

LITERACY TRAINING AT *SEKOLAH IMPIAN* IN SAVANNA VILLAGE: CULTIVATING KNOWLEDGE FOR A BRIGHTER FUTURE

Riska Febrianti

*English Education Department, Faculty of Tarbiyah and Teacher Training, Universitas Islam Negeri
Alauddin Makassar, Gowa 92118, Indonesia*
Email: riskhaikha2003@gmail.com

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Abstract

Literacy plays a crucial role in shaping students' academic abilities and future success. However, English literacy levels among elementary students in Kampung Savana remain underdeveloped due to limited access to proper learning facilities. This community service program aimed to enhance English literacy skills among children at Sekolah Impian through structured training activities. The program was conducted in two stages: preparation and implementation. The preparation stage involved site visits, participant selection, and material development, while the implementation stage included material delivery, reading practice, and an engaging ice-breaking session. The main focus was on the theme "Location and Direction" to strengthen students' spatial and linguistic understanding. The results indicated that students actively participated in the learning process, demonstrating enthusiasm and confidence in engaging with the provided materials. The ice-breaking activity further fostered an enjoyable learning environment, making English literacy training more effective. This initiative highlights the importance of early literacy education and calls for continued efforts to support English learning in underprivileged communities.

Keywords: *English literacy, community service, elementary students, location and direction, student engagement*



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INTRODUCTION

Savanna Village is one of the slum settlement areas located on the border between Makassar City and Gowa Regency. This area emerged as a result of urbanization. People from the outskirts of Makassar City who sought better opportunities in the city but lacked adequate skills and education were ultimately unable to secure decent jobs. As a result, they were forced to settle in informal slum areas that developed spontaneously. The location of this village can be seen in Figure 1 below.



Figure 1. Map of Savanna Village, *Sekolah Impian*

Based on Figure 1 above, it can be observed that the village is relatively close to Makassar city. However, despite this proximity, there remains a significant need for literacy development. This is particularly crucial for children who primarily rely on schools as their sole source of knowledge. Therefore, this situation serves as one of the key considerations for implementing the Community Service Program at the *Sekolah Impian* in Savanna Village.

Upon further examination, the target group of children in this Community Service Program consists of elementary school students from various grade levels. Strengthening literacy within this group serves as a fundamental effort to support the government's mission of fostering an educated society. This initiative aligns with the 1945 Constitution of the Republic of Indonesia, Chapter XIII on Education and Culture, Article 31, Paragraph 1, which states: "Every citizen has the right to education" (Indonesia, 2016). One form of education in this context is literacy enhancement, particularly within communities, focusing on children at the *Sekolah Impian* in Savanna Village.

Literacy skills are a key component of education, essential for improving students' competencies and abilities (Karimah et al., 2021). Literacy education aims to support students' development in terms of essential skills. Therefore, literacy proficiency equips students with the necessary competencies to navigate real-world challenges, particularly in the rapidly advancing era of globalization (Akbar, 2017). The literacy skills required today include language proficiency and students' overall comprehension of knowledge (Abidin et al., 2021). Language literacy, particularly through English learning, can stimulate linguistic abilities and enhance overall competence.

According to Fitriani, Yani and Azis, (2019), literacy is defined as the ability to read and write. The development of literacy is crucial, as it serves as a foundational skill that every individual must acquire to succeed in the future. Unfortunately, Ayu (2020), argues that students' English literacy levels are lower than their proficiency in the Indonesian language. This concern has motivated students from the 2021 cohort of the English Education Department at UIN Alauddin Makassar to initiate the Literacy Training at the *Sekolah Impian* in Savanna Village program. This initiative aims to provide engaging and beneficial English learning materials for the selected group of children.

METHOD

The implementation method used in this activity is divided into two stages: the preparation stage and the implementation stage (Mangkurat et al., 2023). The preparation stage begins with the organizing team determining the theme, materials, target participants, implementation time, and location of the event. The target participants of this Community Service Program activity are students at *Sekolah Impian*, located on the border between Makassar City and Gowa Regency, South Sulawesi. The selection of this location is based on its inclusion in the Community Service Program area conducted by students of the English Education Department at UIN Alauddin Makassar.

In the implementation stage, this activity involved all students of the 2021 cohort of the English Education Department and was conducted offline. The implementation took place on April 13, 2023, at *Sekolah Impian*, located in Kampung Savana, on the border between Makassar City and Gowa Regency, South Sulawesi. The activity began with a gathering at a small hut, followed by an opening speech delivered by a student representative. Subsequently, the core activities of the community service program commenced.

The implementation of this activity involved material delivery by students of the English Education Department at UIN Alauddin Makassar. The activity was carried out in two stages. Stage I included material delivery, reading practice, and in-depth discussion on the topic of "Location and Direction." Stage II consisted of mentoring, where students were guided through practical exercises related to the previously delivered material. Additionally, an ice-breaking session was conducted to create a more engaging learning atmosphere.

Thus, this community service activity was successfully carried out in accordance with its initial objectives, namely, to provide English literacy training to a group of students in an effective and well-targeted manner.

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

This community service activity was carried out in two stages: the preparation stage and the implementation stage. During the preparation stage, the student team conducted a site visit to the school and carried out interviews to ensure that the target participants of this community service activity consisted of a group of children from different age ranges, specifically from 5 until 12 years old. This age group was chosen because they still require guidance on the importance of English literacy in the current era.

Subsequently, the student team formed smaller teams to allocate specific tasks, ensuring that all members could work optimally. For this activity, several students were assigned various roles to ensure the success of the event, from planning and preparation to execution. The program division developed the event sequence or rundown, which served as a reference for conducting the activity. Meanwhile, the secretary was responsible for drafting the proposal, which included the background, objectives, and detailed event schedule.

Next, the team prepared supporting materials such as posters and banners to enhance the effectiveness of the literacy training activity. The purpose of creating posters was to attract and increase participants' interest in joining the activity (Gelinis et al., 2018). Additionally, the treasurer purchased several food items to be distributed to participants and some members of the community after the learning session was completed.

During the implementation stage, the activity involved all students of the 2021 cohort of the English Education Department and was conducted in person. The event took

place on April 13, 2023, at *Sekolah Impian*, located in Kampung Savana, on the border between Makassar City and Gowa Regency, South Sulawesi. The activity began with a gathering at a small hut, followed by an opening speech delivered by a student representative. Afterward, the core activities of the community service program commenced.

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This community service activity ran smoothly and met the expectations of the organizing team. It provided positive and significant outcomes that were directly experienced by the students at *Sekolah Impian*, as evidenced by their enthusiasm in participating in the learning process, answering questions, and actively engaging in the activities organized by the community service team. Although this was their first experience, the students showed great enthusiasm in learning English. Furthermore, the activity was conducted in an enjoyable manner. During the ice-breaking session called “Jumping Around,” the students’ enthusiasm and eagerness to learn further enlivened the atmosphere. Many elementary school students demonstrated confidence in answering questions, which is a commendable attitude that deserves appreciation (Mangkurat et al., 2023). The implementation of this activity is illustrated in Figure 2 below.



Figure 2. Material Delivery Process

During the ice-breaking session, many students showed great enthusiasm. This indicates that, despite not receiving formal English lessons at *Sekolah Impian* in Kampung Savana, they actively participated in the activities. After the ice-breaking session, the event continued with the distribution of food to the students and community members,

followed by a group photo session (Figure 3). The students were very happy and thoroughly enjoyed the entire series of activities.



Figure 3. Group Photo

CONCLUSION

The English literacy training for a group of children at *Sekolah Impian*, Kampung Savana, is one of the literacy-strengthening initiatives aimed at contributing to national education development. The selection of children as the target group for this community service program was based on the understanding that a strong foundation in learning begins in childhood. The choice of material related to "Location and Direction" was intended to foster and enhance children's spatial awareness and directional skills.

This community service program was conducted in two stages: the preparation stage and the implementation stage. The activity involved material delivery by students of the English Education Department at UIN Alauddin Makassar. The implementation was divided into two phases. Phase I consisted of material delivery, reading practice, and in-depth discussion, which were expected to have a positive impact on children's motivation to engage in English literacy. Phase II involved mentoring, where children practiced the previously taught material, followed by an ice-breaking session to create a more enjoyable learning atmosphere.

The continuation of similar community service programs is highly necessary to further enhance English literacy efforts in the future and contribute to the nation's educational development.

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