

# Improving students' speaking skills through project-based learning for eighth-graders at SMP N 1 Jumapolo

Bima Budi Kharisma <sup>a,1,\*</sup>, Ratri Nur Hidayati <sup>b,2</sup>

<sup>a,b</sup> Universitas Ahmad Dahlan, Jl. Ringroad Selatan, Kragilan, Tamanan, Banguntapan, Bantul, Yogyakarta, 55191, Indonesia

<sup>1</sup> [Bima1800004203@webmail.uad.ac.id](mailto:Bima1800004203@webmail.uad.ac.id) \*; <sup>2</sup> [ratri.nh@pbi.uad.ac.id](mailto:ratri.nh@pbi.uad.ac.id)

\* corresponding author

## ARTICLE INFO

### Article history

Received 15 February 2022

Revised 10 June 2022

Accepted 27 June 2022

### Keywords

Speaking Skills

Project-Based Learning

Eight-Graders

## ABSTRACT

This study aimed to implement Project Based Learning (PjBL) model to improve the speaking skills of students in class VIII of SMP N 1 Jumapolo. The method that will be used in this research is Classroom Action Research with pretest-posttest control group design. The subjects are students of class VIII SMP N 1 Jumapolo consisting of 32 students. The research will be conducted in at least two cycles. If the success indicators have not been achieved, the implementation of the next cycle is very possible. Research instruments in this study are interviews, observations, documentation, and tests. The data will be analyzed in two techniques, descriptive qualitative will be used to analyze data from interviews and observation, while descriptive quantitative will be used to analyze data from tests. According to the result of other research, the implementation of this PJBL is an effective and appropriate method to improve skills. Thus, the result of this study is supposed to be the success of the implementation of PJBL in improving students' speaking skills. The findings of this study will be completed in the full paper submission.

This is an open access article under the [CC-BY-SA](https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-sa/4.0/) license.



**How to Cite:** Kharisma, B. B., & Hidayati, R. N. (2022). Improving students' speaking skills through project-based learning for eighth-graders at SMP N 1 Jumapolo. *International Undergraduate Conference on English Education*, 1(2), 364-370.

## 1. Introduction

The entire world has become global in this modern period, and one of the consequences of this phenomenon is the significance of speaking a common language. The English language is one of the most prevalent worldwide languages that may connect countries. Health, banking, scientific research, software, education, business, the internet, information, travel and tourism, media and newspapers, medicine, engineering and technology, entertainment, and so on all use English. More than 85% of research articles in scientific journals are written in English (Rao, 2019). These examples demonstrate the significance of English.

The four macro skills in English are listening, speaking, reading, and writing. Listening and reading are receptive abilities while speaking and writing are productive. Those four skills are inextricably linked. As a result, we can successfully communicate using all of our English skills. The ability to communicate is the most challenging of the four macro skills. This is the case because those who want to improve their speaking ability must actively use English. This is particularly difficult for people who arrive from a nation where English is only spoken as a second language.

Speaking is a necessary skill for connecting, interacting, communicating, and expressing our feelings or self-will. Regardless, an issue develops. It is difficult for some people, particularly students, to speak for themselves. It has been recognized as one of the most difficult skills for a student to learn, and it has even been connected to a person's ability to speak a target language when prompted (Roldán and Gómez, 2005).

Certain countries that teach English as a foreign language have unique challenges. In Indonesia, for example, pupils are finding it difficult to acquire English successfully, particularly in terms of speaking, due to the removal of English from the elementary school curriculum. The majority of teachers primarily teach textual information and focus on receptive skills, while productive skills are neglected. The situation is exacerbated by the fact that English language instruction in high school is given less time than other subjects. According to Permendikbud 35/2018, which is concerning the junior high school curriculum, English topics have a weekly time allocation of roughly 4 learning hours, with one learning hour equaling 40 minutes. When compared to the time allotted to Science, Math, and even Indonesian studies in a week, this subject takes up less time. As a result, we'll need a good way to teach pupils how to communicate energetically and effectively.

According to Permendikbud No. 24 of 2016, appendix 24 point 4, the optimal circumstances that eighth graders possess are as follows. Process, pray, and reason in the concrete (using, parsing, stringing, modifying, and creating) and abstract realms (writing, reading, counting, drawing, and composing) according to those studied in school and other similar sources in the same point of view/theory is the ideal condition mastered by eighth graders. The one mentioned in point 4.1 is the one in question. That is, arrange a very short and simple text of oral and written interpersonal interactions that include the act of requesting attention, checking comprehension, appreciating performance, asking and expressing opinions, and responding with attention to true and in context social functions, text structures, and language elements.

While all of the aforementioned points still necessitate some work to achieve, Furthermore, English Language Teaching (ELT) activities in the classroom are still not up to par with optimal conditions. To begin with, employing English in interactions between the teacher and the pupils is insufficient. In some schools, teachers provide and explain curriculum to students primarily in their second language (national language) or even their mother tongue (local language). It is because the teacher is concerned that if the English language is utilized in the classroom, the students may struggle to comprehend the topic. While this situation will aggravate them, pupils will continue to be unmotivated to communicate, resulting in a decrease in the quality of their speaking.

Second, the use of boring methods, less allocation of learning time, lack of exposure to students, and fewer active students in teaching and learning activities in the classroom could all be factors in determining the reasons for the difficulties mentioned above. This problem leads kids to be unable to talk effectively, such as not responding to questions when asked, which is usually due to a fear of making mistakes. That is the difference between the ideal situation and the actual situation in which students find themselves. The researcher tries to give a solution out of the various options available, particularly the use of project-based learning approaches to overcome students' low speaking skills. All of these issues were discovered in SMP N 1 Jumapolo, prompting researchers to set a goal to solve them.

To overcome the aforementioned difficulty, a variety of methods for teaching speaking could be applied. For these reasons, the researcher chose project-based learning as an alternative to traditional ways of teaching speaking because multiple studies have demonstrated that it is effective and appropriate for teaching English. The project-based learning approach is a methodology that allows students to produce, publish, and display a product by designing, planning, and executing activities. (Patton, 2012; Patton, 2012). Students are engaged to communicate actively in the production of the project through project-based learning, and they will ask to display their work at the end of the process.

Furthermore, through project-based learning, students will sit together, confront one another, locate the problem, talk honestly, and fix the problem. Students can openly discuss and communicate using this strategy, resulting in high-quality results. Gaer discussed one of the accomplishments of the project-based learning technique. (1998) She instructed a group of Southeast Asian refugees enrolled in basic ESOL (English for Speakers of Other Languages) classes

on how to speak English. According to the findings of his study, project-based learning improved speaking skills more than any other traditional method.

This study aimed to implement Project Based Learning (PjBL) model to improve the speaking skills of students in class VIII of SMP N 1 Jumapolo. As a result of the above, the researcher will conduct a classroom-based action research study for eighth-graders at SMP N 1 Jumapolo to improve students' speaking skills through project-based learning.

## 2. Literature Review

Project-based learning is a teaching method that has been utilized to help students enhance their English fluency and learning skills. Engaging in meaningful activities, collaborative learning, and decision-making, problem-solving, and the shifting role of teachers are all features of project-based learning (Howard, 2002). Learners are engaged in meaningful tasks and projects as a result of project-based learning. The impact of project-based learning on learners' growth and abilities is numerous. Improved collaboration and responsibility, problem-solving ability, communication skills, creative thinking, critical thinking, and self-directed learning capacity are just a few of the benefits (Baillie & Fitzgerald, 2000). To improve teaching and learning, project-based learning has been implemented in the field of second and foreign language acquisition.

In project-based learning, learners' speaking skills can be improved through a variety of communicative projects. According to Dewi (2016), when students work on projects, they participate in purposeful communication in a natural setting. Furthermore, engaging in meaningful activities allows students to apply their EFL language skills in real-life situations. It can also be used with junior high school pupils in this scenario.

Many researchers have looked into how to train people to speak. The first is a study by Indrianti and Johanna Wulansari Istanto from the National University of Singapore in Singapore, titled "Implementing Project-Based Approach to Nurture Learners' Cultural Awareness at the Beginner Level." The research was a sort of action research that aimed at the procedures for adopting a project-based approach to develop learners' cultural awareness in a beginners' level Indonesian language course offered to undergraduate students, according to Indrianti and Istanto, the researchers. Hands-on experiences conducted in the project have increased students' awareness of Indonesian culture, according to the study's conclusions.

Second, M. Zaini Miftah (2016), a student at the State Islamic Institute of Palangka Raya in Central Kalimantan, previously published a paper titled "Implementing Project-Based Learning in Scientific Writing Class." Miftah's research focuses on the implementation of PjBL through research proposal drafting. Students are required to write their research proposals as part of their undergraduate thesis writing requirement. It should, hopefully, assist students in being well-prepared for graduation.

Riya Irianti (2017), a student from Universitas Lambung Mangkurat's Biology Education Department, wrote the third paper, "Improving Creative Thinking Skills by Implementing Project-Based Learning on Human Organ System Material." The major goal of this study is to use the Project Based Learning (PjBL) paradigm to help students in class XI at SMK Farmasi ISFI Banjarmasin enhance their creative thinking skills.

The fourth is a study by Menul Teguh Riyanti, Tuti Nuriah Erwin, and Suriani (2017) from the State University of Jakarta titled "Implementing Project-Based Learning Approach to Graphic Design Course." The major goal of this study is to create a commercial graphic design-based learning paradigm.

The titles of the previous studies mentioned above were found to be identical to this study. The parallels with this study stem from the utilization of Project-based Learning as a teaching strategy. The researcher, on the other hand, has a unique approach to teaching, particularly in the area of English language instruction using the Project-based Learning method. The originality of this study is that the researcher focuses on how to increase students' speaking skills through project-based learning for eighth-graders.

### 3. Method

#### 3.1. Research Design

A mixed-method strategy was used in this study, which featured a single group pre-test and post-test design. The data on the effects of project-based learning on learners' speaking skills was analyzed using quantitative and qualitative methodologies.

#### 3.2. Participants

Pupils from SMP N 1 Jumapolo in the second semester participated in the study, which included students from eight grades, 22 girls and 10 males. For the goals of this investigation, the pupils were carefully chosen. They were all native Javanese speakers between the ages of thirteen and fourteen.

#### 3.3. Research Instruments

Speaking tests, project-based learning instructions, questionnaires, and interviews were utilized to collect data for this study's research aims. The speaking tests were designed to assess pupils' progress in their speaking abilities. The research study participants were individually pre-tested on their speaking skills in five areas at the start of the semester: accent, grammar, vocabulary, fluency, and understanding (Hughes, 2003). The students were then instructed to build presenting projects utilizing project-based learning instructions. After the project-based learning was implemented, the students were individually tested on their speaking skills. The opinions of participants on the project-based learning implementation were elicited using a five-point Likert scale questionnaire. Finally, interviews were employed to elicit specific responses from students regarding the implementation of project-based learning. Based on the focus group interviews, eight students with varying degrees of speaking ability were interviewed. For the study's ultimate interpretation, the data acquired from these tools was examined statistically and qualitatively.

#### 3.4. Research Methodology

Stoller's project-based learning paradigm was adopted for this research (2010). The method was as follows: 1) Decide on a project theme; 2) Determine the project's final outcome; 3) structure the project; 4) information gathering cycle; 5) information compilation and analysis cycle; 6) information reporting cycle, and 7) project evaluation. To begin, the teacher and students decided on a project theme, which was local tourist sites. Second, the teacher and students decided on the project's outcomes. Students were exposed to presentation projects. Finally, the students organized their projects into three-person groups, with the teacher serving as the facilitator. The teacher then taught students the language and approach requirements of information collecting. The teacher then prepared the students for the linguistic and strategy demands that they would face while assembling, assessing, and reporting their projects. Following that, students presented their projects. Their projects were then appraised. The teacher also provided helpful feedback and suggestions to the students. The projects were multi-part tasks that included a role-play video project that allowed students to practice speaking English in a real-life situation while working on video tasks.

### 4. Findings and Discussion

The results of the speaking pre-and post-tests are shown in the table below to achieve the study's first goal. There were 32 participants in this study, according to Table 1. Students' speaking skills had a mean pre-test score of 46.67 (S.D.=12.40), and a mean post-test score of 57.66 (S.D.=12.55). The tests demonstrated that after project-based learning was implemented, students' speaking skills post-test scores were considerably higher than their pre-test scores at the 0.01 level. As a result, it may be inferred that the student's English speaking abilities improved as a result of the study.

Table 1. Table of comparison pre-test and post-test scores of students' speaking skills

Test	N	Mean	S.D.	t.	Sig
Pre-test	31	46.67	12.40	1.69	<0.01
Post-test	31	57.66	12.55		

\*p< .01

#### 4.1. Opinions of Students' Results

The next section summarizes students' thoughts on project-based learning implementation in order to reply to the second objective.

Students' replies to semi-structured interviews suggested that they had positive feelings about project-based learning implementation throughout this period. In general, all of the interviewees were enthusiastic about project-based learning with English presentations. They said that implementing project-based learning helped them improve their speaking skills. Due to the inclusion of project-based learning, other learning skills (such as listening, reading, and writing) were also emphasized.

#### 4.2. The Effects of Project-Based Learning

The study's findings revealed that project-based learning was beneficial in enhancing students' English speaking abilities. Students' speaking skills increased dramatically after project-based learning was implemented, according to quantitative data analysis. The qualitative data analysis demonstrated that the presenting tasks, scaffolding activities, and integrative skill practice produced significant results. Students had the opportunity to improve speaking skills through project-based learning with English video presentations. Working on the projects provided students with opportunities to practice their speaking skills and engage in authentic speaking activities. They were able to use their topical knowledge, language, and speaking skills to engage in genuine discussion. During the learning and working process, the processes of project-based learning encouraged students to develop speaking abilities. Students investigate a topic and look for crucial material in English when working on a presenting assignment. They can alter their exposure to sources of knowledge by using the target language authentically, which is beneficial to language improvement (Al-Issa, 2006). Students in this study focused on video projects. The video result activities helped learners enhance their speaking skills and pushed them to use English in relevant and purposeful ways. The findings of this study are comparable to those of other studies that have looked at the effectiveness of presentation tasks. Students can improve their English speaking and oral presentation skills while also increasing their speaking confidence by delivering a video role-play. Students could practice speaking skills through presentation activities in a genuine context when working on project-based learning, which improved their speaking ability.

#### 4.3. Other benefits

One unique benefit that students gained from project-based learning with video role-play was the integration of technology skills. Students mentioned that they created their video using technology means. They went on to say that they used the Internet to gather material and that they employed technological talents to produce visuals for the presentation. To do this, students in each group were assigned technical assignments based on their talents and preferences. Students can use technical skills to participate in learning activities to pick up language skills in project-based learning. Students' speaking abilities and confidence were increased in Fauzi's (2016) study by using a multimedia-based video presentation. Students searching for information for their presentation was a crucial step in project-based learning.

### 5. Conclusion

The goal of this study was to see how project-based learning affected eighth-graders' speaking abilities. To compare students' speaking skills before and after project-based learning implementation, a one-group pre-test and post-test design was used. For the goals of the research, speaking examinations, project-based learning instructions, questionnaires, and interviews were employed as research instruments. For the research interpretation, the gathered data collecting findings were statistically and qualitatively examined. The findings of the study revealed that project-based learning with presentations improved students' speaking abilities significantly. The quantitative data analysis demonstrated that students' speaking skills had greatly improved following the implementation of project-based learning. Furthermore, the qualitative data suggested that the students had positive feelings about project-based learning with role-play videos since it helped them develop their speaking skills. The study found that communicative activities including video tasks and integrative skill practice were effective for students' speaking skills when they used project-based learning with presentations. The activities aided the students in improving their

speaking abilities and developing their capacity to utilize language in a natural way. In addition, as it was imaginatively blended into their initiatives, technological skill integration was identified as a significant factor. Nonetheless, the scope of this research was constrained by the time limits imposed by the initiatives. Allowing students more flexible time to work on their assignments can help solve this problem. More research into project-based learning in a community setting to increase learners' speaking ability is needed. The research has two significant educational implications. To begin, project-based learning with role-play films should be examined and used to increase learners' language learning and skills since it bridges the gap between the classroom and real-world English usage. Furthermore, group video delivery provides learners with a cooperative learning experience that allows them to communicate with others while using their English language skills. Second, project-based learning using role-play films can be utilized to develop integrated skills that are necessary for students to increase their communication ability in a real-world setting. According to Oxford (1996), educating pupils to develop one skill can often improve their performance in other language skills. The findings and interpretation of this study can provide insight into effective EFL learning and teaching strategies, particularly for improving speaking skills.

### Acknowledgment

The study's researcher would like to express gratitude to the SMP N 1 Jumapolo for their help. Last but not least, I'd want to express my gratitude to the students who took part in this research. Thank you for your enthusiastic engagement and dedication to your outstanding efforts. Without the involvement of all of these people, this research study would not have been a success.

### REFERENCES

- Al-Issa, A. (2006). Language problems facing Omani learners of English. *ORTESOL*, 24, pp.19–26.
- Anuyahong, B. (2015). Using project-based approach to enhance English speaking ability of Thai-Nichi Institute of Technology students. *Proceedings of The International Conference on Language, Education and Psychology (ICLEP)*, pp.68-76.
- Baillie, C. & Fitzgerald, G. (2000). Motivation and attribution in engineering students. *European Journal of Engineering Education*, 25(2), 45-155.
- Dewi, H. (2016). Project Based Learning Techniques to Improve Speaking Skills. *English Education Journal (EEJ)*, 7(3), pp.341-359.
- El, S. A., Torky, F., Abd, A., & Maksoud Zaher, E. (n.d.). The Effectiveness of a Task-Based Instruction program in Developing the English Language Speaking Skills of Secondary Stage Students Supervised by Curricula and Methods of Teaching Department.
- Fauzi, I. (2016). The Application of Multimedia-Based Presentation in Improving Students' Speaking Skill. *Journal of ELT Research*, 1(1), pp.103-112.
- Gaer, S. (1998). Less teaching and more learning: Turning from traditional methods to project based instruction. Retrieved from <http://www.ncsall.net/index.html?id=385.html>
- Howard, J. (2002). Technology-enhanced project-based learning in teacher education. *Technology and Teacher Education*, 10(3), pp.343-364.
- Hughes, A. (2003). *Testing for Language Teacher*. Great Britain: Cambridge University Press.
- Irianti, R. (2017). Improving Creative Thinking Skills by Implementing Project Based Learning on Human Organ System Material. <http://www.autodesk.com/foundation>.

- Kemendikbud. (2014) Permendikbud No. 34 Tentang Pembelian Buku Kurikulum 2013 oleh Sekolah. Jakarta: Kemendikbud.
- Kemendikbud. (2016) Permendikbud No. 24 Tentang Kompetensi Inti dan Kompetensi Dasar Pelajaran Kurikulum 2013. Jakarta: Kemendikbud.
- Kemendikbud. (2018) Permendikbud No. 35 Tentang Kurikulum 2013 SMP/MTS. Jakarta: Kemendikbud.
- Miftah, M. Z. (2016). Implementing Project-Based Learning in scientific writing class Implementation of Edmodo in an Indonesian EFL Writing Classroom View project. <https://www.researchgate.net/publication/308893132>
- Oxford, R. (1996). Language learning strategies around the world. Cross-cultural perspectives. Manoa: University of Hawaii Press.
- Rao, P. S. (2019). THE IMPORTANCE OF SPEAKING SKILLS IN ENGLISH CLASSROOMS. [www.acielj.com](http://www.acielj.com)
- Roldán, A., & Gómez, M. E. (2005). Speaking and oral interaction. TEFL in Secondary Education. Granada: Editorial Universidad de Granada, 321-348.
- rPatton, A. (2012). Work that matters: The teacher's guide to Project-Based Learning. The Paul Hamlyn Foundation. Unpublished.
- Stoller, F.L. (2010). Promoting purposeful language learning with project work. Paper Presented at The Institute of English Language Education. Rikkyo University. Tokyo.
- Teguh Riyanti, M., & Nuriah Erwin, T. (2017). Journal of Education and Practice [www.iiste.org](http://www.iiste.org) ISSN (Vol. 8, Issue 15). Online. [www.iiste.org](http://www.iiste.org)