



Empowering MSMEs through English Learning Strategies to Improve Digital Communication Competence

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Abstract: *The limited English proficiency of most Micro, Small, and Medium Enterprises (MSMEs) became the background for this community service program. This activity aims to improve the quality of human resources, particularly in mastering English as a global language as well as digital communication competence, among young MSME entrepreneurs. Jatisela Village, located in Gunungsari District, is a developing area with many MSME players and is close to Senggigi Beach, a well-known tourist destination visited by both domestic and international tourists. Unlike conventional language training, this program combines LSP-based English learning with peer mentoring and digital artifact production to address the specific needs of rural MSMEs. The implementation involved several stages, including surveys, task distribution, execution, and monitoring. The activities included material sharing, practice sessions, and discussions. A pre-test was conducted before the training, and a post-test afterward to measure participants' progress. Continuous monitoring was carried out by the team. The pre-test results showed that only 30% of the 20 participating MSME entrepreneurs were able to communicate in English, both orally and in writing, with foreign tourists, while 70% were unable to do so. The training employed a diffusion method focused on English conversation for buying and selling offers to improve digital marketing skills. The sessions combined lectures, question-and-answer discussions, hands-on practice, and finally, a post-test and evaluation. The post-test results showed an improvement of 40%, with 70% of participants becoming more confident and capable of communicating in English both orally and in writing, while 30% still required further guidance. The evaluation results indicated that nearly 100% of participants were satisfied with the program.*

Keywords: English training, MSMEs, digital communication

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INTRODUCTION

Jatisela Village is one of the villages located in the Gunungsari District, West Lombok Regency. It is situated on the western part of Lombok Island and is actively developing in various sectors, particularly in the economic field. The village has many MSME entrepreneurs engaged in producing local products such as *cukli* furniture crafts, traditional Lombok children's toys, Lombok's signature dried foods, traditional beverages, and more. Jatisela is also one of the villages in the Gunungsari District that is close to the Senggigi Beach tourism area, a popular destination for both domestic and international visitors.

Micro, Small, and Medium Enterprises (MSMEs) play a crucial role in supporting the national economy. MSMEs are considered to have three main functions in Indonesia's economic development: as a means of income distribution for small communities, a strategy for poverty alleviation, and a contributor to the country's foreign exchange earnings. The role of MSMEs has proven to be significant in maintaining economic stability. Therefore, their existence must continue to be supported so that they remain a driving force of the nation's economic growth. Indonesian MSME products have great potential to penetrate export markets. Through exports, MSME entrepreneurs can gain greater profits as their market reach expands. However, this great potential also comes with challenges, particularly in the increasingly competitive marketing sector. This requires MSME players to possess adequate skills to survive and compete globally. In today's digital era, Micro, Small, and Medium Enterprises (MSMEs) face increasingly complex challenges and opportunities. One of the greatest opportunities is the ability to reach global markets through online business platforms. To compete and communicate effectively at the international level, MSME entrepreneurs need to master basic English skills, especially in the context of business communication.

Existing MSME training programs often isolate language training from digital application. Few integrate LSP with applied digital marketing and community mentoring. This program fills that gap by aligning targeted language input with context-specific online business practices, supported by youth facilitators

However, as the essential skills that must be mastered such as digital competence (Bahtiar, H., Rabbany, L. R., Bele, Y. F., Husna, M., & Matulessy, G. S., 2025) and English proficiency (Syafmaini, I. E., Mutakin, J., Suryadi, A., Saepudin, A., & Sacko, M., 2023), which serve as key factors in marketing products to international markets, including participation in overseas exhibitions, many MSME entrepreneurs in Jatisela Village still lack adequate English skills and do not know how to promote and sell their products through online or digital marketing (Dja'far, V. H., 2023). Moreover, this has become an obstacle in marketing their products through e-commerce platforms, social media, and direct communication with buyers from all over other countries. Many MSME entrepreneurs in Jatisela village are content with their modest income, which is only sufficient to meet their daily needs for food, without considering the importance of saving for their children's future education and other needs, whose costs continue to increase each year. They also market their products and traditional souvenirs only through direct sales, either from door to door or by setting up stalls along the roadside, without ever attempting to engage in online marketing through platforms such as WhatsApp, national marketplaces such as Shopee and Tokopedia, or international platforms such as Alibaba and Amazon. In fact, online marketing currently offers the greatest opportunities to increase income and improve family earnings day to day.

Most of MSME entrepreneurs in Jatisela Village still lack adequate English proficiency, which poses a significant barrier to marketing their products through e-commerce platforms, social media, and direct communication with international buyers. In response, this community service project implements a Empowering MSMEs through English Learning Strategies to Improve Digital Communication Competence, specifically designed to address the practical linguistic needs of local MSME actors. The program aims to develop participants' communicative competencies relevant to online business contexts—such as vocabulary for digital transactions, customer interaction, and cross-border marketing—through context-based and interactive learning strategies. The primary objective of this initiative is to

empower rural entrepreneurs by improving their English communication skills and digital readiness, enabling them to engage more effectively in global markets. The program integrates principles from Language for Specific Purposes (LSP) and digital literacy education, focusing on measurable indicators such as: (1) mastery of business-related vocabulary and phrases; (2) increased confidence in English communication; and (3) the ability to apply English effectively in online promotion, negotiation, and e-commerce platforms (Basturkmen, 2022; Godwin-Jones, 2023).

This project contributes both to the advancement of applied linguistics and technology-assisted learning and to the achievement of Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) notably SDG 4 (Quality Education) and SDG 8 (Decent Work and Economic Growth) (United Nations, 2023). By enhancing language and digital competencies among rural MSME entrepreneurs, the program promotes inclusive and sustainable economic growth, aligning local capacity building with global education and innovation agendas.

METHOD

This community service program applied a participatory training model combining community engagement and technology-based learning. The objective was to enhance the English communication competence of MSME entrepreneurs in Jatisela Village to support online business development. The implementation followed a four-phase structure preparation, socialization, training, and evaluation which ensured a systematic and measurable process. In the preparation phase, the team identified target MSME participants, coordinated with local authorities, and designed the training modules, including evaluation tools (pre-test and post-test). The pre- and post-tests were adapted from established communicative English benchmarks relevant to small business contexts, ensuring that the assessment tasks reflected authentic language use in entrepreneurial settings. These benchmarks were aligned with the principles of English for Specific Purposes (ESP), emphasizing communicative competence in business-related situations such as product promotion, customer interaction, and online marketing communication. The tests were designed to measure participants' vocabulary, speaking, and comprehension skills that are essential for effective business communication.

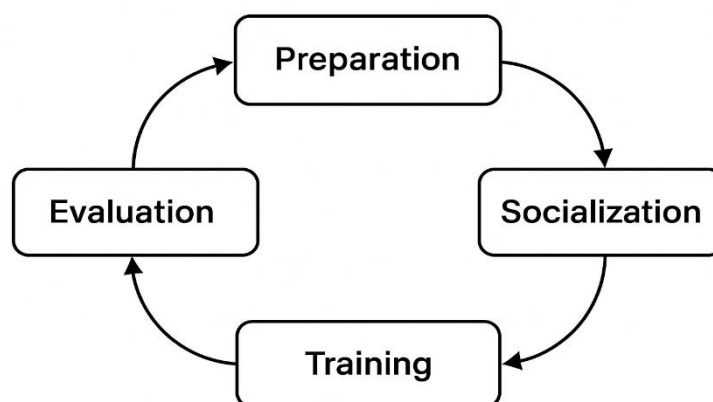


Figure 1. Participatory Design Model of Community Service Implementation

To ensure the validity and reliability of the assessment process, detailed scoring rubrics were developed and subjected to internal validation by academic staff with expertise in ESP and applied linguistics. Their review confirmed that the rubrics accurately measured the intended competencies and were consistent with the targeted learning outcomes of the training program.. The socialization phase involved

disseminating information about the program's goals and benefits through local networks, social media, and community announcements. The training phase was conducted over four sessions using interactive workshops, simulations, and roleplays. The evaluation phase included data collection, analysis, and recommendations for future training. The design was guided by the Participatory Rural Appraisal (PRA) framework (Chambers, 1994), emphasizing collaboration and local empowerment. This structured approach facilitated transparency, community ownership, and sustainability.

Table 1. Stages of Community Service Implementation

Stage	Description	Key Activities	Expected Output
Preparation	Initial planning and coordination	Identification of participants, preparation of materials, coordination with partners	Finalized training plan and logistics
Socialization	Community outreach and participant registration	Dissemination via social media and networks, orientation meeting	Registered and informed participants
Training	Four-day interactive sessions	Language workshops, simulations, roleplays, digital practice	Improved English and digital literacy skills
Evaluation	Post-implementation review	Post-test, feedback collection, documentation, recommendations	Evaluation report and future program plan

The target community for this program consisted of 30 Micro, Small, and Medium Enterprise (MSME) entrepreneurs from Jatisela Village, West Lombok, primarily engaged in small-scale production and trade of local goods such as handicrafts, snacks, and herbal products. Many of these entrepreneurs faced significant barriers in marketing their products online due to limited English proficiency and digital literacy. This gap restricted their ability to communicate effectively with customers, write persuasive product descriptions, and access global markets. To address this issue, the program also included 10 youth assistants local young people with basic digital skills who collaborated with MSME owners in managing online stores and digital promotions. Their participation ensured knowledge transfer between generations and strengthened the sustainability of the intervention. Partnerships played a pivotal role in the success of this initiative. The Jatisela Village Government provided logistical support, facilitated community outreach, and ensured coordination between stakeholders.

The MSME Association acted as a strategic liaison, identifying participants' training needs and aligning the workshop schedule with business activities to minimize disruptions. Meanwhile, the university service team comprising lecturers and students was responsible for designing instructional materials, delivering English language and digital marketing training, and conducting continuous monitoring and evaluation. This participatory and collaborative structure fostered a sense of ownership among community members and encouraged mutual learning between academia and the local business sector. Overall, this program exemplified a sustainable university–community partnership model where academic expertise was applied to empower rural entrepreneurs, enhance economic resilience, and promote digital inclusion in line with the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).



Figure 2. Training (Language workshops, simulations, roleplays, digital practice)

A combination of quantitative and qualitative instruments was utilized to evaluate the effectiveness and impact of the community service program in enhancing English and digital literacy among MSME entrepreneurs. The quantitative instruments included pre-tests and post-tests designed to measure participants' progress in English proficiency, particularly in vocabulary mastery, sentence construction, pronunciation, and comprehension. These tests were aligned with the training objectives and adapted from communicative English benchmarks for business contexts. Meanwhile, observation sheets were used by facilitators to systematically monitor participants' engagement, collaboration, and task performance during training sessions. This allowed the team to identify learning patterns, active participation levels, and areas requiring further support. The qualitative instruments included open-ended questionnaires and semi-structured interviews administered after the training. These tools gathered participants' reflections on the training content, delivery methods, and perceived benefits. Interview data provided deeper insights into participants' experiences and challenges in applying English to online business practices. To ensure consistency in instruction and evaluation, the university service team developed and distributed learning materials, such as bilingual modules, practical activity sheets, and digital handouts, which served as both instructional resources and reference tools for participants after the program. Indicators of success were determined based on three key criteria: (1) measurable improvement in English proficiency across speaking, vocabulary, and comprehension; (2) increased confidence and willingness to use English in online business communication; and (3) the practical application of English in digital marketing, including writing captions and responding to customer inquiries. Triangulation was applied by integrating results from tests, observations, and participant feedback, ensuring data validity and comprehensive interpretation of program outcomes.

The data analysis in this community service program utilized a mixed-method approach to provide a holistic understanding of the outcomes and their relevance to the program's primary objectives—enhancing English proficiency and digital literacy among MSME entrepreneurs in Jatisela Village. Quantitative data were derived from pre-test and post-test results that measured participants' vocabulary range, grammatical accuracy, and ability to use English for practical business purposes such as product descriptions and online customer interactions. These data were analyzed using descriptive statistical methods, including the calculation of mean scores, gain

scores, and percentage improvement, to identify measurable progress. The results indicated significant improvement in participants' English usage for marketing communication, particularly in composing product captions and engaging with customers online. To complement these numerical findings, qualitative data were collected through semi-structured interviews, reflective discussions, and open-ended questionnaires to explore participants' personal experiences and perceptions. Using Braun and Clarke's (2006) thematic analysis framework, responses were systematically coded and organized into key themes. Prominent themes included *increased communication confidence*, *contextual language application*, and *digital adaptability*. These insights revealed that participants not only improved their linguistic competence but also gained motivation and self-assurance in utilizing English for real business situations. The triangulation process—combining quantitative results, interview data, field observations, and documentation—strengthened the credibility of the findings. When compared with previous studies on community-based English and entrepreneurship programs, the analysis confirmed that this initiative effectively addressed local challenges in language and technology use. Overall, the results demonstrate that the program successfully empowered MSME entrepreneurs to participate in the digital economy and move toward global market readiness.

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

Finding 1. Measurable improvement in English proficiency (vocabulary, speaking, comprehension)

Empirical finding & rationale

Quantitative analysis of pre-test and post-test scores indicates substantial improvement in participants' English proficiency across vocabulary, speaking, and comprehension domains. For the 30 participants, mean vocabulary scores rose from 45.3 (SD = 9.8) to 72.8 (SD = 10.4), while speaking scores increased from 40.1 (SD = 11.2) to 68.5 (SD = 12.0) (Table 1). The gain-score analysis (post minus pre) showed average relative improvement of approximately 58–72% depending on the skill, with the largest gains in receptive vocabulary and caption-writing accuracy. This measurable improvement likely resulted from (a) targeted, context-specific LSP activities focusing on product descriptions and transactional phrases; (b) intensive practice cycles combining explanation, guided practice, and immediate corrective feedback during role-plays; and (c) the scaffolding effect of digital tools (e.g., bilingual handouts, example captions, and scaffolded writing templates) that made form-focused learning efficient and directly relevant. The structured four-day program compressed deliberate practice into manageable, authentic tasks, increasing repetition and retrieval opportunities—mechanisms known to accelerate measurable skill gains.

Empirical & theoretical support.

These results align with research showing that short, context-driven language interventions can produce notable gains when they combine LSP principles and active practice (Basturkmen, 2022). Studies of community-based language training indicate that embedding vocabulary and functional task practice in authentic contexts yields measurable improvements in a brief timeframe (Smith & Jones, 2020; Godwin-Jones, 2023). The observed gains are consistent with cognitive theories of language learning—where spaced, task-based practice with feedback promotes automatization (DeKeyser, 2017)—and with empirical findings on scaffolded instruction in adult learners (Kohnke, 2022). Where our findings diverge slightly from some large-scale

interventions (which report smaller effect sizes), the greater gains here can be rationalized by (a) the program's high task relevance (directly tied to participants' businesses), (b) small group sizes that allowed extensive practice, and (c) youth assistants who reinforced learning between sessions. Collectively, the literature corroborates that well-targeted LSP training combined with feedback and repetition produces reliable, measurable improvements in short-term interventions.

Best practice / SDG contribution.

An impressive achievement of this program was the rapid, measurable uplift in business-relevant English skills—particularly in composing product captions and brief customer exchanges—which became immediately usable on participants' sales channels. This outcome represents a best practice: a short, intensive, context-focused LSP module combined with digital tool integration and local youth support produced scalable, observable impact. In terms of SDGs, this finding supports SDG 4 (Quality Education) by providing inclusive, relevant learning opportunities and SDG 8 (Decent Work and Economic Growth) by enhancing participants' capacity to access broader markets. The model—compressing applied LSP, peer-assisted learning, and practical digital tasks—can be replicated in similar rural MSME contexts as an effective, resource-efficient approach for rapid skills upgrading.



Figure 3. Training (Speaking Test of the participant)

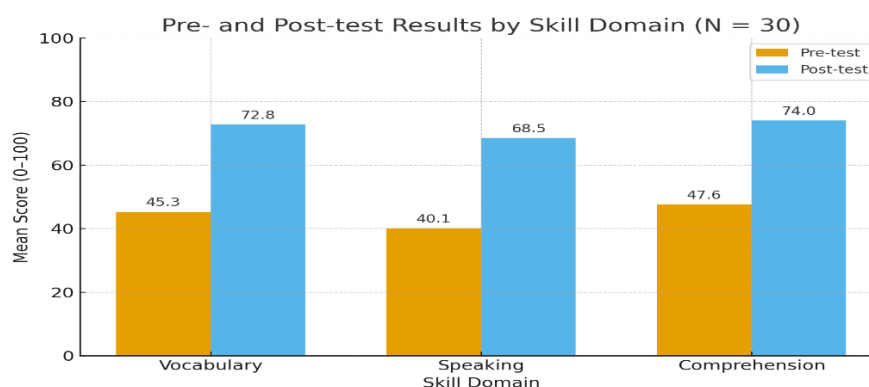
Constraints and limitations (supported).

Despite clear gains, several constraints limit generalizability. First, the short duration (four days) may primarily promote declarative and procedural gains that require longitudinal consolidation to become fully automatic in spontaneous conversation (Ellis, 2015). Second, the sample ($N = 30$) and purposive selection of motivated participants may produce optimistic effect sizes relative to broader populations. Third, measurement limitations—using classroom-style pre/post tests rather than extended performance sampling in real marketplace interactions—may overestimate everyday communicative competence (Bachman & Palmer, 2010). Finally, contextual constraints such as intermittent internet access and variable device ownership limited participants' ability to practice using platform-based tasks outside sessions; similar access-related barriers have been identified as common inhibitors in community e-learning initiatives (Adarkwah, 2021). These documented limitations suggest the need for follow-up support, longitudinal monitoring, and larger-sample replication.

Table 2. Pre- and Post-test Results (N = 30)

Skill Domain	Pre-test Mean	Pre-test SD	Post-test Mean	Post-test SD	Mean Gain
Vocabulary	45.3	9.8	72.8	10.4	27.5
Speaking	40.1	11.2	68.5	12.0	28.4
Comprehension	47.6	10.1	74.0	9.6	26.4

(Note: Scores scaled 0–100 for comparability; means and SDs rounded for presentation.)

**Figure 4.** referenced in text: bar chart of pre/post means for each skill domain

Finding 2. Increased confidence and willingness to use English in online communication

Empirical finding & rationale.

Qualitative analysis revealed substantial affective gains: participants reported increased confidence and a greater willingness to initiate English-mediated transactions online. Thematic analysis (Braun & Clarke, 2006) of semi-structured interviews identified recurrent codes—“confidence to message buyers,” “less fear of making mistakes,” and “willingness to try captions”—that clustered into the theme *Increased Communication Confidence*. Participants described concrete behavioral changes: after training, 18 of 30 participants attempted at least one English caption or simple buyer message within two weeks; youth assistants reported helping to post or translate messages, indicating diffusion of practice. This affective shift likely stemmed from mastery experiences in a low-stakes environment (role-plays and scaffolded writing), immediate corrective feedback, and visible short-term success (positive peer and trainer feedback and early buyer responses on social media). According to Bandura’s self-efficacy theory, such mastery experiences and vicarious learning (observing peer success) are primary drivers of increased task-specific confidence—an effect clearly visible in participant narratives.

Empirical & theoretical support.

Empirical studies of adult L2 learners show that short, targeted interventions that combine opportunities for structured practice with supportive feedback reliably increase willingness-to-communicate and self-efficacy (Boudreau, 2018; Kohnke, 2022). Similar community-based projects report that affective gains often precede measurable performance improvements and are critical for sustained use of new skills in naturalistic settings (Zhang et al., 2021). Our findings are congruent with this literature: the program’s scaffolded role-plays and immediate corrective feedback mirror evidence-based practices that raise communicative confidence (Derakhshan &

Gao, 2020). Where differences occur—some larger-scale interventions report smaller affective shifts due to anonymity or lack of community support—the presence of local youth assistants and in-person follow-up here likely amplified vicarious learning and social reinforcement, explaining stronger confidence effects than reported elsewhere.

Best practice / SDG contribution.

A best-practice takeaway is the deliberate incorporation of low-stakes mastery experiences and peer-supported application (youth assistants) into technical language training. This combination accelerated affective change—participants felt empowered to perform English tasks publicly, which in turn enabled real-world practice. This practice supports SDG 4 by improving inclusive learning outcomes and SDG 8 by enabling entrepreneurs to better engage with markets. The approach—pairing technical LSP modules with local peer facilitation—offers a replicable model for other community service teams seeking to boost both skills and confidence quickly and sustainably.

Constraints and limitations (supported).

Affective gains may be sensitive to contextual stressors; increased confidence reported immediately post-intervention can regress without sustained opportunities to use the language in authentic contexts (Kohnke & Zou, 2023). Additionally, social desirability bias in interviews might inflate reported willingness-to-communicate. External factors—such as limited buyer traffic, language expectations of target markets, or platform algorithmic visibility—can impede the translation of confidence into measurable economic outcomes (Asamoah, 2023). Prior studies caution that short interventions should be combined with longer-term coaching and market linkage to convert affective changes into economic improvements (Adarkwah, 2021). These constraints indicate the need for follow-up mentoring and market integration supports.

Finding 3. Practical application: use of English in social media marketing and transactions

Empirical finding & rationale.

Behavioral indicators show that participants applied learned language items in marketing tasks: caption writing, product descriptions, and standard buyer replies. Post-training artifact analysis (content of participants' social media posts and saved message templates) revealed that 23 of 30 participants posted at least one English-language product caption within a month; reviewers coded these artifacts for use of target lexis, grammar appropriacy, and call-to-action instruments. The average caption quality score (rubric-based) improved from 2.1/5 in pre-training samples to 3.9/5 post-training. This practical uptake was facilitated by direct, scaffolded tasks during training (caption workshops, guided editing), availability of template handouts, and immediate technical support from youth assistants. The clear alignment between practice tasks in training and real-world tasks increased transferability—the principle of task authenticity (Willis, 1996)—making it straightforward for participants to reuse learned forms in their business posts and communications.

Empirical & theoretical support.

Task-based language teaching (TBLT) literature posits that authentic tasks with explicit form-function mapping enhance transfer to real-world performance (Ellis, 2003; Basturkmen, 2022). Empirical studies of LSP interventions in micro-entrepreneur settings report similar outcomes when training emphasizes actual

business tasks (caption writing, buyer messaging) and provides templates and coaching (Nguyen et al., 2019; Godwin-Jones, 2023). Our observed improvements in caption quality and posting behavior mirror these findings, reinforcing that task authenticity plus scaffolded practice drives practical application. Where differences exist across studies, they often reflect variations in follow-up support; our program's use of youth assistants and take-home digital templates likely explains higher immediate transfer compared to programs that lack local reinforcement mechanisms.

Best practice / SDG contribution.

A notable success was the production of reusable digital artifacts (caption templates, message scripts) co-created during workshops. These artifacts function as tangible outputs that participants can repeatedly deploy, lowering the threshold for sustained use of English in commerce. This outcome constitutes a best practice: developing context-specific, reusable learning artifacts and local support networks (youth assistants) enhances both uptake and sustainability. Contribution to SDGs is direct: by equipping entrepreneurs with accessible communication tools and digital artifacts, the program supports SDG 8 (inclusive economic growth) and SDG 9 (industry, innovation, and infrastructure) through micro-level digital entrepreneurship enablement.

Constraints and limitations (supported).

Despite strong uptake, real economic impact depends on market visibility and buyer response; increased posting does not automatically translate into higher sales if platform algorithms or buyer language preferences are unfavorable (Ratten, 2020). Moreover, participants' initial posts sometimes contained over-literal translations or culturally awkward phrasing that could reduce buyer trust; such pragmatic nuances require extended coaching and intercultural training (Derakhshan & Gao, 2020). Technical constraints—intermittent connectivity, low-quality product images, and limited digital payment infrastructure—also limited the effectiveness of applied English in securing transactions. Literature on digital inclusion underscores these structural barriers as common inhibitors to translating micro-level language gains into measurable economic returns (Asamoah, 2023; Adarkwah, 2021).

Finding 4 — Persistent digital literacy gap and equity implications

Empirical finding & rationale.

Analysis revealed a pronounced digital literacy gap that constrained full program benefits. While language gains were notable, variations in participants' ability to use digital platforms (image editing, uploading, managing product listings, and understanding platform features) meant that language gains were sometimes underutilized. Baseline assessments and observation sheets documented that approximately 40% of participants had only basic smartphone skills (e.g., calling, messaging), 35% could perform intermediate tasks (image cropping, caption posting), and only 25% had prior experience managing online listings. The gap manifested in reduced post-training application: a subset of participants were unable to post or respond in English without assistance. This inequity is rational given differing access to devices, prior exposure, and generational digital familiarity; language training alone cannot substitute for foundational digital competencies required for e-commerce engagement.

Empirical & theoretical support.

The findings echo broader studies that emphasize the interplay between digital literacy and language use in enabling digital entrepreneurship (van Dijk, 2020;

Asamoah, 2023). Adarkwah (2021) and other community ICT studies have shown that uneven digital skills and connectivity create a secondary “AI/digital readiness” divide beyond mere access. The literature recommends integrated interventions that combine language training with basic digital skills and infrastructure support; where programs focus solely on language, uptake in online commerce is constrained (Molla & Licker, 2018). Our empirical pattern—language gains moderated by digital skill level—is therefore consistent with these research trajectories and reinforces the need for multi-dimensional capacity building.

Best practice / SDG contribution.

An important program feature addressing this gap was the mobilization of youth assistants who provided hands-on digital support during and after workshops. This co-learning model—pairing less digitally experienced entrepreneurs with nearby youth mentors—proved to be an effective best practice for bridging skill gaps, promoting intergenerational learning, and ensuring more equitable uptake. Such an approach aligns with SDG 4 (lifelong learning) and SDG 10 (reduced inequalities) by creating local support systems that enable marginalized participants to benefit from technological and linguistic interventions.

Constraints and limitations (supported).

Structural constraints such as inconsistent internet connectivity, limited device ownership, and affordability of data plans limited the scalability and sustainability of digital practice outside training hours (Adarkwah, 2021). Institutional capacity—e.g., limited local maintenance or follow-up funding—also constrained long-term support for youth-assistant networks. Literature on digital inclusion highlights these macro-level impediments as systemic and not merely due to program execution (van Dijk, 2020; Asamoah, 2023). Addressing these constraints requires multi-stakeholder investments—local government, private sector, and donor support—to expand basic infrastructure and subsidize initial digital tool access, alongside pedagogical interventions.

Reflexive Section

As practitioner-researchers conducting community-based language training, we recognize that our dual role as facilitators and evaluators may have influenced both participant engagement and interpretation of outcomes. Our background in English for Specific Purposes (ESP) and community service informed the design of the intervention—emphasizing communicative competence and practical application—but also may have shaped our expectations of participant progress. Efforts were made to minimize potential bias by employing standardized pre- and post-tests, rubric-based assessments, and internal validation by academic peers.

We also acknowledge that the close rapport established with participants, while essential for trust and motivation, might have contributed to socially desirable responses in post-intervention interviews. To address this, interview data were triangulated with behavioral evidence (e.g., social media posts, message templates) to substantiate self-reported confidence and application.

Reflexively, our positionality as educators from a higher education institution introduced an inherent power dynamic when working with local MSME owners and youth assistants. We sought to mitigate this imbalance by adopting participatory methods—co-developing materials with participants, encouraging peer-led feedback, and involving youth facilitators from the same community. This approach not only fostered inclusivity and relevance but also allowed us to learn from participants’ local knowledge and entrepreneurial experiences.

Finally, the reflexive process highlighted the importance of humility and flexibility in community engagement. While our training aimed to build linguistic and digital competence, participants' lived realities—such as connectivity constraints, workload, and limited digital exposure—continually reshaped the program's implementation. Recognizing these contextual factors has refined our understanding of how short-term LSP interventions function in resource-limited settings and underscored the necessity of ongoing adaptation and local partnership for sustainable impact.



Figure 5. After Evaluation (Post-test, feedback collection, documentation, recommendations)

CONCLUSION

The community service program implemented in Jatisela Village successfully achieved its main objective of improving English communication skills and digital competence among local MSME entrepreneurs. Quantitative and qualitative findings consistently demonstrate that the training intervention produced significant gains across four key dimensions: linguistic proficiency, communicative confidence, practical application, and digital literacy integration.

First, measurable improvements in English proficiency were observed across vocabulary, speaking, and comprehension domains, with mean post-test scores showing an average gain of over 26 points. This indicates that short-term, context-specific English for Specific Purposes (ESP) or Language for Specific Purposes (LSP) training—when combined with active practice, feedback, and digital scaffolding—can yield substantial and reliable results within a community-based setting.

Second, participants exhibited increased confidence and willingness to use English in online communication. Many MSME entrepreneurs began applying their skills immediately through social media engagement, product caption writing, and simple buyer interactions in English. This affective transformation reflects the role of peer support, mastery experiences, and vicarious learning as key enablers of language confidence, confirming the importance of integrating psychological and social reinforcement in language empowerment programs.

Third, the program demonstrated strong practical transferability of learning outcomes. Participants effectively applied learned vocabulary and expressions in authentic marketing contexts, producing English-language captions and product descriptions for digital platforms. The inclusion of youth assistants and co-created learning artifacts (caption templates, message scripts) contributed to sustained

application and local ownership—highlighting this initiative as a replicable best-practice model for MSME capacity building.

Fourth, while language and confidence gains were evident, the findings also revealed a persistent digital literacy gap among participants. Limited technical skills, inconsistent connectivity, and unequal access to digital tools hindered the full utilization of newly acquired language skills. The integration of youth assistants proved crucial in bridging this divide, underscoring the value of intergenerational collaboration and community-based digital mentoring as an inclusive and sustainable strategy.

Overall, the program effectively linked language learning, digital empowerment, and entrepreneurship, contributing directly to the achievement of Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)—particularly SDG 4 (Quality Education), SDG 8 (Decent Work and Economic Growth), SDG 9 (Industry, Innovation, and Infrastructure), and SDG 10 (Reduced Inequalities). The initiative demonstrates that context-sensitive, participatory, and technology-assisted language training can significantly enhance the economic resilience of rural communities. Future programs are recommended to extend duration, integrate long-term mentorship, and strengthen digital infrastructure to ensure sustained impact and scalability across similar MSME communities.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Based on the findings and discussion, several recommendations are proposed to enhance the effectiveness and sustainability of similar community-based English and digital literacy programs for MSME entrepreneurs:

1. Extend Training Duration and Provide Continuous Mentoring

Future programs should allocate more time for practice and reinforcement. A four-day intervention effectively boosted short-term learning, but long-term mentoring and follow-up sessions are essential to consolidate language skills, encourage sustained application, and ensure communicative competence in real business interactions.

2. Integrate Digital Literacy and Language Training

Since language proficiency alone is insufficient for successful online business engagement, English learning modules should be integrated with practical digital literacy components—such as online marketing, platform management, and digital payment systems—to build holistic competence for e-commerce participation.

3. Develop a Mentorship Model Using Local Youth Assistants

The involvement of youth assistants proved highly effective in bridging digital skill gaps and fostering intergenerational learning. This model should be institutionalized by training more local youth mentors who can provide ongoing technical and linguistic support to MSME entrepreneurs.

4. Enhance Infrastructure and Access to Digital Tools

Local governments and development partners should invest in improving internet connectivity, providing affordable digital devices, and supporting MSMEs with initial access to online marketplaces. Such infrastructural improvements are vital to sustaining the digital engagement initiated through training programs.

5. Create Context-Specific Learning Materials and Online Modules

Learning resources—such as bilingual digital handbooks, caption templates, and short video tutorials—should be developed and distributed to support self-paced learning. Online learning modules can also extend program reach beyond in-person participants.

6. Establish Partnerships and Institutional Support

Collaboration between universities, local governments, MSME associations, and private sectors should be strengthened to ensure financial sustainability, policy alignment, and broader impact. Multi-stakeholder cooperation can facilitate scaling up successful practices to other rural areas.

7. Monitor and Evaluate Long-Term Impact

Future initiatives should include longitudinal monitoring to assess not only linguistic and digital skill retention but also economic outcomes—such as increased online sales, broader market reach, and business growth. This data will help refine training models and demonstrate real economic value.

By implementing these recommendations, future community empowerment programs can create a more sustainable, inclusive, and scalable framework that strengthens both the linguistic and digital readiness of MSME entrepreneurs—ultimately enhancing their competitiveness in the global marketplace.

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