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Students' Self-Confidence in Speaking English During Project-Based Learning Activities

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abstrak — Kemampuan berbicara bahasa Inggris merupakan keterampilan penting di era globalisasi. Namun, banyak siswa masih mengalami kesulitan dalam berkomunikasi karena rendahnya kepercayaan diri. Kepercayaan diri berperan penting dalam mendorong siswa untuk berani berbicara dan berpartisipasi aktif dalam pembelajaran. Salah satu faktor penyebab rendahnya kepercayaan diri adalah metode pembelajaran yang lebih menekankan teori daripada praktik. Pembelajaran Berbasis Proyek (PBL) menawarkan pendekatan yang melibatkan siswa secara aktif melalui kerja kelompok dan penyelesaian proyek. Metode ini tidak hanya membantu meningkatkan kemampuan berbicara, tetapi juga mengembangkan keterampilan berpikir kritis dan rasa percaya diri siswa. Penelitian ini melibatkan 32 siswa SMP Negeri 2 Kalitidu. Data diperoleh melalui observasi dan wawancara untuk mengetahui pengaruh PBL terhadap kepercayaan diri siswa dalam berbicara bahasa Inggris. Hasil penelitian menunjukkan bahwa penerapan PBL memberikan dampak positif terhadap peningkatan kepercayaan diri dan partisipasi siswa dalam aktivitas berbicara. Meskipun terdapat beberapa hambatan, seperti rasa malu dan kendala dalam kerja kelompok, Pembelajaran Berbasis Proyek (PBL) terbukti efektif dalam mendukung pengembangan keterampilan berbicara bahasa Inggris siswa.

Kata kunci — Pembelajaran Berbasis Proyek, Berbicara, Kepercayaan Diri.

Abstract — English speaking ability is a crucial skill in the era of globalization. However, many students still struggle with communication due to low self-confidence. Self-confidence plays a crucial role in encouraging students to speak up and actively participate in learning. One contributing factor to low self-confidence is learning methods that emphasize theory over practice. Project-Based Learning (PBL) offers an approach that actively engages students through group work and project completion. This method not only helps improve speaking skills but also develops critical thinking skills and self-confidence. This study involved 32 students at SMP Negeri 2 Kalitidu. Data were obtained through observations and interviews to determine the effect of PBL on students' confidence in speaking English. The results showed that the implementation of PBL had a positive impact on increasing student confidence and participation in speaking activities. Despite some obstacles, such as shyness and difficulties in group work, Project-Based Learning (PBL) proved effective in supporting the development of students' English speaking skills.

Keywords — Project-Based Learning, Speaking, Self-confidence.

INTRODUCTION

English speaking ability has become a crucial skill in the era of globalization, serving as a tool for international communication in education, technology, and employment. However, many students still struggle to speak English due to a lack of self-confidence. Self-confidence is a crucial factor influencing students' confidence in expressing opinions, interacting, and actively using English in class. According to Dewi et al. (2025), English language proficiency is one of the fundamental skills that students need to develop. This ability is needed both in educational settings and in daily life, and to equip students with the necessary skills to thrive in today's global professional surroundings.

According to Brown (2001), self-confidence plays a significant role in successful language learning because confident students tend to be more willing to take risks in communication. Low student self-confidence is often caused by a fear of making mistakes, a lack of opportunities to practice speaking, and learning methods that focus on theory. As a result, students become passive and less active in speaking activities. Research by Clément et al. (2001) shows that motivation and self-confidence are closely related to foreign language speaking ability.

One method that can be used to increase student self-confidence is Project-Based Learning (PBL). (Thomas (2000) explains that Project-Based Learning (PBL) is a learning approach that actively engages students in completing projects related to real-life situations. Through group work, presentations, and discussions, students gain more opportunities to use English directly, thereby developing their confidence and speaking skills (Nurdianingsih et al., 2021). Stated that although English is not considered a core subject, its teaching and learning process should still be engaging and enjoyable. An enjoyable learning experience can help increase students' interest and motivation to learn English. One effective way to create a more positive and stimulating classroom environment is through the use of appropriate learning media, which can make lessons more interactive and appealing to students.

English speaking skills are essential for global competition (Baker & Westrup, 2013). According to Baker and Westrup (2013), English language proficiency allows students to communicate in a variety of situations and participate globally. In

addition, they point out that mastering English skills not only strengthens students' confidence but also supports their achievement in future careers.

Fitria et al. (2025) stated that students' English speaking ability is influenced by several interconnected factors. Psychological aspects, such as self-confidence and anxiety, significantly affect students' willingness to communicate in English. In addition, linguistic factors, including vocabulary mastery and grammatical competence, significantly affect their speaking performance. External factors, such as limited opportunities to practice and a lack of supportive English speaking surroundings, can also obstruct the improvement of speaking competence. The researcher further explained that students who demonstrate strong learning motivation and receive adequate academic support tend to make greater progress in their speaking ability than those who lack such advantages.

Based on these issues, this study aims to determine how implementing Project-Based Learning(PBL) can improve students' self-confidence in speaking English at SMP Negeri 2 Kalitidu.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

This study adopted a descriptive qualitative research design. Qualitative research aims to explore and understand individuals' experiences, perceptions, and interpretations within their natural environments (Creswell, 2013). Descriptive research seeks to provide a systematic, factual, and accurate account of the characteristics and phenomena of a specific population or setting. This approach was considered suitable for the present study because the primary focus was not on statistically assessing students' speaking performance, but rather on investigating their self-confidence and experiences when using English during project-based learning activities.

According to Moleong (2000), qualitative research is conducted in natural settings and employs qualitative analytical procedures. Data are collected inductively, with the research emphasizing the discovery of underlying theories through descriptive findings. This approach prioritizes the research process over the final

outcomes, utilizes a flexible research design, and encourages mutual agreement regarding the interpretation of findings.

Furthermore, Sugiyono (2015) explains that qualitative research is grounded in the philosophy of postpositivism and is used to examine phenomena in their natural contexts rather than under experimental conditions. In this method, the researcher serves as the primary instrument for data collection. Participants are typically selected through purposive and participant referral sampling, the data were gathered using multiple methods, including triangulation. The analysis process is inductive in nature, and the findings emphasize the interpretation of meaning rather than broad generalizations.

This study was conducted on May 23–24, 2026. The research process consisted of several stages. The first stage involved developing the research design, preparing the research instruments, and obtaining permission from the relevant parties. The second stage focused on conducting observations and collecting data through interviews. The final stage included analyzing the collected data and presenting the research findings.

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

This study was aimed to analyze the factors influencing students' self-confidence and English-speaking ability at SMPN 2 Kalitidu. The data were gathered using interview and observation techniques involving 32 students. The results were categorized into two main aspects: self-confidence and English speaking ability.

The interview results revealed that self-confidence plays an important role in shaping students' speaking performance. Many participants reported that they were shy and having low self-confidence and anxiety were major barriers to speaking English. Students frequently felt afraid of making mistakes and worried that they would receive negative feedback from their classmates or teachers. For instance, one participant, Azis Arteta, stated that he frequently hesitated to speak because he was concerned about using incorrect grammar. This finding suggests that speaking difficulties are closely related to students' self-perceptions and the social pressures they experience in the academic environment.

Regarding English language ability, most students indicated that limited vocabulary and insufficient mastery of grammatical structures. As a result, they experienced difficulties in conveying their thoughts with fluency. Several participants explained that they frequently struggled to construct appropriate sentences or find suitable English words to convey their thoughts. For example, Mufid Fastabiquul K mentioned that although he knew what he wanted to say, he frequently lacked the necessary English vocabulary to express it. These findings demonstrate that challenges in English-speaking ability are strongly associated with inadequate speaking practice and limited practical command of language components.

Self-confidence was also influenced by several environmental and instructional factors. Based on the interview data, many participants reported having limited opportunities to practice speaking in class, insufficient encouragement from teachers to develop speaking confidence, and a lack of supportive environments for using English beyond the classroom. The author's observations confirmed that the English interaction during the classroom activities stayed at a standstill, while Indonesian continued to be the dominant language of communication. One respondent stated that although speaking activities were occasionally provided, the available time was often too limited for all students to participate actively. Furthermore, access to supportive English-speaking environments, such as language clubs or language communities, was still restricted.

The results of this study indicate that students' speaking skills are built through teamwork between self-confidence and English language proficiency. Exploring these interconnected variables are essential for developing more effective instructional strategies that support students' overall speaking development.

Psychological factors, including anxiety, lack of self-confidence, and fear of making mistakes, were identified as major barriers to English speaking. These findings are consistent with the Affective Filter Hypothesis proposed by Stephen Krashen (1982), which suggests that negative emotions such as anxiety can hinder language acquisition and language production. When students are afraid of being judged or making errors, they tend to avoid speaking opportunities, which consequently slows the development of speaking fluency. However, the results also

showed that adequate preparation and support from the surrounding environment can help reduce these barriers. Students who felt well-prepared and had a good understanding of the material generally demonstrated higher confidence and greater willingness to speak in front of others.

Limited vocabulary knowledge and difficulties in applying grammatical rules emerged as significant challenges for many students. Although most participants recognized the importance of grammar in communication, they still found it difficult to use grammatical structures accurately in spontaneous speaking situations.

From the perspective of English-speaking ability, the lack of verbal practice and the absence of English speaking surroundings also contributed to students' difficulties in developing their speaking skills. Most participants felt that classroom instruction remained heavily focused on theoretical knowledge other than communicative practice. This method highlights the necessity of building a collaborative and communicative classroom atmosphere that boosts students' speaking confidence. The concept of Project-Based Learning (PBL) Language theory emphasizes that language is learned most effectively when it is used in authentic social contexts. Therefore, increasing the frequency of activities such as group discussions, presentations, and spontaneous interactions is highly recommended. Furthermore, teachers play a crucial role as facilitators who provide constructive feedback and encouragement to help strengthen students' confidence.

The observational data further supported the interview findings. Students who actively participated in speaking activities tended to demonstrate greater self-confidence, improved speaking fluency, and a better ability to respond to feedback. Nevertheless, many students still displayed passive behavior, spoke in low voices, and experienced difficulty organizing and expressing their ideas coherently. These observations suggest that instructional programs should place greater emphasis on encouraging active participation, developing students' willingness to perform in front of others, and promoting self-reflection through activities such as voice recordings and peer evaluation.

Overall, the study demonstrates that students' English-speaking performance is influenced by both psychological and linguistic factors. Addressing these factors

through supportive learning environments, increased speaking opportunities, and confidence-building activities significantly supports the improvement of students' speaking skills.

CONCLUSION

This study was aimed to explore the factors influencing students' self-confidence and English-speaking skills at SMPN 2 Kalitidu through a descriptive qualitative approach. Based on the interview and observation data, the findings indicate that students' English-speaking performance is influenced by both psychological and linguistic factors.

Psychological Factors including anxiety, fear of making errors, and lack of self-confidence were identified as major obstacles to students' performance that limited students' willingness to speak English. Many students were reluctant to participate in speaking activities because they were concerned about negative evaluation from their peers and teachers. At the same time, linguistic factors, including limited vocabulary and insufficient grammatical knowledge, hindered students from expressing their ideas effectively and fluently.

The study also revealed that environmental and instructional factors contributed to these challenges. Limited opportunities for speaking practice, insufficient encouragement, and the lack of an English-speaking environment reduced students' confidence and restricted their language development. Observation data further showed that students who actively engaged in speaking activities demonstrated higher confidence and better speaking performance than those who remained passive.

In conclusion, self-confidence and English-speaking ability are closely interconnected and mutually influence one another. Therefore, creating a supportive learning environment, providing more opportunities for communicative practice, and implementing confidence-building activities are essential for improving students' speaking skills. These findings suggest that teachers should emphasize interactive and student-centered learning strategies, such as Project-Based Learning, to foster both students' confidence and their English-speaking competence.

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In Conclusion, it is hoped that the findings of this study will contribute to the advancement of speaking instruction strategies, approaches, and teaching methods. Furthermore, this research is expected to provide valuable guidance for educators and future researchers in improving the quality and effectiveness of English language teaching and learning.

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