Communicating With Confidence in the AI Era: Enhancing Professional English Competency and Literacy for Journalists in Pontianak Post

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Abstract: This article reports on a community service program conducted by FKIP Universitas Tanjungpura in collaboration with Universiti Teknologi MARA (UiTM) Malaysia, aimed at enhancing professional English competency and AI literacy among journalists at Pontianak Post. The program integrated comprehensive English communication training with artificial intelligence tool applications, including ChatGPT, Google AI Studio, Elicit, Consensus, Humata, Otter AI, and Canva AI. A post-training survey was administered to 20 participating journalists using a Likert-scale instrument supplemented by open-ended questions. Results indicate overwhelmingly positive outcomes, with overall satisfaction reaching 4.80 out of 5.00. The highest-rated aspects included the international collaboration value (4.85), AI-enhanced learning effectiveness (4.80), and participants' intention to continue using AI tools in their professional practice (4.80). Qualitative feedback revealed that journalists experienced significant improvements in their confidence to communicate in English, enhanced efficiency in news production through AI integration, and increased awareness of ethical considerations in technology-assisted journalism. The findings demonstrate that combining language competency training with digital literacy creates a synergistic effect that prepares journalists for the evolving demands of contemporary media practice.

Keywords: Professional English Competency, Artificial Intelligence Literacy, Journalism Training, Community Service Program.

Introduction

In an increasingly interconnected world where journalism transcends geographical boundaries, the ability to communicate effectively in English while leveraging cutting-edge technology has become essential for media professionals. The rapid advancement of artificial intelligence has fundamentally altered the landscape of journalism, introducing new tools and methodologies that enhance productivity while simultaneously raising questions about ethics, authenticity, and professional standards (Diakopoulos, 2019; Pavlik, 2023). Recent research indicates that AI is being adopted across various stages of news production and distribution, from content generation to audience engagement analytics (Newman, 2024). Recognizing these critical needs, FKIP Universitas Tanjungpura partnered with Universiti Teknologi MARA (UiTM) Malaysia to deliver an innovative community service program titled "Communicating with Confidence in the AI Era: Enhancing Professional English Competency and Literacy for Journalists in Pontianak Post."

This comprehensive training program was designed to equip local journalists with dual competencies that are increasingly recognized as fundamental to modern journalism practice. The first competency, professional English communication skills, addresses the growing necessity for Indonesian journalists to engage with international sources, access global information networks, and communicate their local stories to wider audiences (Chernii et al., 2020). Professional English communicative competence has been identified as essential for journalists operating in multilingual and multicultural contexts, enabling them to fulfill their professional responsibilities more effectively (Sergeeva, 2014; Burganova et al., 2016). The second competency, AI literacy, acknowledges the transformative impact of artificial intelligence on news production, from content generation and editing to research and multimedia creation (Sonni, 2025). The Reuters Institute Digital News Report 2024 reveals that 78% of digital leaders, editors, and CEOs surveyed believe investment in AI technology will be crucial to journalism's survival (Newman, 2024).

The program represents a significant investment in professional development at a time when local journalism faces numerous challenges, including competition from digital platforms, the need for multimedia capabilities, and the imperative to maintain relevance in an increasingly globalized information ecosystem. By addressing both language proficiency and technological literacy simultaneously, the training recognizes that these competencies are not separate skills but rather complementary capabilities that together enable journalists to navigate the complex terrain of contemporary media practice (Deuze & Prenger, 2019).

The design of this community service program emerged from careful analysis of the challenges facing journalists at Pontianak Post and similar regional media organizations in Indonesia. Three central problems were identified that required systematic intervention. First, there was a clear need to design and implement practical English language training that directly addresses the communication needs of media employees rather than generic language instruction. Second, journalists required hands-on practice with AI-based technology that could demonstrably support work productivity in authentic media environments. Third, concerns existed about ensuring the sustainability of both English language skills and AI technology utilization after the formal training concluded, recognizing that professional development initiatives often fail to produce lasting behavior change when follow-up mechanisms are absent.

In response to these identified problems, the program established three primary objectives. The first objective centered on providing practical English training encompassing both communicative and workplace English specifically tailored to the professional needs of media employees. This training would address authentic communication scenarios that journalists regularly encounter, from conducting interviews to writing articles and engaging with international sources. The second objective focused on training participants directly in the use of AI-based technology, including automated content writing, digital media editing, and AI-based data analysis. Rather than merely introducing these technologies conceptually, the program emphasized practical application that participants could immediately integrate into their work routines. The third objective addressed sustainability concerns by encouraging continued application of English and AI skills through the provision of modules, guidelines, and ongoing mentoring support that would extend beyond the formal training period.

The program anticipated several key outcomes that would demonstrate its effectiveness and value. First, interactive AI-based training activities would be developed and delivered specifically tailored to the needs of media employees in improving both their English skills and their utilization of digital technology. Second, measurable improvement would occur in Pontianak Post employees' practical skills in using English for professional communication and in applying AI-based technology to support media work through structured training and hands-on practice. Third, the program would contribute to the formation of a more innovative and adaptive work culture that embraces technological developments and elevates the quality of media content production based on both technology and international standards. Finally, the program would produce scientific articles published in accredited national journals, providing academic documentation of the implementation and results of this collaborative community service activity.

At the individual level, the program aimed to help media employees improve their professional communication skills in English, particularly those related to news writing, content creation, and cross-border interactions. These skills are increasingly important to support the competitiveness of local media in both national and international arenas, where English proficiency can determine access to sources, audiences, and professional opportunities (Tyurina, 2019).

The integration of AI-based technology represented another crucial benefit dimension, enabling media work efficiency in areas such as automatic writing, digital content editing, and audience trend analysis. Research demonstrates that AI tools can streamline time-consuming tasks, freeing journalists to

focus on in-depth investigation and creative storytelling (UNRIC, 2025). This technological capability provides competitive advantages and accelerates both news production and content distribution processes, essential factors in the fast-paced contemporary media environment. Through training and hands-on practice, participants would not only understand AI technology concepts abstractly but also apply them practically in their daily work routines, thereby enhancing both individual capacity and professional quality in the workplace.

Beyond individual skill development, the program was designed to drive digital transformation in editorial environments and media workplaces more broadly. By exposing journalists to cutting-edge technologies and international communication standards, the initiative aimed to foster a more adaptive work culture that embraces technological advancements and maintains openness to global collaboration. Research on journalism education emphasizes the importance of cultivating adaptability and technological fluency as core professional competencies in an era of rapid change (Bhaskaran et al., 2024).

The international collaboration dimension of the program generated its own set of benefits, expanding professional networks across countries and educational institutions. The partnership among Pontianak Post, Tanjungpura University, and Universiti Teknologi MARA Malaysia created opportunities for sustained cooperation in journalism, education, and media research. Such cross-border educational partnerships have been recognized as valuable mechanisms for knowledge transfer and capacity building in journalism education globally (Goodman & Steyn, 2017). The program's innovative combination of language training and technology integration positions it as a potential model for other media outlets seeking to develop human resource capacity sustainably through collaborative training and cutting-edge technology. In the long term, the initiative aims to build excellent media human resources ready to compete in the digital and globalization era, equipped with cross-language competencies and mastery of artificial intelligence-based technology.

Method

The program employed a three-stage methodology to maximize learning effectiveness and practical skill acquisition. Stage one consisted of face-to-face training in Pontianak, delivered collaboratively by lecturers and Master's students from Universitas Tanjungpura's Faculty of Teacher Training and Education, alongside expert speakers from Universiti Teknologi MARA Selangor, Malaysia. The curriculum covered three integrated areas: (1) English use in journalism and mass media, including genre-specific language features, professional register, and communication strategies; (2) AI platform utilization (ChatGPT, Google AI Studio, Canva AI, Elicit, Consensus, Humata, Otter AI) for news writing, content editing, and information visualization, emphasizing both technical operation and critical evaluation of outputs; and (3) integration strategies for combining English and AI technology to create engaging, efficient, digitally-relevant media content.

Stage two involved independent practice and mentoring, where participants applied training to authentic work tasks—writing English news, compiling broadcast scripts, and creating visual content—with individualized technical and conceptual guidance. Activities were tailored to each participant's role at Pontianak Post, with each producing at least one complete work product (e.g., AI-assisted English news article or social media content).

Stage three employed multiple assessment techniques: pre-tests and post-tests measuring improvements in English communication and AI literacy; satisfaction questionnaires evaluating material quality, facilitator effectiveness, and work relevance; assessment of practical work products; and joint reflection sessions for constructive feedback and follow-up action development. This approach aligns with professional development assessment best practices emphasizing multiple data sources and stakeholder perspectives (Heravi, 2019; OSCE, 2024).

Survey Methodology

A comprehensive post-training survey was administered to all twenty participating journalists, achieving 100% response rate. The quantitative component featured seventeen Likert-scale questions (1=Strongly Disagree to 5=Strongly Agree) organized into three categories: (1) English Communication Competency (seven questions on understanding English importance, professional confidence, speaking fluency/pronunciation, workplace materials relevance, idea expression clarity, public speaking confidence, cross-cultural awareness); (2) AI Literacy and Digital Communication (five questions on AI-enhanced learning, AI tool proficiency, efficiency gains, ethical awareness, continued use intentions); and (3) Program Implementation and Overall Satisfaction (five questions on international collaboration value, trainer expertise, theory-practice balance, program duration, overall satisfaction). The qualitative component included three open-ended questions identifying the most impactful training aspects, describing changes to communication/journalism approaches, and suggesting future improvements. The survey was administered

immediately post-program to ensure detailed, fresh responses.

Result and Discussion

The survey results revealed overwhelmingly positive responses across all measured dimensions, demonstrating the program's significant impact on participants' professional development. The quantitative data, summarized in Table 1, provides clear evidence of the training's effectiveness in achieving its stated objectives.

Table 1. Summary of Survey Results by Category and Item

Category	Survey Item	Mean Score	Interpretation
English Communication Competency	Understanding importance of English in professional contexts	4.65	Excellent
	Confidence in using English for work-related communication	4.70	Excellent
	Improvement in speaking fluency and pronunciation	4.60	Very Good
	Relevance of workplace English materials	4.75	Excellent
	Ability to express ideas clearly and respectfully	4.65	Excellent
	Public speaking and presentation confidence	4.70	Excellent
	Cross-cultural communication awareness	4.55	Very Good
AI Literacy and Digital Communication	Effectiveness of AI-enhanced learning	4.80	Outstanding
	Ability to use AI for writing and editing	4.75	Excellent
	AI contribution to efficiency and quality	4.70	Excellent
	Awareness of ethical and responsible AI use	4.55	Very Good
	Intention to continue using AI tools	4.80	Outstanding
Program Implementation and Satisfaction	Value of UNTAN-UiTM collaboration	4.85	Outstanding
	Trainer expertise and knowledge	4.75	Excellent
	Balance between theory, practice, and application	4.70	Excellent
	Adequacy of program duration	4.35	Good
	Overall satisfaction with training program	4.80	Outstanding

The English Communication Competency category demonstrated strong positive outcomes across all seven items. Participants' recognition of English importance in professional contexts scored 4.65, indicating that the program successfully heightened awareness of English as a crucial tool for global communication and career advancement. The confidence in using English for work-related communication achieved an even higher score of 4.70, suggesting that the training effectively reduced language anxiety and empowered participants to engage more boldly in English communication situations. These findings align with research demonstrating that foreign language communicative competence significantly enhances journalists' professional capabilities (Fahrutdinova et al., 2014).

Figure 1. Training session on English communication and AI literacy at Pontianak Post

Speaking fluency and pronunciation improvements scored 4.60, with participants attributing these gains particularly to the role-play activities and conversational practice sessions that formed a central component of the training methodology. The relevance of workplace English materials received the highest rating in this category at 4.75, confirming that the curriculum designers successfully aligned the training content with the authentic needs and contexts of journalists' professional practice. This high relevance rating is particularly significant because it indicates that participants perceived immediate applicability of the

skills learned, which is likely to translate into sustained use and continued skill development beyond the training period. The ability to express ideas clearly and respectfully scored 4.65, demonstrating that participants gained not only linguistic competence but also pragmatic awareness of how to communicate effectively in professional contexts. Public speaking and presentation confidence reached 4.70, a particularly important outcome given the increasing prevalence of video journalism, live reporting, and multimedia presentation in contemporary news production. Cross-cultural communication awareness achieved 4.55, indicating that participants developed greater sensitivity to cultural differences and improved ability to adapt their communication strategies when engaging with diverse audiences.

The AI Literacy and Digital Communication category yielded exceptionally high scores, with two items achieving the outstanding rating of 4.80. The effectiveness of AI-enhanced learning scored 4.80, representing the highest rating in this category and indicating that participants found the integration of artificial intelligence tools made the learning process more engaging, interactive, and effective. This finding is consistent with research demonstrating that AI tools can streamline time-consuming tasks such as transcription, keyword searching, and trend analysis, freeing journalists to focus on in-depth investigation and storytelling (UNRIC, 2025; Wang et al., 2021). The ability to use AI for writing and editing achieved an excellent score of 4.75, indicating successful skill transfer from training to practical capability. Participants reported gaining proficiency in using tools such as ChatGPT for content generation and refinement, Google AI Studio for text analysis, and Canva AI for visual content creation.

The perception that AI contributes to efficiency and quality scored 4.70, confirming that participants recognized tangible benefits from AI integration in terms of time savings and improved output quality, which are critical factors for sustained adoption of new technologies in professional practice. Awareness of ethical and responsible AI use scored 4.55, demonstrating that the program successfully cultivated critical consciousness about the implications of AI adoption in journalism. This ethical awareness is essential to ensure that efficiency gains do not come at the cost of compromised journalistic standards, plagiarism, or erosion of public trust. Research indicates that transparency in AI systems and adherence to ethical principles are crucial for maintaining journalistic credibility in the age of automated journalism (Weikmann & Lecheler, 2023). The intention to continue using AI tools achieved an outstanding score of 4.80, which is perhaps the most significant indicator of program success because it suggests that participants

internalized the value of AI integration and planned to incorporate these tools into their ongoing professional practice rather than viewing them as merely novel additions explored during training.

Figure 2. Program facilitators from FKIP UNTAN and UiTM Malaysia with participants at Pontianak Post

The Program Implementation and Satisfaction category revealed both strengths and areas for potential enhancement. The value of the UNTAN-UiTM collaboration received the highest overall score across the entire survey at 4.85, indicating that participants deeply appreciated the international dimension of the training. This collaboration appears to have enriched the learning experience by exposing participants to diverse perspectives, international standards, and the prestige associated with cross-border educational partnerships (Goodman & Steyn, 2017). Trainer expertise and knowledge scored 4.75, reflecting participants' confidence in the facilitators' command of the subject matter and their ability to convey complex information effectively. The balance between theory, practice, and application achieved 4.70, confirming that the program's pedagogical design successfully integrated conceptual understanding with hands-on skill development and authentic application. The adequacy of program duration scored 4.35, representing the lowest rating across all survey items. While still indicating general satisfaction, this comparatively lower score, combined with qualitative feedback requesting extended training periods, suggests that future iterations of the program might benefit from longer duration to allow for deeper skill development and more extensive practice opportunities. Overall satisfaction with the training program achieved an outstanding score of 4.80, indicating that when participants holistically evaluated their experience, they perceived substantial value and expressed strong appreciation for the program.

The open-ended survey questions yielded rich qualitative data that provided contextual depth and nuanced understanding beyond what could be captured

through scaled responses alone. When asked to identify the most impactful or useful component of the training, participants' responses demonstrated the diversity of the program's value propositions. Several participants specifically highlighted the training on AI tools, particularly ChatGPT and Canva AI, as transformative elements that fundamentally changed their approach to content creation. Public speaking sessions were frequently mentioned as confidence-boosting experiences, with participants noting that these sessions directly improved their comfort and competence in on-camera performance. Role-play activities received considerable praise for creating safe, supportive environments where participants could practice English conversation without the anxiety associated with authentic high-stakes communication situations.

Responses to the question about how the program changed participants' approach to communication or journalism revealed tangible shifts in professional practice and mindset. Many journalists reported that they now routinely use AI for drafting and editing news articles, integrating these tools into their standard workflow rather than viewing them as occasional supplements. This integration appears to have become normalized rather than exceptional, suggesting successful technology adoption. Research indicates that AI is now applied across an ever greater range of tasks in the production and distribution of news, from automated reporting to personalized content delivery (Diakopoulos, 2019; Pavlik, 2023).

Perhaps most significantly, numerous participants described developing a more conscious and critical approach to AI ethics, particularly regarding issues of plagiarism, source verification, and transparency. These journalists articulated awareness that while AI tools offer tremendous benefits, they also carry responsibilities and potential risks that must be carefully managed to maintain journalistic integrity and public trust. The suggestions for program improvement revealed both satisfaction with the current format and aspirations for even deeper engagement. The most frequent suggestion involved extending the program duration, with multiple journalists expressing that while the current training was valuable, additional time would allow for more comprehensive skill development. Research on digital competence training for journalists emphasizes the need for sustained, comprehensive programs that address both technical skills and critical digital literacy (OSCE, 2024; Heravi, 2019).

Conclusion

The "Communicating with Confidence in the AI Era" program has proven highly successful in achieving its objectives of enhancing professional English competency and AI literacy among journalists at Pontianak Post. With an overall satisfaction score of 4.80 out of 5.00 and consistently high ratings across all competency areas, the training demonstrably improved participants' professional capabilities in ways they recognize as valuable and applicable to daily work. The program successfully addressed all three identified problems by providing practical English training tailored to journalists' authentic needs, delivering hands-on AI technology practice applicable to media work, and establishing mechanisms for sustained skill application through modules, guidelines, and mentoring support.

The achievement of program objectives is evidenced not only by high satisfaction scores but also by participants' reported behavior changes, including routine AI tool usage and enhanced English communication confidence in professional contexts. The anticipated outcomes have been realized, with interactive AI-based training activities successfully delivered, measurable skill improvements documented, and a more innovative work culture beginning to take root at Pontianak Post. The collaboration between FKIP Universitas Tanjungpura and Universiti Teknologi MARA Malaysia has established a strong foundation for continued partnership and program enhancement, offering a replicable model for other regions and institutions seeking to address similar professional development challenges in an era of rapid technological transformation and increasing global interconnection.

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