



Implementation of Project-Based Learning to Enhance the Language Skills of Students at Universitas Sindang Kasih Majalengka

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ABSTRACT

Speaking skills are a fundamental aspect of Indonesian language education, serving not only as a medium for conveying ideas but also as a crucial tool for academic achievement and professional readiness; however, many students still face challenges such as low confidence, communication anxiety, and limited opportunities for authentic practice, which hinder the optimal development of their oral proficiency. To address this issue, the present study explores the implementation of Project-Based Learning (PjBL) as an innovative pedagogical strategy to enhance the speaking skills of students in the Indonesian Language Education Program at Universitas Sindang Kasih Majalengka. Employing a qualitative approach with purposive sampling, this research focused on fourth-semester students actively involved in project activities, with data gathered through in-depth interviews, participatory observation, and document analysis, which were subsequently examined using thematic analysis to identify patterns and generate insights. The findings demonstrate that PjBL significantly improves students' speaking skills by providing contextualized opportunities for repeated oral practice through project presentations, group discussions, and authentic communication tasks, thereby strengthening phonology, diction, fluency, and rhetorical ability while simultaneously fostering self-confidence and active participation. Furthermore, the relevance of projects to real-life contexts intrinsically motivated students, encouraged them to think critically and creatively, and supported the development of collaborative learning attitudes. Continuous feedback from lecturers and peers also facilitated reflection and refinement, allowing students to gradually enhance their communicative competence.

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1. Introduction (*Heading 1*) (bold, 11 pt)

Speaking ability is one of the fundamental aspects in Indonesian language education, holding a central role in building effective communication processes (Paksi & Iswari, 2022). This ability does not merely serve as a means of delivering messages, but also functions as an essential medium for students to express ideas, opinions, and arguments in a clear, coherent, and well-targeted manner (Hajarudin, 2023). Through speaking skills, students are able to construct communicative discourse so that the messages they convey can be properly understood by their interlocutors. Moreover, speaking ability contributes to the development of self-confidence, the strengthening of critical

thinking skills, and the enhancement of students' academic capacity in various communicative contexts.

In the context of higher education, speaking skills hold a strategic position as one of the key indicators in assessing language competence. This is particularly true for students of Indonesian language programs who are expected to master the ability to communicate in a scientific, formal, and persuasive manner (Wahyuningsih & Susanti, 2020). Mastery of speaking not only supports academic success but also prepares students to face professional challenges as educators, researchers, or language practitioners. Thus, speaking ability can be regarded as an essential provision that connects linguistic theory with real-life communicative practice in society.

However, in practice, many students still face complex challenges in developing their speaking skills (Sihombing, 2023). These barriers generally arise from both internal and external factors. Internally, a lack of self-confidence often becomes the main obstacle, preventing students from voicing their opinions or participating actively in discussions. Anxiety, fear of making mistakes, or concern about not being understood by the audience exacerbate this situation. Externally, limited opportunities to practice speaking in relevant academic contexts and the lack of supportive learning environments hinder students from continuously improving their speaking abilities.

This condition directly impacts the low quality of students' oral communication, both in academic and non-academic forums. In fact, strong speaking ability requires repeated practice within a supportive atmosphere, including encouragement from lecturers and active participation from peers. Without an environment that fosters the courage to speak, students will struggle to achieve the expected speaking competence, and their communicative potential will not develop optimally (Muttaqin et al., 2023). Therefore, it is crucial to provide a learning strategy that can foster self-confidence while offering authentic and relevant speaking practice spaces.

Project-Based Learning (PjBL) has been widely recognized as an innovative learning method that fosters the improvement of various essential skills, including speaking (Firdaus & Septiady, 2023). Unlike traditional lecturer-centered methods, PjBL emphasizes a student-centered approach. In practice, students are actively involved in designing, carrying out, and completing real-life projects that directly relate to their daily lives or academic needs (Hidayat et al., 2024; M. P. Mukhlisin, 2024; Pramono, 2016). Through this active engagement, students not only acquire conceptual understanding but also practice expressing ideas, engaging in discussions, and delivering project results in oral presentations. Such conditions directly nurture critical thinking, collaborative work, and more effective communication (Wahyuningsih & Susanti, 2020).

The implementation of PjBL in the context of Indonesian language education holds tremendous potential in addressing the speaking challenges faced by students (Anggara, 2017). This approach ensures that learning does not stop at mastering linguistic theories but extends to real applications in authentic communicative situations. Students are required to interact, argue, and present ideas in both academic and social forums, allowing their speaking skills to develop naturally and contextually (Kamiri, 2022). Furthermore, PjBL encourages students to integrate cognitive, affective, and psychomotor aspects, ultimately leading to significant improvements in fluency, accuracy, and self-confidence in speaking (M. Mukhlisin et al., 2024). Thus, PjBL is not merely a teaching method but a pedagogical strategy that holistically shapes students' communication competence in line with global demands.

This study aims to deeply explore the role of Project-Based Learning in enhancing the speaking skills of students in the Indonesian Language Program at Universitas Sindang Kasih Majalengka. By understanding the effectiveness of this method, the research is expected to contribute significantly to the development of more innovative, effective, and relevant teaching strategies in the field of language education today. Based on this background, the main research problem is formulated as follows: How can Project-Based Learning improve the speaking skills of students in the Indonesian Language Program?

The main objective of this study is to identify and analyze the role of Project-Based Learning in supporting the improvement of students' speaking ability. In addition, the research seeks to provide practical recommendations for lecturers to implement this method effectively in the classroom. With such recommendations, Indonesian language learning is expected not only to emphasize theoretical

aspects but also to offer practical spaces where students can sharpen their speaking skills in more contextual ways.

The significance of this study can be viewed from both theoretical and practical perspectives. Theoretically, it is expected to enrich the body of knowledge on the implementation of Project-Based Learning in language education, particularly regarding its impact on speaking skills. The findings may serve as an academic reference that strengthens the literature on innovative learning strategies aligned with 21st-century skills. Practically, the results are expected to serve as an applicable guide for educators and educational institutions in designing, developing, and applying more effective learning models to improve students' speaking ability. Therefore, this study not only contributes to theoretical development but also offers concrete solutions for the practice of Indonesian language learning in higher education.

2. Method

This study employs a qualitative approach with the aim of deeply exploring the role of project-based learning in improving the speaking skills of students in the Indonesian Language Education Program at Universitas Sindang Kasih Majalengka. This approach was chosen because it provides opportunities for the researcher to understand students' experiences, learning dynamics, and the factors influencing speaking skills within a broader and more holistic context (Kamiri, 2022). The research subjects were fourth-semester students in the Indonesian Language Education Program, selected through purposive sampling based on criteria such as active participation in project activities, variations in speaking ability, and learning motivation (Aryawan, 2023; M. Mukhlisin et al., 2023).

Data collection was carried out using three main instruments: in-depth interviews, participatory observation, and document analysis. In-depth interviews were conducted to explore students' experiences and perceptions regarding the effectiveness of project-based learning, while participatory observation was conducted during the implementation of projects to examine students' interactions, participation, and communication in real contexts (Ejie, 2021). Document analysis, including students' project outputs and teaching materials, was used to strengthen the findings, ensuring that the data collected was comprehensive and supported by triangulation.

The research procedure began with a preparation stage through the collection of preliminary information about the implementation of project-based learning in the Indonesian Language Education Program (Mukharomah et al., 2023). Following this, subjects were selected based on predetermined criteria, and data collection was systematically carried out through interviews, observations, and document analysis (Baho et al., 2021). The collected data was then analyzed using thematic analysis techniques (Aprilianto et al., 2023; M. Mukhlisin & Sofy, 2025), which included coding, theme identification, and interpretation of findings. Through this process, the study is expected to provide a comprehensive understanding of how project-based learning contributes to the improvement of students' speaking skills.

3. Results and Discussion

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3.1. Enhancement of Students' Speaking Skills

Project-based learning has been proven to provide ample opportunities for students to practice speaking skills repeatedly and contextually. Activities such as project presentations, group discussions, and interviews with external resource persons allow students to use language in diverse situations. This process indirectly improves aspects of phonology, diction, and sentence structure in their speech. Moreover, students are trained to adjust their speaking style according to the audience, thereby developing their rhetorical skills. This aligns with the findings of Annisa & Safii (2023), who assert that speaking skills improve when students are given opportunities to learn in real contexts.

3.2. Increasing Self-Confidence and Active Participation

One of the main challenges faced by students in speaking skills is often a lack of self-confidence. Through projects that demand full engagement, students become accustomed to facing audiences, negotiating with team members, and presenting ideas publicly. These repeated experiences help reduce anxiety and foster the courage to speak. Enhanced self-confidence subsequently encourages more active participation in various learning activities. Students who were previously passive begin to ask questions, express opinions, and respond to their peers' ideas. This condition is consistent with the concept of student-centered learning, which emphasizes independence and active participation in the learning process.

3.3. Contextualization and Relevance of Projects

The main advantage of project-based learning lies in its connection to students' real-life experiences. When projects are designed to address actual issues, students are motivated to seek solutions that are not only academically relevant but also practical in everyday life. For example, projects such as creating educational content in the Indonesian language or managing literacy programs in partner schools make students feel that their tasks have tangible impacts. This context fosters stronger intrinsic motivation compared to conventional, theory-oriented learning. The relevance of projects also sharpens students' critical, analytical, and creative thinking skills, which ultimately supports the improvement of their speaking abilities.

3.4. The Role of Feedback in the Learning Process

Feedback plays a central role in improving students' speaking skills. Lecturers act as facilitators by providing constructive evaluations on content, argument structure, language use, as well as vocal and body language techniques. Meanwhile, peer feedback serves as a social mirror that helps students understand how their speech is perceived by the audience. The combination of both forms of feedback creates a cycle of reflection and continuous improvement. As a result, students not only pay attention to the technical aspects of speaking but also refine their broader communication sensitivity, including empathy, message clarity, and the ability to build interpersonal relationships.

3.5. Theoretical and Practical Implications

This study presents two key implications. Theoretically, the findings enrich the study of the effectiveness of project-based learning in language education, particularly in enhancing students' speaking skills. This method can serve as a foundation for further research on integrating PjBL with other approaches, such as collaborative learning or blended learning. Practically, the study provides recommendations for lecturers and educational institutions to facilitate project-based learning through the provision of resources, intensive guidance, and supportive training. Furthermore, the implementation of this strategy can be expanded to other courses that require communication skills, ensuring its benefits extend beyond the field of language learning.

4. Conclusion

Based on the analysis presented, it can be concluded that project-based learning makes a significant contribution to improving the speaking skills of Indonesian language education students at Universitas Madura. Through active engagement in real projects, students gain opportunities to practice speaking in various authentic contexts, sharpening their rhetorical abilities, clarity of expression, and language fluency. This method also positively impacts students' psychological aspects, particularly in building confidence and courage to speak in front of an audience. Moreover, the relevance of projects to real-life contexts makes learning more meaningful and fosters intrinsic motivation to communicate effectively. Supported by constructive feedback from lecturers and peers, students are able to engage in reflection and continuous improvement of their speaking quality. Thus, project-based learning not only enriches the theoretical discourse on language teaching strategies but also offers practical implications for lecturers and educational institutions in designing innovative, relevant, and communication-oriented learning.

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