

A DAY OUT WITH FOREIGNER: AN EFFORT TO IMPROVE STUDENT'S CONFIDENCE IN COMMUNICATING IN ENGLISH

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ABSTRACT

English proficiency is an essential skill in the professional world, facilitating access to global information and career advancement. The National Association of Colleges and Employers (NACE, 2024) identifies communication skills as a key component of employability. However, many Indonesian students, including those at a technology-based university in Bali, struggle with low confidence in speaking English. The previous study found that factors such as fear of making mistakes, lack of speaking practice, limited vocabulary, and negative past experiences contribute to this challenge (Dewi, 2024). This study examines the effectiveness of the "A Day Out with a Foreigner" program, which applies Project-Based Learning (PBL) based on Experiential Learning Theory (ELT) to enhance students' confidence in speaking English. A quantitative associative research design was employed, with data collected through pre-test and post-test questionnaires. The sample consisted of 79 students, selected from a population of 90 using random sampling based on the Henry King Nomogram. Data were analyzed using the Spearman Rank correlation test, a non-parametric inferential statistical method. The results indicate a strong positive correlation between pre-test and post-test scores ($R_s = 0.862$), demonstrating that the program effectively boosts students' confidence in spoken English.

Keywords: *Speaking, Confidence, English, PBL, ELT.*

INTRODUCTION

English proficiency is essential in professional and academic settings, providing access to career opportunities and global knowledge. According to the National Association of Colleges and Employers (NACE, 2024), communication skills, particularly in English, are crucial for employability, with many companies requiring English proficiency for recruitment (Butar et al., 2024; Kusnaedi & Hajarudin, 2023). However, many Indonesian students struggle with confidence in speaking English due to fear of making mistakes, limited vocabulary, and minimal exposure to real-life English interactions (Jusuf et al., 2021; Medalia Cadiz-Gabejan, 2021; Nety et al., 2020).

Several challenges hinder students from developing their English-speaking skills. Anxiety, hesitation, and fear of negative evaluation often lead to avoidance of speaking opportunities, while lack of practice prevents learners from gaining fluency (Muqorrobin et al., 2022). Brown (2018) identifies common difficulties in speaking English, such as hesitation, pronunciation struggles, and difficulty maintaining a natural speech rhythm. These issues reduce motivation and

confidence, making meaningful conversations more challenging. Research suggests that authentic exposure, such as direct interaction with native speakers, can significantly enhance students' confidence in speaking English (Pujiani et al., 2021; Rosmayanti et al., 2023; Tifani et al., 2020).

To address these issues, Experiential Learning Theory (ELT) and Project-Based Learning (PBL) offer effective pedagogical approaches. ELT, developed by Kolb (Kolb & Kolb, 2005), emphasizes learning through direct experience and consists of four stages:

- 1) Concrete Experience: Engaging in real-world English conversations.
- 2) Reflective Observation: Analyzing strengths and weaknesses.
- 3) Abstract Conceptualization: Developing strategies for improvement.
- 4) Active Experimentation: Applying strategies in future interactions.

By progressing through these stages, students shift from passive learning to active engagement, reinforcing their language skills through practical experience.

Meanwhile, PBL is an inquiry-based approach that encourages students to solve real-world problems through hands-on projects. Harding da Rosa (2024) highlights that PBL in English as a Foreign Language (EFL) classrooms fosters critical thinking, collaboration, and active language use. Unlike traditional learning methods, PBL immerses students in meaningful communication, allowing them to practice English naturally. Studies indicate that PBL can significantly improve students' confidence and language proficiency by providing authentic speaking opportunities (Hamidah et al., 2020; Ifwandi et al., 2024; Riski, 2023; Sofiriyah et al., 2024).

At a technology-focused university in Bali, many students struggle with speaking English confidently due to limited exposure, difficulty understanding different accents, and fear of making mistakes (Dewi, 2024). These challenges align with previous research findings on common barriers in EFL learning. To address this issue, *A Day Out with a Foreigner*, a PBL-based learning activity, has been introduced. This initiative immerses students in real-life English-speaking situations, encouraging them to engage in authentic conversations with native or fluent English speakers. By providing firsthand experience in real-world communication, this program aligns with ELT principles, reinforcing learning through practice.

Self-confidence is a crucial factor in language learning. Brown (2018) emphasizes that confidence influences motivation and willingness to communicate, making it essential for developing speaking skills. Several factors shape self-confidence, including self-image (belief in one's ability), past experiences (positive or negative learning encounters), and social environment (support from peers and instructors) (Park & Lee, 2005). Given the significance of self-confidence in language acquisition, it is important to examine whether immersive, real-world speaking opportunities can effectively enhance students' willingness and ability to use English in everyday interactions.

While extensive research confirms the benefits of authentic exposure and the individual effectiveness of Project-Based Learning (PBL) and Experiential Learning Theory (ELT), a research gap exists in studies that quantitatively measure the impact of a program that formally integrates all three elements. Much research focuses on in-class activities or simple, unstructured exposure. The **novelty** of this study, therefore, lies in the design and evaluation of the "A Day Out with a Foreigner" program as a structured, out-of-class intervention. It moves beyond simple interaction by framing the activity as a formal PBL assignment grounded in Kolb's four-stage ELT cycle. The importance of this research is to provide empirical evidence for this specific, replicable model. If this integrated approach proves effective at boosting confidence, it can serve as a practical pedagogical model for other institutions in non-English-speaking environments seeking to solve the persistent challenge of speaking anxiety.

MATERIALS AND METHOD

This research was conducted in some stages with the following descriptions:

- 1) **Problem Identification:** At this stage, an ex post facto study was conducted based on previous research, which found that one of the main obstacles preventing students at Universitas Primakara from speaking English proficiently is a lack of confidence in speaking English.
- 2) **Literature Review:** A literature review was conducted to explore methods and approaches that are suitable for improving students' confidence in speaking English.

- 3) Hypothesis Formulation: This study hypothesizes that there is a positive and significant relationship between the *Making A Day Out with a Foreigner* project and students' confidence in speaking English. The research applies an associative statistical hypothesis as follows:
 - Null Hypothesis (H_0): There is no relationship between the *Making A Day Out with a Foreigner* project and students' confidence in speaking English.
 - Alternative Hypothesis (H_1): There is a relationship between the *Making A Day Out with a Foreigner* project and students' confidence in speaking English.
- 4) Instrument Development and Testing: The following steps are taken in this stage:
 - a. Designing a questionnaire framework and questionnaire based on a Likert scale (1–4) related to the ELT cycle and Speaking Confidence.
 - b. Conducting construct validity testing to determine how well the instrument measures the intended theoretical construct, followed by content validity testing to assess whether the instrument covers all aspects or dimensions of the measured construct (Sugiyono, 2017). These two tests are carried out by three expert judges in English language education. After approval, a pilot test is conducted with a sample of 30 students from the population. Once data is tabulated, factor analysis is performed by correlating the scores of instrument items.
 - c. Reliability testing is performed using internal consistency, where the instrument is tested once, and the results are analysed. The reliability analysis technique used is Cronbach's Alpha, processed in SPSS Version 30.
- 5) Data Collection: Data is collected through questionnaire distribution to the selected sample. The population consists of first-semester students enrolled in the English course for the Informatics Study Program (morning class) in the 2024/2025 academic year, totalling 90 students. The sampling technique used is simple random sampling, with the Herry King's Nomogram Table applied to determine the sample size at a 1% margin of error. Based on the Herry King's Nomogram Table, for a population of 90 students with a 1% error rate, the required sample size is 79 students.

- 6) Data Analysis and Interpretation: The study employs inferential statistical correlation analysis (probability-based), specifically a non-parametric analysis, as the research aims to generalize the findings to the population using ordinal data from the Likert scale (1–4) (Sugiyono, 2018). To test the associative hypothesis with ordinal data, the Spearman Rank Correlation Method is used, with data analysis conducted using SPSS Version 30.

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

The questionnaire framework was developed using ELT theory and Speaking English Confidence and underwent construct validity assessment by three expert judgments in the field of English education. These experts are currently pursuing doctoral degrees or have already obtained doctoral degrees in English education. The expert judges provided their opinions on the designed instrument. The results from the expert judgments indicated that 31 statement items were deemed appropriate by all three experts, while one item, statement number 14, required revision based on the feedback from the third expert. The original statement, “I feel more confident speaking with foreign speakers after this activity,” was more relevant to speaking confidence rather than active experience. Therefore, it was revised to “I tried speaking with foreign speakers using English during this activity.”

After completing the construct validity process, content validity was then assessed by expert judgments, followed by an instrument trial involving 30 participants from the population. The content validity evaluation by experts was conducted using the Content Validity Ratio (CVR), which serves to assess content validity by Lawshe (Hendryadi, 2017). The formula for the Content Validity Ratio (CVR) is as follows:

- Ne: Number of experts who rated the item as “relevant.”
- N: Total number of experts.

According to Lawshe, the critical CVR value depends on the number of experts (N). For $N = 3$, the minimum CVR value is 0.99. Items with a $CVR \geq$ the critical value are considered content valid. The results of the CVR calculations from the three experts are presented in Table 1.

Table 1. CVR Value Result

Item	Expert 1	Expert 2	Expert 3	Total Relevant (ne)	CVR Value
1	Very Relevant	Very Relevant	Very Relevant	3	1,00
2	Very Relevant	Very Relevant	Very Relevant	3	1,00
3	Very Relevant	Very Relevant	Very Relevant	3	1,00
4	Very Relevant	Very Relevant	Very Relevant	3	1,00
5	Very Relevant	Relevant	Very Relevant	3	1,00
6	Very Relevant	Very Relevant	Very Relevant	3	1,00
7	Very Relevant	Very Relevant	Very Relevant	3	1,00
8	Very Relevant	Very Relevant	Very Relevant	3	1,00
9	Very Relevant	Very Relevant	Very Relevant	3	1,00
10	Very Relevant	Very Relevant	Very Relevant	3	1,00
11	Very Relevant	Very Relevant	Very Relevant	3	1,00
12	Very Relevant	Very Relevant	Very Relevant	3	1,00
13	Very Relevant	Very Relevant	Very Relevant	3	1,00
14	Very Relevant	Very Relevant	Relevant	3	1,00
15	Very Relevant	Very Relevant	Very Relevant	3	1,00
16	Very Relevant	Very Relevant	Very Relevant	3	1,00
17	Very Relevant	Very Relevant	Very Relevant	3	1,00
18	Very Relevant	Very Relevant	Very Relevant	3	1,00
19	Very Relevant	Very Relevant	Very Relevant	3	1,00
20	Very Relevant	Very Relevant	Very Relevant	3	1,00
21	Very Relevant	Very Relevant	Very Relevant	3	1,00
22	Very Relevant	Relevant	Very Relevant	3	1,00
23	Very Relevant	Relevant	Very Relevant	3	1,00
24	Very Relevant	Very Relevant	Very Relevant	3	1,00
25	Very Relevant	Relevant	Very Relevant	3	1,00
26	Very Relevant	Relevant	Very Relevant	3	1,00
27	Very Relevant	Very Relevant	Very Relevant	3	1,00

28	Very Relevant	Very Relevant	Very Relevant	3	1,00
29	Very Relevant	Relevant	Very Relevant	3	1,00
30	Very Relevant	Relevant	Very Relevant	3	1,00
31	Very Relevant	Relevant	Very Relevant	3	1,00
32	Very Relevant	Relevant	Very Relevant	3	1,00

From Table 1, it is shown that each statement in the questionnaire received a CVR score of 1, which means it is valid as it exceeds the critical value of 0.99.

Following the CVR validation, an instrument trial on 30 samples confirmed instrument validity and reliability. The validity test for all pre-test and post-test items (Variables X and Y) showed a 'Corrected Item-Total Correlation' value above the minimum threshold of 0.3. Subsequent reliability analysis using Cronbach's Alpha demonstrated 'good' or 'highly reliable' internal consistency for all instruments: Variable X Pre-Test ($\alpha = 0.909$), Variable Y Pre-Test ($\alpha = 0.925$), Variable X Post-Test ($\alpha = 0.925$), and Variable Y Post-Test ($\alpha = 0.949$). All scores were above the 0.8 threshold, confirming the instruments were valid and reliable.

Once the questionnaire was declared valid in terms of construct and content, an instrument trial was conducted on 30 samples. The results of this trial were then followed by reliability analysis. Reliability analysis was performed to determine the consistency of the measuring instrument, which includes questionnaires, scales, or surveys, and to assess the validity of each statement item by correlating the item scores with the total score, followed by a correction of the correlation coefficient (Priyastama, 2017).

In this study, reliability analysis was conducted using SPSS Version 30 to test the validity and reliability of the instrument. The results of the validity and reliability tests for the pre-test and post-test instruments are as follows.

From the validity test output, the case processing summary section shows that all pre-test and post-test items for both variables were 100% accepted, with none being excluded. Meanwhile, the reliability statistics output using Cronbach's Alpha indicates a value above 0.8, specifically 0.9 for both variables X and Y in the pre-test and post-test, which is considered highly reliable (Priyastama, 2017). This suggests that the items are acceptable, valid, and reliable.

After the pre-test and post-test questionnaires were declared valid and reliable, data collection was conducted on 79 samples using a random sampling method with a 1% margin of error. The pre-test questionnaire was administered during the first class meeting, while the post-test questionnaire was conducted at the final meeting (15th session). The questionnaire used a Likert scale (1-4), resulting in ordinal data. The collected data were analysed using inferential statistical correlation analysis (non-parametric) to draw conclusions applicable to the population (Sugiyono, 2018). Since non-parametric inferential statistics were used, the data did not need to follow a normal distribution.

The associative hypothesis was tested using Spearman Rank Correlation with the aid of SPSS Version 30. Spearman Rank Correlation was used to examine the relationship between pre-test and post-test scores. The analysis began by examining the total pre-test and post-test scores in SPSS, followed by Spearman Rank correlation analysis, with the results as follows.

Table 10. Spearman Rank Correlation for Hypothesis Testing Result

Correlations			
		Pretest_Total	Posttest_Total
Spearman's rho	Pretest_Total	Correlation Coefficient	1.000
		Sig. (2-tailed)	.862**
		N	79
Posttest_Total	Pretest_Total	Correlation Coefficient	.862**
		Sig. (2-tailed)	<.001
		N	79

** . Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

Confidence Intervals of Spearman's rho			
	Spearman's rho	Significance (2-tailed)	95% Confidence Intervals (2-tailed) ^a
			Lower
Pretest_Total - Posttest_Total	.862	<.001	.789
			Upper
			.911

a. Estimation is based on Fisher's r-to-z transformation.
 b. Estimation of standard error is based on the formula proposed by Fieller, Hartley, and Pearson.

Spearman Rank Correlation (r):

- The r-value ranges from -1 to 1:
 - If $r > 0$: Positive correlation (higher pre-test scores correspond to higher post-test scores).
 - If $r = 0$: No correlation.
 - If $r < 0$: Negative correlation (higher pre-test scores correspond to lower post-test scores).

Significance (Sig. 2-tailed):

- If $p < 0.05$, the correlation is statistically significant.

From Table 10 shows $R_s = 0.862$ with a 1% significance level, indicating that $r > 0$, meaning there is a strong positive correlation between the pre-test and post-test scores.

To determine whether there was a significant difference between the mean pre-test and post-test scores, the analysis continued with a paired sample t-test, with the following results.

Table 2. Paired Sample T-Test Result

Paired Samples Statistics					
		Mean	N	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean
Pair 1	Pretest_Total	86.8861	79	16.36051	1.84070
	Posttest_Total	92.9873	79	16.80315	1.89050

Based on the Standard Deviation, the average pre-test score is 16.36, while the post-test score is 16.80, indicating an increase in scores after the “Day Out with Foreigner” activity.

Table 12. Paired Differences Pre-Test and Post-Test

Paired Samples Test									
		Paired Differences						Significance	
		Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean	99% Confidence Interval of the Difference		t	df	
					Lower	Upper			One-Sided p
Pair 1	Pretest_Total - Posttest_Total	-6.10127	9.17577	1.03235	-8.82703	-3.37550	-5.910	78	<.001
									Two-Sided p
									<.001

Table 3. Paired Samples Effect Sizes

Paired Samples Effect Sizes							
				Standardizer ^a	Point Estimate	99% Confidence Interval	
						Lower	Upper
Pair 1	Pretest_Total - Posttest_Total	Cohen's d		9.17577	-.665	-.984	-.343
		Hedges' correction		9.26519	-.659	-.975	-.340

a. The denominator used in estimating the effect sizes.
 Cohen's d uses the sample standard deviation of the mean difference.
 Hedges' correction uses the sample standard deviation of the mean difference, plus a correction factor.

In Table 2, the mean difference of -6.10 indicates that the average post-test score increased by 6.10 points compared to the pre-test. Table 12 also shows a t-value of -5.91, meaning the greater the distance from 0, the more significant the difference between pre-test and post-test scores. The p-values (One-Sided $p < 0.001$, Two-Sided $p < 0.001$) confirm that the observed increase in confidence is statistically significant.

Table 3 reports an effect size of -0.665 for Cohen's d, indicating a moderate impact, suggesting that the intervention noticeably influenced students' confidence. Hedges' correction (-0.659) reinforces this, further supporting the effectiveness of the activity.

The results from the Spearman Correlation and Paired Sample T-Test show a positive correlation between the *A Day Out with A Foreigner* activity and

students' speaking confidence. Thus, the null hypothesis (H_0) is rejected, and the alternative hypothesis (H_a) is accepted.

This finding is consistent with previous research (Alberth, 2023; Kit et al., 2024; Nurhaliza, 2023; Pranata et al., 2023; Riski, 2023), which suggests that exposure to the English language through direct interaction with native speakers can enhance the confidence of EFL students. By engaging in conversations with native speakers, EFL students gain direct examples of pronunciation and receive immediate feedback during communication (Alberth, 2023).

This aligns with Vygotsky's Social Interaction Theory, which emphasizes that interaction with native speakers, group discussions, and collaborative learning can facilitate English language acquisition among EFL students. Additionally, within the framework of Experiential Learning Theory (ELT) and Project-Based Learning (PBL), this approach enables EFL students to gain contextual learning experiences, such as planning, collaborating in groups, problem-solving, and communicating both within their groups and with native speakers (Agustiawati & Ambarwati, 2022; da Rosa, 2024; Ifwandi et al., 2024; Sofiriyah et al., 2024). This also supports Brown's (2018) argument that life experiences and the learning environment significantly influence EFL students' confidence in learning English.

Furthermore, direct interaction with native speakers provides authentic learning experiences, which contribute to increased confidence among EFL students. Findings from some studies (Alberth, 2023; Pranata et al., 2023; Riski, 2023; Wahyuni & Afrianti, 2021) indicate that students' interactions with native speakers effectively enhance their confidence, as these interactions create an engaging and contextually relevant learning environment. Confidence levels among EFL students are a key factor in determining their success in English-speaking proficiency (Komang et al., 2021; Medalia Cadiz-Gabejan, 2021; Pizarro Chacón, 2022), along with other aspects of speaking skills such as grammar, vocabulary, pronunciation, comprehension, and fluency (Brown, 2004).

CONCLUSION

This study highlights the positive impact of *A Day Out with a Foreigner* on students' confidence in speaking English. Direct interaction with native or fluent speakers enhances communication willingness, reduces anxiety, and provides authentic language exposure.

By incorporating Experiential Learning Theory (ELT) and Project-Based Learning (PBL), the activity fosters real-world conversations, immediate feedback, and practical communication skills. The findings align with Vygotsky's Social Interaction Theory and Experiential Learning Theory (ELT), emphasizing the role of social engagement in language acquisition and learning experience.

This approach can serve as a model for improving speaking confidence in EFL classrooms, particularly in non-English-speaking environments. Future research could examine its long-term effects and adaptability across different educational settings.

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