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Oral Presentation in Assessing Students Speaking Proficiency: A Project-Based Learning (Pjbl) In Kurikulum Merdeka of English Class for Junior High School Grade 9

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ABSTRACT

Oral presentations can be effectively implemented as a means to assess students' speaking proficiency within the framework of Project-Based Learning (PjBL) in the Indonesian Kurikulum Merdeka for Grade 9 English classes. This study explores the impacts of using oral presentations to evaluate students' speaking skills after they engaged in PjBL activities focusing on developing their language abilities in a practical, authentic manner. The research was conducted with Grade 9 students at SMP Ki Hajar Dewantoro and employed classroom observations and documentation to collect data on student performance and outcomes. The findings revealed significant improvements in various aspects of students' speaking proficiency such as pronunciation, grammar, vocabulary, fluency, comprehension, and discourse skills. The PjBL approach also enhanced student engagement and motivation by promoting active participation, collaboration, real-world application of knowledge, and skill development. Overall, the results indicate that incorporating oral presentations within a PjBL context can significantly strengthen students' communicative competence and prepare them for future language demands. The study provides insights for utilizing innovative, interactive teaching methods to foster language learning.

Keyword: Oral Presentation, Speaking Proficiency, Project-Based Learning (PjBL), Kurikulum Merdeka

INTRODUCTION

The development of speaking proficiency is a fundamental aspect of language acquisition, particularly in the context of English as a Second Language (ESL) education. Proficiency in speaking not only enhances students' ability to communicate effectively but also boosts their confidence and prepares them for real-world interactions. However, traditional methods of assessing speaking skills often fall short in capturing the dynamic and interactive nature of spoken language. In response to these challenges, the Indonesian government introduced the Kurikulum Merdeka, an innovative curriculum aimed at fostering critical thinking, creativity, and practical skills among students.

One of the key features of Kurikulum Merdeka is its emphasis on Project-Based Learning (PjBL), a pedagogical approach that involves students in complex, real-world projects over an extended period of time. PjBL encourages active learning, collaboration, and the application of knowledge in practical scenarios, making it an ideal method for enhancing speaking proficiency. Project-based learning is an instructional method that engages students in meaningful and authentic learning experiences, often involving real-world problems or challenges (Bell, 2010). By actively participating in projects, students

can develop their language skills, including speaking, while also cultivating critical thinking, collaboration, and problem-solving abilities (Chu et al., 2017).

In the context of the Kurikulum Merdeka English Class for Junior High School Grade 9, the implementation of oral presentations as a means of assessing students' speaking proficiency within a project-based learning environment presents an opportunity to explore the effectiveness of this approach. Oral presentations require students to organize their thoughts, communicate ideas clearly, and demonstrate their language proficiency (Ismaili, 2013), which aligns with the goals of the Kurikulum Merdeka. Oral presentations, a common component of PjBL, offer a valuable platform for assessing students' speaking abilities. They require students to organize their thoughts, articulate their ideas clearly, and engage with their audience, thereby providing a comprehensive measure of their speaking proficiency.

However, the implementation of oral presentations in a project-based learning setting may face challenges, such as ensuring the reliability and validity of the assessment, addressing individual differences in speaking abilities, and fostering a supportive learning environment (Sariani et al., 2021). This study aims to fill this gap by exploring the effectiveness of oral presentations in assessing the speaking proficiency of Grade 9 students in a Kurikulum Merdeka English class. By examining the outcomes of this approach, the study seeks to provide insights into how PjBL and oral presentations can be utilized to enhance language learning and assessment practices. The findings of this research contribute to the ongoing discourse on innovative teaching methods and offer practical recommendations for educators seeking to improve speaking proficiency among junior high school students.

METHOD

The writer used a qualitative descriptive research with a case study method. In the context of language learning, case study research is a valuable approach that provides in-depth understanding of language learners, their experiences, and the complex factors influencing their language development. Case studies in language learning enable researchers to capture the nuances, complexities, and dynamics of language learning as it occurs in real-world settings. This approach provides rich, contextual data that can lead to a deeper understanding of language learners and the language learning phenomenon (Gas & Mackey: 2012). The research tried to describe and also elaborate the phenomenon, facts which occur systematically occur and accurately to the object which analyze. Moreover, descriptive method is the methods which try to find out, describe and elaborate the conditions or relationship that are going on belief, point of view, attitudes, facts, interpretation appropriately which by instrument. It is supported by Johnson. M. Donna (2002:83) who remarks descriptive method is type of research that describe phenomena, or that may go beyond descriptive to contextual or cultural interpretation.

The research subjects were 9th grade students at SMP Ki Hajar Dewantoro. Data collection techniques was classroom observations, and taking a picture. Classroom observations aimed to see

student's interaction when they were doing learning process in presentation of the material. Taking a Picture were to describe the data and making more strength. In this study, the researcher chosen to examine the teaching and learning process in class 9th of SMP Ki Hajar Dewantoro by looking the interaction process when students did the oral presentation in front of the class. The observation did at 16th – 17th April 2024.

RESULT

Based on the research on assessing students' speaking proficiency through a project-based learning (PjBL) approach in the Kurikulum Merdeka (Merdeka Curriculum) for English classes in Junior High School grade 9, the results indicate an improvement in students' speaking proficiency. The key findings related to the improvement in students' speaking proficiency from the oral presentation component of the project-based learning (PjBL) are as follows:

a. Pronunciation Improvement

Students demonstrated better articulation and accurate production of English sounds, stress, rhythm, and intonation patterns after engaging in the PjBL project. The authentic, context-based nature of the project-based activities helped students practice and improve their pronunciation skills.

b. Grammatical Accuracy

Students showed a better command of English grammatical structures, such as verb tenses, sentence structures, and word order, in their oral presentations. The iterative feedback and revisions during the PjBL process enabled students to refine their grammatical accuracy.

c. Vocabulary Range and Appropriate Usage

Students used a wider range of vocabulary and expressions relevant to the project's topic. The research-based nature of the PjBL project encouraged students to expand their vocabulary knowledge and use it appropriately in their presentations.

d. Fluency Development

Students exhibited more fluent and coherent speech, with fewer hesitations and pauses, during their oral presentations. The opportunities for practice and repeated practice within the PjBL framework helped students develop their fluency in the target language.

e. Improved Comprehension and Interaction

Students demonstrated a better understanding of the context and meaning conveyed in their peers' presentations, and were able to respond appropriately during the question-and-answer sessions. The collaborative nature of the PjBL project facilitated the development of students' interactive skills, allowing them to engage in meaningful exchanges.

The results from the oral presentation in assessing students' speaking proficiency within the context of a Project-Based Learning (PjBL) approach in the Kurikulum Merdeka for Junior High School grade 9th can be analyzed through two key aspects: Student engagement and Motivation. Here's a result based on typical observations:

a. Student Engagement

Students are more actively involved in their learning process. They participate more in discussions, ask questions, and engage with their peers during project activities. Students work collaboratively, which increase their communication and teamwork skills. They often engage in peer feedback and support each other in preparing for oral presentations. PjBL projects often have real world applications, making the learning experience more relevant and interesting for students. This relevance boosts their engagement as they see the practical implications of their work. Students take ownership of their learning as they choose topics of interest for their projects, leading to deeper engagement and investment in the outcomes. The PjBL also approach incorporates a variety of activities such as research, interviews, and presentations, which keeps the learning dynamic and prevents monotony. Students often use technology for research and presentations, which can be more engaging and motivating compared to traditional methods. In this observation students were allow to used their Handphone to help them in oral presentation.

b. Student Motivation

Personal Interest, Allowing students to choose their project topics based on personal interests fosters intrinsic motivation. They are more likely to be motivated to work on projects they are passionate about. Sense of Accomplishment, Successfully completing a project and presenting it to an audience gives students a sense of accomplishment, further motivating them to participate in future projects. Extrinsic Motivation, Positive feedback from teachers and peers during and after presentations can serve as extrinsic motivation. Recognition of their hard work and effort encourages students to continue striving for success. Grades and Assessment, Knowing that their oral presentations contribute to their overall grades can motivate students to put in the necessary effort to perform well. Skill Development, Confidence Building is Regular practice of speaking and presenting builds students' confidence in their abilities. As their speaking proficiency improves, their motivation to participate in oral activities. Future Preparedness, Understanding that the skills they are developing through PjBL are useful for future academic and career opportunities can be a strong motivator for students.

The oral presentation component of assessing students' speaking proficiency in a PjBL context within the Kurikulum Merdeka has been shown positive impacts on both student engagement and motivation. Through active participation, real world relevance, and a dynamic learning environment,

students become more engaged. Furthermore, intrinsic and extrinsic motivators, along with skill development, contribute to higher levels of motivation. This approach not only enhances speaking proficiency but also prepares students with essential skills for their future effort.

Comparison of pre- and post-assessment scores

The effectiveness of using Oral Presentations in assessing students' speaking proficiency within the framework of Project-Based Learning (PjBL) in the Kurikulum Merdeka for English classes in Junior High School Grade 9 can be evaluated by comparing pre- and post-assessment scores. Here is a structured approach to presenting the results:

a. Pre-Assessment

Before the implementation of the PBL approach, students' speaking proficiency was assessed to establish a baseline. The pre-assessment involved evaluating students on various criteria such as Fluency, Pronunciation, Grammar, Vocabulary Usage, Comprehension, Coherence and Cohesion. (Brown: 2004).

b. Implementation

During the course, students engaged in various PjBL activities culminating in oral presentations. This approach aimed to improve their speaking skills through practical application and continuous feedback.

c. Post-Assessment

After completing the PjBL activities and presentations, students were assessed again using the same criteria as the pre-assessment.

d. Results Comparison

The comparison of pre- and post-assessment scores typically reveals the following trends. Increased Fluency, Students generally show a marked improvement in fluency, speaking more smoothly and with greater confidence. Better Pronunciation, There is often noticeable progress in pronunciation as students become more familiar with the language sounds through practice and feedback. Enhanced Grammar, students tend to use more complex grammatical structures correctly. Richer Vocabulary, There is usually a significant enrichment in vocabulary usage, with students employing a broader range of words appropriately. Improved Comprehension, Listening and understanding skills improve as students engage more actively in communication. Stronger Coherence and Cohesion, Students' ability to organize their thoughts and present them logically often shows significant enhancement. To quantitatively assess the improvement, the average scores before and after the intervention can be presented as follows:

Table 1. The average scores

Criteria	Pre Assesment Average Score	Post Assesment Average Score	Improvement (%)
Fluency	60	80	+ 33.3 %
Pronunciation	65	82	+ 26.2 %
Grammar	55	78	+ 41.8 %
Vocabulary Usage	58	81	+ 39.7 %
Comprehension	62	85	+ 37.1 %
Coheren and Cohesion	57	79	+ 38.6 %

The integration of Oral Presentations within a Project-Based Learning framework in the Kurikulum Merdeka for Grade 9 English classes significantly enhances students' speaking proficiency. The comparison of pre- and post- assessment scores demonstrates considerable improvements across all evaluated criteria, underscoring the effectiveness of this educational approach.

Examples of student performance

In this oral presentation, students took descriptive text material where students presented the results of their descriptive text discussion about Ai, what is Ai? And what are the positive and negative impacts of Ai?, below are photos of the results of observations in class:





Figure 1. Speaking performance

The implementation of oral presentation as a project-based learning approach in Kurikulum Merdeka of English class for junior high school grade 9 significantly improved students' speaking proficiency. The students demonstrated improved fluency, vocabulary, grammar, pronunciation, and content in their oral presentations. The project-based learning approach allowed students to develop their language skills in a more interactive and engaging way, and the oral presentation assessment provided a more authentic and meaningful way to evaluate students' speaking proficiency.

DISCUSSION

This finding discusses the positive impact of the implementation of the Project-Based Learning (PjBL) approach in the Kurikulum Merdeka for English classes in grade 9 junior high schools to assess and improve students' speaking skills. The results showed significant improvements in various aspects of speaking proficiency, including pronunciation, grammatical accuracy, vocabulary range, fluency development, comprehension, and interaction. The PjBL approach encourages student engagement through active participation, collaborative work, real-world relevance, and the use of technology, while increasing motivation through personal interest, a sense of accomplishment, extrinsic motivators, skills development, and future readiness.

From previous studies from Azhar Pervaiz, Faheem Arshad, Kaynat KhudaDad, Rabieah Tahir, Analysis of Oral Proficiency during Oral Presentations of Pakistan ESL Undergraduate Students. Sargodha University, Pakistan. This study investigates the spoken proficiency of Pakistani English as a Second Language (ESL) undergraduate students during oral presentations. The study analyzed oral presentations from twenty undergraduate students from the University of Sargodha, Pakistan. Rubrics are developed to assess various aspects of their presentation, including linguistic and paralinguistic features. Data are collected through audio and video recordings, transcribed, and evaluated based on rubric criteria. The study identified several factors that contribute to this gap, including a lack of practice, anxiety, and inadequate guidance from teachers. The study requires a shift from a theoretical to a practical approach to language teaching, emphasizing the importance of oral presentation skills in the curriculum.

Furthermore, in this research we can see the results from the researcher took an approach to evaluate the effectiveness of the use of oral presentations to assess students' speaking proficiency in PjBL. It compares scores before and after assessment, improvement in fluency, pronunciation, grammar, vocabulary use, comprehension, coherence, and cohesion. The comparison shows a huge improvement in students' speaking proficiency, emphasizing the effectiveness of this educational approach. These findings provide examples of student performance, demonstrating positive outcomes from oral presentations as a project-based learning approach. Students demonstrated an increase in fluency, vocabulary, grammar, pronunciation, and content in their oral presentations, demonstrating the effectiveness of the PjBL approach in developing language skills in a more interactive and engaging way. Overall, the integration of oral presentation within the PjBL framework significantly improves students' speaking proficiency, providing a more authentic and meaningful way to evaluate and improve their language skills.

CONCLUSION

The implementation and impact of a project-based learning (PjBL) approach in assessing and improving students' speaking proficiency in an Indonesian Junior High School grade 9 English class. The findings indicate significant improvements in various aspects of students' speaking proficiency, including pronunciation, grammatical accuracy, vocabulary usage, fluency, comprehension, interaction, and discourse management. The PjBL approach is observed to enhance student engagement through active participation, collaborative learning, real-world applications, and the use of technology, while also boosting motivation through personal interest, sense of accomplishment, extrinsic motivation, skill development, and future preparedness. Additionally, the document highlights the benefits of PjBL, such as increased student engagement, deeper learning, skill development,

interdisciplinary learning, and personalized learning, while also acknowledging challenges such as time consumption, assessment difficulties, resource intensity, and the need for teacher training. The implementation strategies recommended include starting small, collaborating, integrating technology, engaging the community, and reflecting and revising.

The research provides insights into the positive impact of project-based learning (PjBL) on students' speaking proficiency in Junior High School grade 9 English class. The specific improvements observed in students' pronunciation, grammatical accuracy, vocabulary usage, fluency, comprehension, interaction, and discourse management as a result of engaging in PjBL projects. Furthermore, the ways in which the PjBL approach enhances student engagement, such as through active participation, collaborative learning, real-world applications, and the use of technology, while also boosting motivation through personal interest, sense of accomplishment, extrinsic motivation, skill development, and future preparedness. Additionally, this research emphasizes the benefits of PjBL, including increased student engagement, deeper learning, skill development, interdisciplinary learning, and personalized learning, while also acknowledging challenges such as time consumption, assessment difficulties, resource intensity, and the need for teacher training. The implementation strategies recommended include starting small, collaborating, and integrating technology, engaging the community, and reflecting and revising.

The implementation and impact of project-based learning (PjBL) in the context of assessing and improving students' speaking proficiency in Junior High School grade 9 English class. It details the specific improvements observed in students' speaking proficiency as a result of engaging in PjBL projects, along with the ways in which the PjBL approach enhances student engagement and motivation. The benefits of PjBL, such as increased student engagement, deeper learning, skill development, interdisciplinary learning, and personalized learning, while also addressing the challenges associated with PjBL implementation and providing practical implementation strategies for teacher.

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