



The Use of Project-Based Learning and Peer Assessment to Improve Young Learners' Speaking Skills

Dwi Endah Widyastuti^{1*}

¹STIE Tribuana Bekasi, Indonesia

*Corresponding author: dwiendahwidyastuti@gmail.com |

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Abstract

Purpose: This research aimed to determine the impact of project-based learning and peer assessment learning to improve students' speaking skills and the benefits of PBL and Peer Assessment.

Research Methodology: This research was conducted in the seventh grade at SMPN 2 Babelan-Bekasi, from September 12 to October 10, 2017. It involved only one class, VII.1, at SMPN 2 Babelan-Bekasi. This class consisted of 30 students, 17 females and 13 males. This study was a classroom action research that consisted of three cycles. Each cycle has four steps: planning, acting, observing, and reflecting. The researcher answered the research questions using four instruments: observation, interviews, tests, and questionnaires.

Results: The results of this research revealed that PBL and Peer Assessment improved students' speaking skills. Second, they talked a lot, and they were participating with each other, which motivated them to speak more, be enthusiastic, and be independent learners. In addition, the number of errors in speaking components significantly decreased after they were encouraged to assess their peers.

Conclusions: Based on the theories and previous studies, it can be concluded that peer assessment applied in project-based learning (PBL) has positive effects on teaching speaking. Peer assessment helped the students in speaking English and correcting their performance, which built their motivation to develop their speaking skills.

Limitations: This study involved only one class with a small sample and short duration, limiting generalizability and long-term impact analysis.

Contributions: This study provides evidence that integrating project-based learning and peer assessment can improve students' speaking skills and promote engagement and autonomy.

Keywords: *Peer Assesment, Project-Based Learning, Speaking Skill*

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1. Introduction

Project-based learning (PBL) has become increasingly popular in language teaching. Project-based learning is a learning method or technique that focuses on the learner, while the teacher plays the role of a facilitator and motivator (Aldabbus, 2018; Kurniawan & Hariadi, 2022). Based on another study, PBL emphasizes learner-centered learning activities that are usually integrated with real-world concerns. Moss and Van Duzer (1998) defined project-based learning as an instructional approach that contextualizes learning by presenting learners with problems to solve. As stated by Fadlianto and Sulistyowati (2022)

and Stoller (1997), PBL provides opportunities for the natural integration of all four skills: reading, writing, listening, and speaking. The final outcome of the project can be a bulletin board display, written report, debate competition, brochure, advertisement, poem, letter, handbook, oral presentation, video, multimedia presentation, or theatrical performance (Hidayatulloh, 2020; Shpeizer, 2019).

The benefits of PBL, according to Lee (2002), include enhanced student motivation, engagement, and enjoyment because project work progresses according to specific contexts and students' interests. He stated that projects involving authentic tasks are more meaningful to students, increase their interest and motivation to participate, and can promote learning. This is because a project may be connected to real professions through the use of authentic methods, practices, and audiences. In addition, PBL can help students develop skills. Coleman (1992) discusses a benefit related to increased social and cooperative skills, as well as group cohesiveness.

2. Literature Review

Based on a previous study, adopting PBL projects in the classroom also helps reinforce social relationships among team members and enhances collaboration among learners and between learners and the teacher. PBL also provides learners with opportunities to learn collaborative skills, such as relying on the work of peers and providing them with thoughtful feedback. Involving students in pairs and groups stimulates cooperation and encourages individual students to talk more (Nabilla & Soehaditama, 2023; Ricardianto et al., 2022; Supardi, 2023).

The researcher focused on speaking, which is applied in project-based learning. Based on observations, students had difficulties in speaking and pronouncing words correctly, and they were afraid to speak in front of their teacher or the class. Students have different levels of capability and understanding. Addressing these differences requires special competence from the teacher, for example, in creating appropriate teaching techniques or methods. In the teaching-learning process, teaching is an important aspect that must be considered; however, assessment of the learning process is also essential.

Tahir (2023) and Tarras (2005) defines assessment as the judgment of students' work and evaluation, referring to judgments regarding courses or course delivery, or the process of making such judgments. Harywibowo and Hariadi (2022) and Nurgiyantoro (2011) argues that assessment is a systematic process of collecting, analyzing, and interpreting information to determine how far learners achieve educational goals. It can be concluded that assessment is a judgment based on several criteria to understand learners' comprehension. Many forms of alternative assessment have been widely applied in language assessment, such as students' journals, portfolios, self-assessment, peer-assessment, conferences, and interviews (Brown, 2003; Muliayati et al., 2023). Peer assessment is "an educational arrangement where students judge a peer's performance quantitatively and/or qualitatively and which stimulates students to reflect, discuss and collaborate" (Ahmadun et al., 2023; Strijbos & Sluijsmans, 2010).

This study describes the implementation of peer assessment and project-based learning on students' speaking skills and attempts to determine the impact of peer assessment applied in project-based learning.

Several previous studies have been conducted in this area. Chien et al. (2020) and Wijayanti and Santoso (2022) conducted a study to explore the effect of peer assessment on speaking in project learning and found that peer assessment had a positive impact on students' motivation in developing their speaking skills.

In another study, McDonald (2008) discussed assessment for learning in project-based learning, emphasizing that assessment by self, peers, and supervisors is necessary. McDonald (2008) provided several assessment models and rubric forms and found that although students tended to rate themselves higher than teachers' evaluations, peer-assessment forms were useful as guidance for students' work

and presentations. This suggests that a good assessment tool can become an effective learning tool in schools. Therefore, instructors need to consider their teaching context and project objectives when selecting assessment models (Lumi & Yosef, 2022; Parmenas, 2022).

Hunaiti et al. (2010) and Nuraeni et al. (2022) examined the principles of assessment for project- and research-based learning. The study emphasizes that learning is a constructivist process; therefore, both formative assessments (such as self- and peer-evaluation) and summative assessments (such as written reports and presentations) are important in PBL. The authors highlight that teachers must create an environment where students are willing to give and receive feedback to improve their learning and performance. Since students have different learning styles, strengths, and weaknesses, teachers should design flexible assessments and offer various assessment types. The study also emphasizes that assessment in PBL should be valid, reliable, and transparent (Abidin et al., 2022; Hernawan et al., 2022).

Nejad and Mahfoodh (2019) conducted a study focusing on the agreement between teacher assessment and peer assessment of oral presentation skills, as well as students' perceptions of peer assessment. The results showed both agreement and differences between teacher and peer evaluations. Peer assessment scores were generally higher than teacher scores, which may be explained by teachers' broader experience in evaluating oral presentations. Previous studies indicate that in the context of project-based learning, peer assessment plays a vital role in improving speaking skills by engaging students in evaluating their peers' work. It also helps learners reflect on their project work and serves as guidance for improvement (Lin et al., 2021; Nunuh & Wulandari, 2021; Sirisrimangkorn, 2021).

The present study differs from previous studies in terms of participants, setting, and research design. It focuses on young learners, as they often face difficulties in mastering speaking skills. The study was conducted over two months, starting from September 1st, with seventh-grade students at SMPN 2 Babelan in the 2017/2018 academic year. This study employed qualitative research using classroom action research and was conducted in three cycles, aiming to reduce the number of students scoring below the minimum criteria.

3. Methodology

Based on a review of the related literature, the following research questions were addressed:

1. How do project-based learning and peer assessment improve young learners' speaking skills?
2. What problems do seventh-grade students face as young learners?
3. What are young learners' responses to the application of PBL and peer assessment?

In this study, the researcher used qualitative research with classroom action, which focuses on a particular problem and a specific group of students in a classroom. This study consisted of three cycles. Each cycle has four steps: planning, acting, observing, and reflecting. Classroom action research serves as a guide for teachers to improve performance and enhance the quality of learning in a sustainable manner, reflecting the professional role of educators (Heigham & Croker, 2009; Strijbos & Sluijsmans, 2010).

The subjects of this research consisted of 30 students in class VII-1 at SMPN 2 Babelan in the 2017/2018 academic year. Students have different levels of capability and understanding. Some students experienced difficulties in speaking and pronouncing words. Addressing these different learner characteristics requires special competence from the teacher. The researcher obtained data from students' activities, such as observation field notes. The data sources included events, informants, and documents. The instruments used for data collection were observation, interviews, and documentation. The researcher analyzed the data using three steps: data reduction, data display, and data verification (Margono, 2000; Sumaryadi & Kusnadi, 2021).

4. Results and Discussion

Based on the students' scores after implementing PBL and Peer Assessment, the results of the research could be explained as follows: Cycle I on the result of the average students' score is 68.93. This means that the students' score increased by 56.7% (there were 17 students who could achieve KKM score, $17/30 \times 100\% = 56.7\%$). The results of the observations in cycle 1 showed that some students could not pronounce some words well. Based on the interview results, the students could not pronounce words because the words were too difficult for them to pronounce. The peer assessment results also showed that some students' assessments differed from those of the researcher. The peer assessment results were higher than those of the researcher. To solve this problem, the researcher modified the teaching in cycle two. In cycle two, the researcher used mind mapping to describe an animal. The researcher showed some words and how to pronounce them in the video. The researcher then asked the students to create a mind map based on the picture of an animal and present their oral project.

In Cycle II, there was an improvement in the students' achievement. The average score was 73.33. This means that the students' score increased 76.7%, or there were 23 students could achieve standard score, $23/30 \times 100\% = 76.7\%$. Based on the observations in Cycle 2, some students could pronounce well, but their fluency was poor. Some students spoke with long pauses "em..". because the words are too long. To solve this problem, the researcher modified the teaching strategy to solve students' fluency problems. The researcher used pictures in Cycle 3 to help them. The researcher asked the students to describe the activity in the Figure 1.



Figure 1. Descriptive Text

In the cycle III. The average score of the students was 80.00. This means that the students' score increased 93.3% (there were 28 students could achieve standard score, $28/30 \times 100\% = 93.3\%$. Based on the observation in cycle 3 showed that some students made mistakes in describing because they could not comprehend the picture. To solve this problem, the researcher provided them with some pieces of text based on the picture to match the text with the picture.

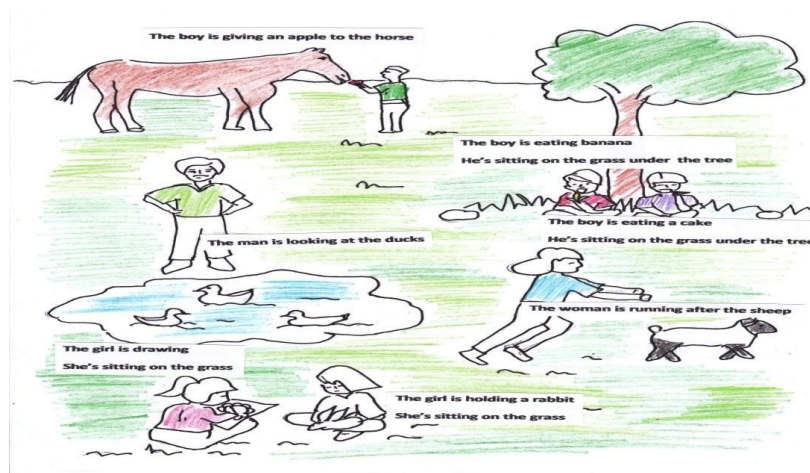


Figure 2. Descriptive Text

However, in the peer assessment results, some students had similarities with the researcher. The interview results showed that video modelling could help them assess their partners based on the rubric. The researcher and the collaborator felt satisfied because the students had significant improvement in their scores from the pretest, posttest 1, and posttest 2, as well as in the components of speaking. They could pronounce and comprehend well. The speaking test results achieved the target score of 85%; therefore, the researcher did not continue this research into the next cycle.

The results of this study are similar to those of (Seifert & Feliks, 2019). This study focused on the agreement between professional assessment or teacher assessment and peer assessment of oral presentation skills and explored student perceptions of peer assessment. All presentations were recorded. The students assessed their peers using a rubric. The results of this study showed a comparison between the teacher and peer assessment rubrics in terms of scoring. With the differential of peer assessment scores and teacher scores, it can be concluded that there is a level of agreement and disagreement when assessing the oral presentations. The peer-assessment scores were mostly higher than the marks given by teachers. This can be explained by differences in the width and depth of their basic experience (Priyono et al., 2021; Saputra & Kusnadi, 2021).

The researcher's study also showed differences when assessing oral presentations as a speaking project. It was found that the peer assessment scores were mostly higher than the marks given by the researcher as the teacher. Students' perceptions of peer assessment influenced their willingness to consider the feedback generated by peer assessment and act on it (Suyanto et al., 2021).

The achievement could be more enhanced if PBL and also peer assessment can be applied in daily teaching learning process. However, the time allotted for this research was not specifically designed but taken from the time allotted for the four skills. Meanwhile, this study focused only on part of one skill. Thus, the cycle procedure could not be performed away from other teaching procedures. To clarify the above result, the following diagram can be used:

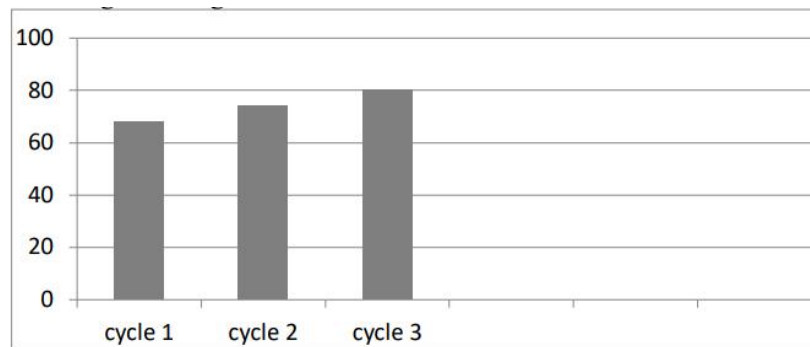


Figure 3. The Percentage of Students Achievement

Data analysis revealed that the students' increased in each cycle. The results of students' scores in every cycle can be seen in the appendix. In cycle one, the average score was 68,93. In cycle two, the average score was 73.3. In cycle three, the highest score was 80.00. The interview results showed that PBL and peer assessment improved students' speaking skills and mts' speaking skiotivation. This technique was very interesting because oral presentation as the speaking project was assessed, and most participants (students) played the role of assessor and assessee. Therefore, they became more aware of their mistakes during oral presentations.

5. Conclusions

The results of the studies showed that the use of peer assessment and project-based learning could improve students' speaking skills and help them understand correct pronunciation through correction. The student commenting peers defined speaking as oral interaction which are conventional was of presenting information, expression, our idea, and thought (Nunan, 1991). It is also appropriate with the advantages of peer assessment by Cassidy (2006) that it is potentially capable of providing increased student responsibility and evaluative skill.

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Author Contributions

DEW contributed to conceptualization, methodology, formal analysis, data collection, investigation, writing—original draft preparation, writing—review and editing, and supervision.

Conflicts of Interest

The authors declare that there is no conflict of interest regarding the publication of this study. This research was conducted independently, and no financial or personal relationships influenced the results or interpretation of the findings.

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