role-playing, and collaborative learning. Such approaches create enjoyable learning environments where children feel comfortable practicing English without excessive fear of making mistakes. Kamalia and Hadi (2025) reported that contextual and participatory learning activities successfully improved children's vocabulary, speaking fluency, and confidence despite limited educational facilities available in the orphanage.

Mentoring also plays an important role in strengthening children's motivation and confidence during English learning. Continuous guidance allows learners to receive immediate feedback on pronunciation, vocabulary usage, and sentence construction while encouraging active communication with instructors and peers. A community service program conducted at Muhammadiyah Orphanage in Mataram demonstrated that structured mentoring activities significantly

improved children's English proficiency, including vocabulary, grammar, pronunciation, fluency, and accuracy. These findings indicate that consistent educational assistance contributes positively to children's language development in non-formal educational settings.

Interactive and enjoyable learning activities have likewise been widely recognized as effective strategies for improving children's English learning outcomes. Educational games, communicative tasks, and practical speaking activities increase learners' motivation while creating opportunities to apply newly acquired vocabulary in meaningful contexts. A community service program conducted at Naungan Kasih Orphanage in Ende showed that Fun with English activities successfully introduced basic English vocabulary and speaking skills through interactive learning designed specifically for beginner learners. The implementation of enjoyable learning experiences encouraged children to participate actively and develop positive attitudes toward learning English.

Recent community service initiatives have also emphasized that English

learning can be integrated with broader educational objectives, including character education, self-confidence, and life skills. Febriyanti et al. (2025) demonstrated that combining English communication training with character development and practical life skills effectively enhanced orphanage children's readiness for future academic and social challenges. Similarly, Basit and Qureshi (2025) highlighted that community engagement programs focusing on communicative English not only improved learners' speaking confidence but also strengthened their motivation to continue learning English beyond the training sessions.

Based on these previous studies, community service-based English learning provides substantial benefits for children living in orphanages by offering educational support that complements formal schooling. Interactive learning, continuous mentoring, educational games, and communicative speaking activities create meaningful learning experiences that improve vocabulary mastery, speaking ability, pronunciation, confidence, and learning motivation. Therefore, implementing Describing

People and Word Matching activities in the present community service program represents an appropriate instructional strategy for supporting children's English language development while creating an engaging and learner-centered learning environment at Yayasan Panti Asuhan Rumah Cahaya Baru.

C. METHOD

3.1 Service Location and Participants

This community service program was conducted at Yayasan Panti Asuhan Rumah Cahaya Baru, located on Jalan Setia Budi, Gang Gereja Karo No. 15, Sempakata, Medan Selayang, Medan, Indonesia. The program was implemented on 13–14 June 2026 by one lecturer and four university students.

The participants consisted of 15 children aged between 6 and 17 years, ranging from elementary to senior high school levels. Based on the initial observation, most participants had limited English vocabulary, low speaking confidence, inaccurate

pronunciation, and limited opportunities to practice English because of insufficient learning resources available at the orphanage.

3.2 Stages of Community Service

The implementation of the community service program consisted of four stages: observation, preparation, implementation, and evaluation.

The observation stage was conducted to identify the participants' English learning needs and existing language abilities. Based on the findings, the service team designed learning materials suitable for the participants' ages and English proficiency levels.

During the preparation stage, the facilitators developed learning materials, vocabulary lists, speaking activities, educational media, Word Matching cards, quiz questions, and rewards to support interactive learning.

The implementation stage involved English learning activities conducted over two consecutive days, while the evaluation stage focused on assessing children's vocabulary acquisition,

speaking performance, pronunciation, and participation throughout the program.

3.3 Learning Activities

The learning activities were designed using interactive and learner-centered approaches.

On the first day, the session began with an ice-breaking activity entitled Morning One Clap, Afternoon Two Claps, Night Three Claps to increase children's enthusiasm and concentration. The facilitators then introduced the topic Describing People, focusing on vocabulary related to physical appearance and personality traits, including *tall, short, slim, fat, beautiful, handsome, kind, friendly, curly hair, and straight hair*.

After the vocabulary explanation, participants practiced pronunciation, answered vocabulary questions, and completed guided speaking activities by describing themselves and their friends individually and in pairs.

On the second day, participants reviewed the vocabulary learned during

the previous session before participating in the Word Matching activity. The activity required children to match pictures with English words, meanings, and descriptive adjectives. The session was organized as an individual quiz, and participants who answered correctly received small rewards to increase motivation and participation.

3.4 Evaluation Techniques

The effectiveness of the community service program was evaluated using direct observation, speaking performance assessment, question-and-answer sessions, and vocabulary quizzes.

The facilitators observed participants' vocabulary mastery, pronunciation accuracy, speaking confidence, classroom participation, and ability to describe themselves or their friends using simple English expressions. The evaluation results were used to determine the effectiveness of the educational activities in improving children's speaking and vocabulary skills.

3.5 Indicators of Program Success

The success of the community service program was determined based on several qualitative indicators observed throughout the implementation. First, participants demonstrated increased participation and enthusiasm during learning activities, as reflected in their willingness to answer questions, engage in discussions, and actively participate in games and speaking exercises. Second, improvements in vocabulary mastery were identified through participants' ability to recognize, understand, and correctly use English words related to the Describing People topic during quizzes and Word Matching activities.

Third, improvements in speaking skills were evaluated based on participants' ability to describe themselves and their friends using simple English sentences with better pronunciation and greater confidence. Finally, the program was considered successful if participants showed positive learning attitudes, increased self-confidence, and greater motivation to communicate in English throughout the two-day community service activities.

D. RESULT AND DISCUSSION

4.1 Initial Condition of Participants

Prior to the implementation of the community service program, the service team conducted an initial observation to identify the participants' English learning needs and existing language abilities. The observation involved 15 children aged between 6 and 17 years, ranging from elementary to senior high school levels, at Yayasan Panti Asuhan Rumah Cahaya Baru. The findings indicated that although several participants were familiar with basic English expressions such as greetings and a few everyday words, most of them still experienced considerable difficulties in using English for oral communication.

The primary challenge identified during the observation was limited vocabulary mastery. Many participants recognized only a small number of English words and had difficulty recalling vocabulary related to physical appearance, personality traits, and descriptive adjectives. As a result, they were unable to construct simple sentences when asked to describe themselves or their friends. This limitation affected not

only their speaking performance but also their confidence in participating in English learning activities.

In addition to vocabulary limitations, pronunciation was another challenge observed among the participants. Several children tended to pronounce English words based on Indonesian phonological patterns, resulting in inaccurate pronunciation. Furthermore, many participants were hesitant to speak because they were afraid of making mistakes or being laughed at by their peers. This lack of self-confidence reduced their willingness to answer questions or participate actively during English learning sessions.

The observation also revealed that the orphanage had limited learning resources for English education. The children had minimal access to English learning media such as picture cards, educational games, visual materials, or interactive learning tools that could support vocabulary acquisition and speaking practice. Consequently, opportunities to practice English outside formal school lessons were relatively limited.

Despite these challenges, the participants showed positive attitudes toward learning English. Most children demonstrated curiosity, enthusiasm, and a willingness to participate when interactive learning activities were introduced. They responded positively during the introductory session and expressed interest in learning new English vocabulary through games and communicative activities. These observations indicated that the participants possessed strong learning motivation despite their limited English proficiency.

Based on the initial observation, the service team designed learning activities that focused on improving children's vocabulary mastery and speaking skills through the integration of Describing People and Word Matching activities. The instructional materials and learning strategies were adapted to the participants' ages, language abilities, and learning needs to create an enjoyable, interactive, and learner-centered learning environment throughout the two-day community service program.

4.2 Implementation of the *Describing People* Activity

The first day of the community service program focused on the implementation of the Describing People activity, which aimed to improve children's English vocabulary and speaking skills through interactive learning. The session began with an ice-breaking activity called "Morning One Clap, Afternoon Two Claps, Night Three Claps." This activity successfully attracted the participants' attention, created a cheerful learning atmosphere, and increased their enthusiasm before the main lesson began. The use of ice-breaking activities also helped establish positive interaction between the facilitators and the participants, making the children feel more comfortable during the learning process.

Following the ice-breaking session, the facilitators introduced vocabulary related to physical appearance and personality traits. The lesson included commonly used adjectives and expressions such as *tall*, *short*, *slim*, *fat*, *beautiful*, *handsome*, *kind*, *friendly*, *straight hair*, and *curly hair*. Each vocabulary item was explained using

simple language, gestures, and examples that were appropriate for the participants' ages and English proficiency levels. The facilitators also encouraged the children to repeat each word several times to improve both vocabulary retention and pronunciation.

After the vocabulary presentation, participants practiced pronunciation together with the facilitators through repetition drills and question-and-answer activities. The facilitators corrected pronunciation errors directly while providing encouragement to help the children speak more confidently. This stage allowed participants to become familiar with the pronunciation of new vocabulary before applying it in speaking activities. Repeated pronunciation practice also enabled learners to remember vocabulary more effectively while reducing hesitation when speaking English.

The speaking practice was conducted individually and in pairs. Each participant was asked to describe themselves or one of their friends using the vocabulary that had been introduced during the lesson. Younger participants generally produced simple descriptive phrases, whereas older

participants were able to construct short descriptive sentences by combining adjectives with appropriate pronouns and verbs. Although several children initially appeared shy and uncertain, most participants gradually became more willing to speak in front of their classmates after receiving guidance and positive feedback from the facilitators.

Throughout the learning session, the facilitators observed a gradual increase in children's participation and confidence. More participants volunteered to answer questions, pronounce newly learned vocabulary, and perform speaking tasks than during the initial observation. The interactive learning approach created an enjoyable classroom atmosphere where participants actively engaged in the learning process without excessive fear of making mistakes. These findings are consistent with previous community service studies reporting that learner-centered and communicative English learning activities effectively improve children's confidence, participation, and speaking performance in orphanage settings (Kamalia & Hadi, 2025; Agustina et al., 2025). Likewise, guided speaking practice supported by

vocabulary instruction has been shown to facilitate children's oral communication skills by providing meaningful opportunities to use newly acquired vocabulary in authentic contexts (Basit & Qureshi, 2025).

Overall, the Describing People activity provided meaningful learning experiences by integrating vocabulary learning, pronunciation practice, and speaking exercises into a single instructional session. The activity not only enriched participants' vocabulary but also encouraged them to communicate more confidently in English, laying a strong foundation for the Word Matching activity conducted on the second day of the program.

4.3 Implementation of the Word Matching Activity

The second day of the community service program focused on the implementation of the Word Matching activity, which was designed to reinforce the vocabulary introduced during the Describing People session on the previous day. Before beginning the main activity, the facilitators conducted a brief review of the

vocabulary related to physical appearance and personality traits. Participants were encouraged to recall and pronounce the English words they had learned, such as *tall*, *short*, *slim*, *fat*, *beautiful*, *handsome*, *kind*, *friendly*, *curly hair*, and *straight hair*. This review helped activate the participants' prior knowledge and prepared them for the vocabulary reinforcement activities.

Following the review session, the facilitators introduced the Word Matching game. The learning media consisted of vocabulary cards, pictures, and word definitions displayed on the classroom wall. Each participant was asked to match English words with the appropriate pictures, meanings, or descriptive characteristics. The activity was conducted individually in the form of a quiz to encourage every participant to think independently while recalling the vocabulary learned during the previous session.

The participants showed greater confidence and enthusiasm compared with the first day of the program. Most children actively volunteered to participate in the matching activity and demonstrated improved ability to recognize and understand the target

vocabulary. Elementary school participants were generally able to match simple adjectives with appropriate pictures, while junior and senior high school participants successfully matched vocabulary and used several descriptive words to explain their answers. These findings indicated that repeated exposure to vocabulary through interactive learning activities contributed positively to vocabulary retention and comprehension.

To increase learners' motivation, the facilitators provided small rewards for participants who answered correctly. The reward system created a positive learning atmosphere and encouraged healthy competition among the children. Throughout the activity, participants remained actively engaged and were eager to answer questions. The combination of educational games and positive reinforcement helped maintain children's attention and encouraged them to participate more confidently during the learning process.

The implementation of the Word Matching activity demonstrated that educational games can effectively reinforce vocabulary learning while

creating enjoyable learning experiences. The findings support previous studies reporting that game-based learning improves vocabulary mastery, learner participation, and motivation because children actively interact with learning materials rather than relying solely on memorization (Iman, 2026). Similarly, Ardayati and Ramasari (2025) found that communicative games significantly enhance vocabulary acquisition by encouraging learners to repeatedly use and recall newly learned words in meaningful contexts. In addition, Ninsiana et al. (2024) emphasized that repeated vocabulary practice combined with interactive activities helps young learners improve vocabulary retention and pronunciation accuracy.

Overall, the Word Matching activity successfully strengthened the participants' understanding of the vocabulary learned during the first day while increasing their enthusiasm, confidence, and active participation. The combination of vocabulary review, matching games, quizzes, and rewards created an enjoyable learning environment that supported children's English vocabulary development. The positive responses observed during the

second day also indicated that integrating interactive educational games into community service programs can effectively facilitate English learning among children living in orphanage settings.

4.4 Improvement in Children's Speaking and Vocabulary Skills

The implementation of the community service program showed positive improvements in children's English speaking and vocabulary skills. These improvements were observed through participants' active involvement during learning activities, their ability to recall newly introduced vocabulary, and their increased confidence in using simple English expressions. Compared with the initial observation, the children demonstrated greater willingness to participate in speaking activities and showed better understanding of vocabulary related to physical appearance and personality traits.

One of the most noticeable improvements was the development of vocabulary mastery. Before the program was implemented, most participants had limited knowledge of

English vocabulary and experienced difficulties in remembering and applying words in communication. After participating in the Describing People and Word Matching activities, participants were able to recognize and use several descriptive words, such as *tall, short, beautiful, handsome, kind, friendly, curly hair, and straight hair*. The vocabulary review and matching activities helped children strengthen their memory because they were repeatedly exposed to the same words through explanation, pronunciation practice, speaking exercises, and educational games.

The improvement was also observed in participants' speaking performance. During the initial session, several children were hesitant to speak English because they lacked confidence and were afraid of making pronunciation mistakes. However, after receiving guidance, pronunciation practice, and positive encouragement from the facilitators, more participants became willing to perform speaking tasks in front of their friends. The older participants, particularly junior and senior high school students, were able to create simple descriptive sentences, while younger participants were able to

mention and recognize several English adjectives related to the topic.

The increased confidence among participants indicates that interactive learning activities provided a supportive environment for practicing English communication. The combination of vocabulary instruction, speaking practice, and educational games allowed children to learn English in a less stressful atmosphere. Instead of focusing only on correct answers, the activities encouraged children to participate actively and view mistakes as part of the learning process. This finding supports Kamalia and Hadi (2025), who reported that contextual and participatory English learning activities can improve children's language skills and confidence in orphanage learning environments. Similarly, Basit and Qureshi (2025) found that community-based English learning programs contribute to improving orphaned children's communication abilities and motivation to learn English.

Furthermore, the results of the Word Matching activity demonstrated that game-based learning can effectively support vocabulary retention. Through

matching pictures, words, and meanings, children were encouraged to recall vocabulary independently while enjoying the learning process. This finding is consistent with Ardayati and Ramasari (2025), who stated that communicative games provide meaningful opportunities for learners to practice and remember new vocabulary. In addition, Iman (2026) emphasized that word games in English learning programs can increase students' engagement and motivation because they combine learning objectives with enjoyable activities.

Although the program was conducted within a limited period of two days, the observed changes indicated that appropriate learning strategies could create meaningful improvements in children's English learning experiences. The participants not only gained new vocabulary but also developed greater confidence, enthusiasm, and willingness to communicate in English. Therefore, the integration of Describing People and Word Matching activities can be considered an effective approach for supporting vocabulary development and speaking practice among children in orphanage settings.

4.5 Discussion

The results of the community service program indicate that the integration of Describing People and Word Matching activities provided an effective approach to improving children's English speaking and vocabulary skills at Yayasan Panti Asuhan Rumah Cahaya Baru. The findings showed that the participants experienced positive changes in vocabulary recognition, speaking confidence, pronunciation practice, and learning motivation. These improvements were influenced by the use of interactive activities that allowed children to actively participate, practice English, and receive immediate feedback from the facilitators.

The improvement in vocabulary mastery can be explained by the use of contextual learning materials. The topic of Describing People was selected because it was closely related to children's daily experiences, allowing them to connect new English words with familiar concepts such as physical appearance and personality. Learning vocabulary through meaningful contexts helps learners understand not

only the meaning of words but also how they can be applied in communication. This finding supports Nation (2022), who emphasized that vocabulary learning becomes more effective when learners receive repeated exposure to words and have opportunities to use them in meaningful situations.

Furthermore, the use of Word Matching as a vocabulary reinforcement activity contributed to children's ability to recall and recognize English words. The activity required participants to actively connect words, pictures, and meanings, which encouraged deeper vocabulary processing compared with passive memorization. This result is consistent with Ardayati and Ramasari (2025), who found that communicative games can increase vocabulary acquisition by providing repeated practice and enjoyable learning experiences. Similarly, Iman (2026) reported that word games in English learning programs improved learners' engagement and motivation because games created a more relaxed and interactive learning atmosphere.

The improvement in speaking confidence was another important outcome of the program. During the first

session, several participants were reluctant to speak because they were afraid of making mistakes. However, through pronunciation practice, guided speaking tasks, and supportive feedback, participants gradually became more willing to express themselves in English. This finding reflects the importance of creating a safe learning environment where learners can practice communication without excessive anxiety. According to Krashen's affective filter hypothesis, learners are more likely to acquire language successfully when emotional barriers such as fear and anxiety are reduced. Therefore, interactive speaking activities and positive reinforcement played an important role in encouraging children's participation.

The findings also demonstrate the importance of community service programs in providing additional English learning opportunities for children in orphanage settings. Many children in orphanages may have limited access to supplementary learning resources and opportunities for language practice outside formal education. Through community-based educational activities, university students and educators can provide

meaningful learning experiences that support children's academic and personal development. This finding is in line with Kamalia and Hadi (2025), who found that contextual and participatory English learning activities improved basic English skills and confidence among orphanage children. Likewise, Basit and Qureshi (2025) highlighted that community engagement programs can empower orphaned children by improving their communication skills and motivation to learn English.

Although the program was conducted within only two days, the observed improvements indicate that carefully designed interactive activities can create meaningful learning outcomes. The combination of vocabulary instruction, speaking practice, educational games, and rewards successfully encouraged children to participate actively and develop positive attitudes toward English learning. Therefore, the implementation of Describing People and Word Matching activities can be considered an appropriate strategy for community service programs aimed at improving children's English proficiency, particularly in contexts where learning

resources and opportunities for English practice are limited.

D. CONCLUSION

The community service program at Yayasan Panti Asuhan Rumah Cahaya Baru was successfully implemented to improve children's English speaking and vocabulary skills through Describing People and Word Matching activities. The program was designed based on the participants' initial conditions, where most children had limited English vocabulary, lacked confidence in speaking, and experienced difficulties in pronunciation. Through interactive and contextual learning activities, the program provided opportunities for children to learn English in an enjoyable and supportive environment.

The implementation of the program showed positive changes in participants' language abilities and learning attitudes. The Describing People activity helped children acquire vocabulary related to physical appearance and personality traits while providing opportunities to practice speaking through individual and pair

activities. Meanwhile, the Word Matching activity strengthened vocabulary retention by encouraging children to connect words, pictures, and meanings through an educational game. The combination of vocabulary instruction, pronunciation practice, speaking activities, quizzes, and rewards successfully increased children's participation and motivation.

The results of the program indicated that interactive learning strategies can effectively support English language development among children in orphanage settings. The participants became more active, confident, and willing to communicate using simple English expressions. Older participants demonstrated the ability to construct descriptive sentences, while younger participants improved their ability to recognize and recall basic vocabulary.

Therefore, this community service program highlights the importance of providing meaningful and engaging English learning experiences for children with limited access to additional language learning resources. Future community service programs are recommended to involve longer implementation periods, more diverse

learning materials, and continuous mentoring to further develop children's English communication skills.

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