

## Driving to communicative approach: the innovative teaching speaking methods in Indonesian English immersion program

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### Article Info

#### Article history:

Received Sep 9, 2022

Revised Nov 19, 2023

Accepted Nov 26, 2023

#### Keywords:

Communicative goal

Immersion program

Integrated skills

Speaking

Teaching methods

### ABSTRACT

Students' failure to be successful English learners is primarily due to uninteresting materials that lead to demotivation in learning. This research aimed to uncover the students' motivation to study in the Indonesian English immersion program (IEIP) of *Kampung Inggris Pare* and to investigate the innovative methods of teaching speaking as a communicative approach in the IEIP at *Kampung Inggris Pare*. This qualitative study with a micro-ethnography approach was conducted in four English course institutions by associating ten students and four teachers as participants. By having the initial interviews, the results revealed that most students perceived learning English at formal schools as unsatisfied. In comparison, the two months of observation in "the daffodils, Mr. Bob, Kresna, and Peace" English course institutions found that the teachers taught speaking by integrating the other skills and utilizing some sources. They could regulate and deliver the materials attractively based on their methods. The communicative methods employed namely teaching speaking through writing practice (TSWP), teaching speaking through listening practice (TSLP), and teaching speaking through visual media or pictures (TSVM). This study supports students learning English at the IEIP because it fits the purpose of communicative goals, which directs the students' success.

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## 1. INTRODUCTION

The number of English speakers dramatically increased. Approximately 375 million people speak English as their first language (L1) and it is the official language in 75 countries with a total population of more than two billion. 750 million people are considered to speak English as a foreign language [1], [2]. The second language (L2) English speakers outnumber those who speak as their L1 [1], [2]. According to Gabryś-Barker [3], 25-40% more than the number of L2 users and native English speakers. The data indicate that the current global spread of English is so rapid [4], [5]. This phenomenon requires precise steps from the Indonesian government to compete with other countries. The nation's policy on foreign language development needs a special attention. Therefore, some countries perform English as a compulsory subject in formal schools, including Indonesia [6], [7].

Over time, English develops in Indonesia as a foreign language. As a result, English is not widely spoken in Indonesian society. The most perceptible effect of adopting English as a foreign language was the introduction of English language instruction in formal schools. Even though English has been mandated as a required subject beginning with junior high school in Indonesia, many difficulties remain [8]. A few of

Indonesian specialists who have investigated these obstacles reported implementation issues with the 2013 curriculum [9], [10]. The character of development goals of this curriculum encompass four aspects including spiritual, attitude, knowledge, and skills. Nonetheless, many educators do not prepare lesson plans prior to teaching. Although they understand that the 2013 curriculum concept is connected to the scientific method, such as project-based learning, discovery learning, problem-based learning, and task-based learning, they are not familiar with the scientific approach. Therefore, teachers do not always prepare instructional materials and have difficulty assessing students' attitudes. Thus, the learning process is inefficient. Research by Wahyuningsih and Afandi [10] reported the way English is learned and taught bears a burden. Even though the grammar-based approach since the 1980s has changed into the Indonesian English curriculum's practical use approach, teachers still teach English with the previous approach. Consequently, teachers fail to create a communicative, comfortable, and fascinating atmosphere of learning and teaching. In the end, the grammar-based approach engenders students' perceptions that English is complicated and burdensome.

The phenomenon of teacher-centered learning has become a difficult-to-break pattern. In this conventional method, it appears that teachers play a significant role in the teaching and learning process. The teachers impart information to the students, who passively receive it. There is no preparation and additional activities prior to learning. Students are permitted to sit, maintain silence, and listen only. This approach is characterized primarily by the use of textbooks for teaching English, an emphasis on grammar, and the production of students who can perform well on certain English tests, as opposed to producing students who can communicate effectively. Students lose the opportunity to complete language tasks communicatively through collaboration and peer interaction. Finally, even though English has been taught and used for many years in Indonesian schools, the outcome still has not been satisfactory because very few graduating students can communicate well and speak fluently [11]. Many learners feel anxious to speak in or out of the classroom due to different psychological or social reasons, and they still enjoy being silent [12]–[14]. Some authors also reveal that getting students to talk is much more troublesome than making them read, write or listen during language courses [15], [16]. Therefore, teachers should build up students' talk activities. They should implement some communicative teaching methods and high mobilization in the classroom such as group work, role-plays, projects, and face-to-face interviews, to stimulate the students' self-confidence and willingness to speak English for all conditions [17], [18].

A growing body of literature has investigated innovative methods of teaching speaking as a communicative approach in varied contexts. However, there has been little discussion on the English immersion context. Research by Rachmawati *et al.* [19] affirmed that the English immersion program provides a promising venue for young English as foreign language (EFL) students to experience and explore English varieties and cultures. Through that program, the students also become aware of the diverse world they live in and take part in shaping. Research by Ball *et al.* [20] reported that creating a supportive learning environment such as an immersive program is important in learning a second language such as English. It is a program that will improve the English proficiency of students through increased exposure to the English language [21], [22]. Thus, this study addresses two research questions: i) what motivated students to study in the Indonesian English immersion program (IEIP) of *Kampung Inggris Pare* including the students' previous learning English experience, learning outcome, and perception of English? and ii) what are the innovative methods of teaching speaking employed by teachers in the IEIP of *Kampung Inggris Pare*?

## 2. RESEARCH METHOD

This study employed a qualitative design with a micro-ethnography approach. It shares patterns of actions, behaviors, or languages of an entire cultural society in the natural setting over prolonged periods [23], [24]. Previous researches [25], [26] explained that micro-ethnography focuses on a specific setting and topic element. It draws on how the cultural character is imitated in microcosm in particular facets of everyday life but emphasizes the specific behaviors in specific environments rather than portraying the whole cultural system. This study was conducted in four Indonesian English course institutions located in the IEIP of *Kampung Inggris Pare*, Kediri, Indonesia. They were the Daffodils, Mr. Bob, Kresna, and Peace. This qualitative study associated ten students and four teachers as informants.

The data were collected through interviews and observation for two months. To gain the data, the researchers did participant observers, who attended the classroom every day to learn, complete the task, and build a rapport with other students in and out of the classroom interaction. Simultaneously, the researchers used the opportunity to observe the research site and then made casual talk and semi-structured interviews.

The participants were chosen according to some considerations. The participants were the researchers' classmates, whether male or female. They were students who had completed formal education at least in junior high school. It was the first time that participants came to *Kampung Inggris Pare*. These considerations were due to several reasons: i) men and women had the same opportunity to be participants in this study to avoid gender discrimination; ii) the participants selected were the researchers' classmates to

make the observation process easier; iii) the elementary and junior high school students were not the targets of this study because most of them have not been able to act and make their own decisions. Usually, students in the range of these ages still depended on teachers and parents. It might affect the validity of observations and interviews; and iv) the last consideration in choosing the participants who first came to the IEIP of *Kampung Inggris Pare* was to easily catch the students' standpoints on the differences in teachers teaching methods and their learning experiences between previous environments and the IEIP of *Kampung Inggris Pare*. Immersion refers to language instruction where a foreign language is the principal medium of content transmission and communication [27], [28]. Thus, researching the immersion program was crucial, in which the researchers might find something unique and different from the teaching process in the native context.

This research employed two stages of data collection to obtain the purposes of the study. In the first step, the researchers conducted the initial interview with the students in the first meeting. In this step, the researchers tried to find what motivated students to come to the IEIP of *Kampung Inggris Pare* and choose these English course institutions. The researchers addressed some open-ended questions to gain this information. They were the students' previous learning English experience, learning outcome, and perception of English before coming to this place. Next, in the second step, the researcher investigated the teaching and learning process at four English course institutions in the IEIP of *Kampung Inggris Pare*. The second step was focused on the teachers' teaching methods, which the interviews supported the data.

Qualitative data collection should be done continuously until the data is saturated and ready to be analyzed. Chen *et al.* [29] reported the first preparation of the data for analysis involves organizing the vast amount of information, transferring it from written or verbal words to more organized and neat written reports, whether by hand or by a computer-typed file. In the data analysis, it begins from preparing the raw data of transcripts, field notes, or images. Then, the following steps were organizing and designing data for analysis, reading through all data, coding the data by hand or computer, interrelating themes and descriptions, and the last was interpreting the meaning of themes or descriptions [24].

### 3. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

#### 3.1. The students' motivation to study in the IEIP of *Kampung Inggris Pare*

The results of interviews showed that eight participants commented on a negative learning experience before coming to the IEIP of *Kampung Inggris Pare*. However, only two students felt they had a positive experience in learning English at schools or private English institutions. Then, seven students claimed that they had negative learning outcomes related to English. They had low speaking ability, low speaking confidence, and no idea about appropriate learning strategies, especially in improving their speaking skills. However, two students came with enough speaking ability, even though they were not too fluent. Some of them confessed to having self-confidence but no learning strategies. These participants were categorized as students who got a medium or moderate learning outcome before participating in these English courses. Interestingly, one student was identified as having a positive learning outcome. These students had positive learning outcomes even though they experienced a negative English learning process at school. These were identified as gaps. Figure 1 presents these findings.

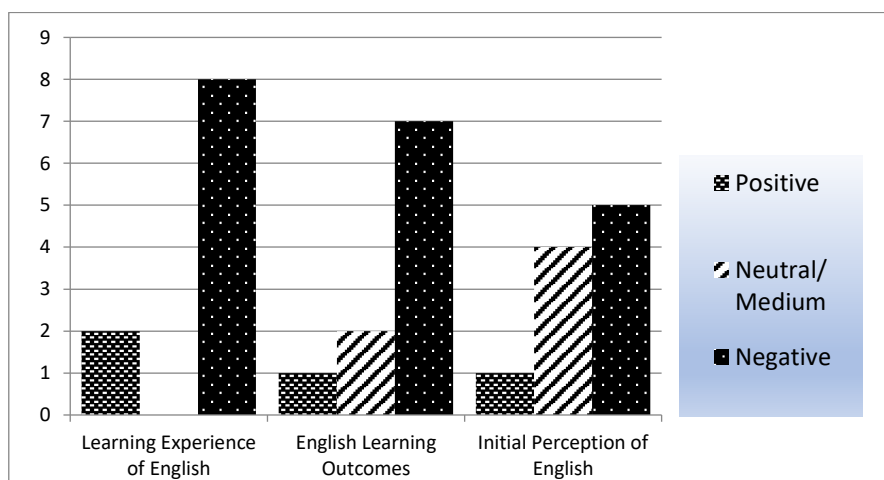


Figure 1. Gaps in non-immersive English learning environment

However, the students generally echoed more negative comments when asked about their initial perception of English before coming to this immersive program. The findings showed that the negative comments were caused by English learning experience in their school [4]. Further, Behroozizad *et al.* [30] reported that their school did not give many opportunities to practice and speak English among teachers and friends. Of 10 total respondents of students, there were five participants who stated negative perceptions of English. Besides, some positive responses from the participants were also found, even though the quantities were fewer. One participant revealed he liked English and did not have any problems with English. While the other four participants were in a neutral tone for different reasons. Thus, according to the data, it was found that most students received the fulfillment of unsatisfactory English needs before coming to this immersive environment. According to students' responses, it was revealed that most participants had negative experiences learning English before taking a course in this immersive environment. The main reason for these negative experiences was caused by the content of English materials. Then, it was followed by an inappropriate time of English schedule, English is not the only subject to learn, language instruction, and the gap between teachers and students.

The participants said that they did not feel satisfied with the teaching and learning process at school because it was boring. This result shares a number of similarities with [1] findings. The findings reported that the students get bored when the teachers do not use clear and concise examples during the teaching-learning process. One participant revealed that teachers teach material by referring only to the book instructions. Consequently, it fails to create a more varied, creative, and communicative atmosphere that produces tedious and monotonous learning. She said that the teachers' method of using reading texts can be a mediation of students to increase English vocabulary. However, it will be useful if the teachers can use the reading text to train students to use it in a verbal situation. Teachers can ask students to arrange sentences or conversations related to the context of daily life. Thus, even though the grammar used by students may still not be neatly arranged, at least they are accustomed to speaking. The other case is also exposed by P5. She said that some of their friends left the class during English time. She asked, "is there something wrong with the way teachers teach English?". She then answered:

*"I don't know, sister. English was always scheduled in the mid-day (sleepy time), as I remember, the lesson that felt difficult was increasingly unpleasant. Besides, the teacher also sometimes asked us to memorize sentence patterns like memorizing math formulas. The teacher mostly explained the formulas and gave some examples of sentences. After that, we start to do the assignment."*  
(Wednesday/March 27th 2019, interview with P5)

P5 previously confirmed that English learning only focused on grammar. He revealed that the teacher talked throughout class hours. The teacher explained the sentence structure and then gave questions according to the material taught. Students' activities were only sitting quietly to listen to the teacher's presentation, after that students did the assignment. The traditional teaching method applied by the teacher seemed monotonous and passive. It impacted one-way communication and interaction in the classroom. Besides, English lessons were always scheduled at inappropriate times. The English lesson was expected to be scheduled in the morning because this difficult lesson would be harder if it is learned during the sleepy hours. As a result, students were bored and have bad experiences when studying English at school. P5 also informed that she had taken an English course for one year and a half, but she got nothing because the situation was formal and she did not enjoy it.

In addition, the writing skills taught to P3 when she studied in junior high school were also related to grammar. The teacher taught how to produce a sentence consisting of a subject, verb, and object. The practice of writing sentences was repeated continuously until students were able to produce a paragraph. This method is good. However, something lacks in its implementation. After students can produce a sentence or paragraph, the teacher should train them to pronounce it aloud until they are fluent. This activity provides greater opportunities for students to practice language teaching in its function as a verbal communication tool. This study found that the students who felt negative learning experiences at school were identified as acquiring adverse learning outcomes. The students generally confirmed that they had low speaking ability and self-confidence to speak. Similarly, research by Wahyuningsih and Afandi [10] emphasized that the students felt less confident because they did not have any chance to speak English in public. Most of the participants who were analyzed as having low speaking performance admitted they had little self-esteem, especially in speaking. Self-confidence depends on the students' speaking ability. They said how they could confidently talk if they did not have English speaking skills. Participants perceived that most of their schools did not facilitate them to practice English. The teachers, friends, and people around these participants never talked English to them, so English has no function in their daily lives. As a result, they have low ability, no self-confidence, and could not identify the best strategy to learn in speaking this foreign language.

Finally, experience and the outcome of learning English impacted the students' perception of English. Based on the data, five participants were identified as having a negative perception of English before participating in this immersive environment. In expressing their perceptions, participants mentioned different words with similar meanings. They felt that English was difficult, hard, burdensome, uninteresting, disliked, and boring. P7 who had the same tone as P2 argued:

*“My initial perception of English is that it is a difficult and uninteresting subject. I don't like it. But I realize it is very important in our life. So, I came here. I am sure, even though it is not now, English will be useful for me someday”* (Saturday/April 13th 2019, interview with P7)

From the argument, P7 felt English was difficult. However, he realized that English was essential, so he took an additional English course in this immersive environment. Overall, from the series of investigations, the researchers concluded that the students found some gaps in learning English at schools as the result of conventional teaching approaches.

### 3.2. Communicative teaching approach: the innovative methods of teaching speaking

Based on the observation in four English courses located in an English immersion environment, the researchers found that teachers taught speaking by integrating the other skills and utilizing some sources that were considered boring by the students. This part presents teaching speaking through reading, listening, writing practice, and visual media. These innovative methods are explained in sub-sections.

#### 3.2.1. Teaching speaking through reading practice

To master English speaking skills, students carried out the following activities starting from understanding the reading text. Indirectly, giving reading texts could improve students' vocabulary mastery. Many activities could be done with a reading text to achieve the expected main target of speaking skills improvement. It shows that reading practice will help students to develop their ability to express ideas, whilst also enlarging the size of their vocabulary [31]. Thus, vocabulary knowledge, as one of the crucial factors, will influence fluency in speaking. In observing the Daffodils on Thursday–Friday/April 11th–12nd 2019, the tutor gave a reading text entitled “Why Finland's Schools are so successful.” In the text, there were many words in bold, which indicated that they needed special attention. In the first activity, the tutor used the drilling method. Students read silently two times. After that, the tutor instructed the students to read the text aloud in turns. Each student read one to two paragraphs and would return after the last student had finished reading. The activity of reading aloud was carried out in three rounds. After that, the whole class, both tutors and students, discussed the storyline and looked for meanings in bold words.

Furthermore, the activity was developed into the speaking area by discussing, drawing conclusions, or verbally answering reading questions. These activities further enlivened the classroom atmosphere because students moved from one place to another and talked from one pair to another because the actions were carried out in couples or groups. At the end of the activity, several students were randomly asked to retell the reading content individually. Figure 2 illustrates the model of teaching speaking through reading practice.

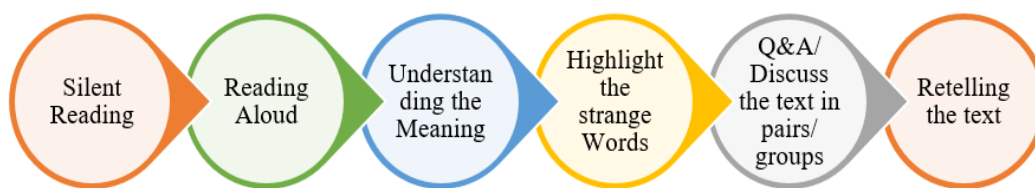


Figure 2. Reading text-based speaking practice

#### 3.2.2. Teaching speaking through listening practice

The present finding confirms and extends the earlier finding [32]. It shows that the listening practice technique is quite successful in improving speaking skills. Speaking classes that were integrated with listening practice could be in the form of giving listening material, podcasts, recording interviews, and stories about motivation. These materials were accessed from well-known English learning sites such as BBC, Cambridge, British Council, and effortless English language. Similar to teaching speaking that was integrated with reading practice, several sequential processes started with listening and led to the speaking activity stage. The fifth meeting with Mr. Bob was focused on a western song entitled ‘Sway, by Michael Bubble.’

This activity started with ice breaking, where the tutor asked some general questions regarding the theme of songs and music. This icebreaking activity was divided into two stages (preface and chitchat). In the preface, the tutor gave general questions to all students. Meanwhile, chitchat activities were carried out in pairs simultaneously, so there were five pairs of students having a conversation. This activity aimed to improve speaking skills, social interaction, and train concentration because students must speak in a crowded atmosphere in the class. Common questions related to the theme, for example, “what kind of music do you like?”, “What is the meaning of music for you?”, “Can you play a music tool?”, and “explain about your favorite singer!”

The activity continued with distributing a piece of paper containing incomplete song lyrics. Then the students were asked to listen to the song while paying attention to the blank words. These empty words must be found in the song. The song was played five times to practice students' listening skills while completing the lyrics. After repeating the song five times, the tutor checked the students' answers while students matched their works, followed by discussing unfamiliar words. After that, students were asked to tell the content of the song according to their perceptions. Finally, the class activities ended by singing the song together. In this activity, students looked enthusiastic and very excited because of the various class activities. Figure 3 shows the details of listening material-based speaking practice.

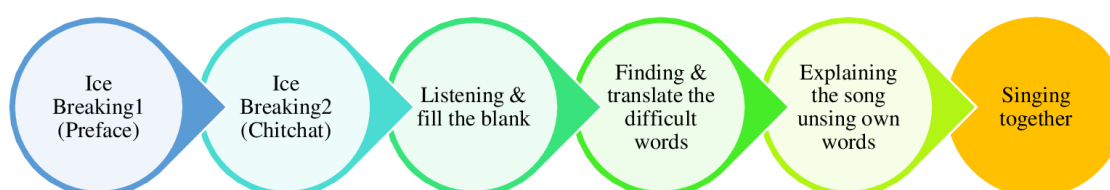


Figure 3. Listening material-based speaking practice

### 3.2.3. Teaching speaking through writing practice

Speaking classes that were integrated with writing activities started by developing a certain topic according to perception, experience, and knowledge accompanied by searching for accurate reference sources from the internet. These activities were usually done in an advanced speaking class. Kresna course institute provided guidebooks for students, including in the ‘speaking 6 class.’ This level was the highest-grade speaking class in Kresna which focused on improving students’ speaking skills and critical thinking. Therefore, students were trained to produce academic writing that correlated students' perceptions, experiences, and knowledge accompanied by reliable evidence. These activities were not intended to check the students' writing grammar but were more focused on the quality of content and presentation techniques. Thus, the guidebook provided strategies for preparing and delivering material, how to start and end presentations, and presenting many sentences and phrases samples for presentations.

At the initial meetings, students were asked to choose one of the 16 topics provided in the guidebook to be presented in turns. After selecting the appropriate topic, students were given the freedom to schedule their presentation according to the agreement between them. In this activity, students were trained to manage their learning as well as possible and took advantage of free time to find references, develop ideas, and practice presentations with anyone they met. If possible, they discussed with their roommates or tutors at camp related to the topic they developed before presenting it to the class. If they had not had their turn to present the topic at that time in class, students would become the audience and listened to their friends' presentations. So that students also developed listening skills. During the presentation, students tried to show their best while the audience noted strange words and essential ideas from the performance.

Besides, the activity continued with a question-and-answer session, and it invited all the students to talk more. The present finding agrees with that of the earlier study [33]. The students seemed very enthusiastic because this activity, in addition to increasing speaking fluency, also increased vocabulary, broadened horizons, strengthened critical thinking, and stimulated self-confidence. Unlike the others, this series of processes was not completed in one meeting but lasted for one period. The details of the series are illustrated in Figure 4.

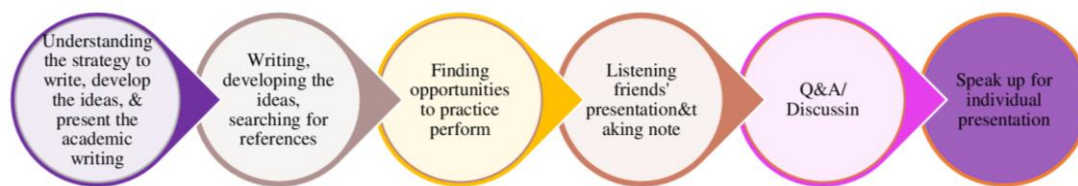


Figure 4. Writing content-based speaking practice

### 3.2.4. Teaching speaking through visual media

Visual media, such as watching videos or viewing photographs, can also be used to teach speaking skills. Visual media consistently stimulates analytic abilities. So many instructors utilized images in their instructional materials. One of them was a tutor in the Peace English Center's moving speaking class. It appears to support [34] research findings. He stated that visual media could assist teachers in presenting courses in a more engaging and understandable manner. Figure 5 depicts the specifics of a sequence of writing-based speaking practices. At the tenth meeting of the moving speaking class at Peace English Center, the group of five students was divided into three groups. Each group is seated in a circle in a different classroom corner. This activity does not involve competition or debate among groups. However, it fostered cooperation among group members. The tutor gave each group 20 types of pictures with varying themes. Each student will describe the photographs without pausing for 15 minutes. The images to be described were not selected by the speaker, but rather by group members. Within 15 minutes, I observed that many students could describe 10 to 15 images without pausing. A few were less than 10, but it was a minority.

The assignment of tasks to groups was clearly defined. While one student spoke and described the images, the other student kept track of time. Two students assisted in selecting random images, while another was responsible for sprinkling powder as a punishment whenever the speaker paused or spoke in Bahasa Indonesia. Each error would be sprinkled with powder. Therefore, students who made ten errors in 15 minutes would be punished tenfold. Nevertheless, students still enjoyed the punishment because it was novel and not burdensome.

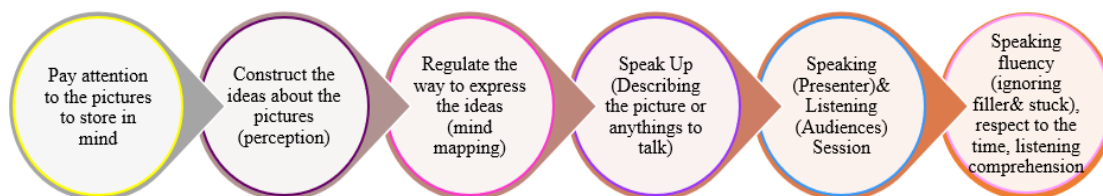


Figure 5. Visual media-based speaking practice

## 4. CONCLUSION

The students' failure to be successful English learners is mostly due to uninteresting materials that lead to demotivation in learning. By having the initial interviews, most students perceived learning English at school as unsatisfactory. In comparison, the two months of observation in "the daffodils, Mr. Bob, Kresna, and Peace" English Course Institutions found that teachers taught speaking by integrating the other skills and utilizing some sources that were considered boring by the students. However, the teachers could regulate and deliver the materials attractively based on their methods. The communicative approaches employed are teaching speaking through writing practice (TSWP), teaching speaking through listening practice (TSLP), TSWP, and teaching speaking through visual media or pictures (TSVM). These activities facilitate students to move and do interaction while studying in the classroom. Thus, based on the condition, learning the language for a communicative purpose can be achieved.

## ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

The researchers would like to express our highest gratitude to Universitas Terbuka, Indonesia and Universitas Teknokrat Indonesia, Indonesia for supporting this research. We would also like to extend our appreciation to all participants in *Kampung Inggris Pare* for their cooperation in providing the necessary information to obtain the data to carry out this study.




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