

# THE EFFORTS TO IMPROVE THE SPEAKING COMPETENCE OF VIII GRADERS AT SMPN 10 PONTIANAK THROUGH PJBL

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Competence,  
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**Abstract** - This classroom action research aimed at improving the English speaking competence of the students of grade VIII at SMPN 10 Pontianak through PjBL (Project-Based Learning). This was classroom action research using Kemmis dan McTaggart model: planning, action, observation and reflection. The result showed, by implementing PjBL, all students reached the minimum standard score of 82, even more students scored above 82. In the interactions, the result of the students' improvement was described from the frequency of their producing English based on the categories. In the 1st cycle, 19 out of 34 students were categorized as good category. There were 10 students who are categorized as average and 5 students who were classified into very good category. There was no student categorized as excellent category. In the 2nd cycle, 14 students out of 34 students were categorized as very good category and 20 students who were classified into good category. There was no more student who categorized as average. There was no student categorized as excellent category. This means that the students' speaking competence has been improved through PjBL.

**Keywords:** speaking competence, PjBL (Project-Based Learning)

## I. Introduction

21<sup>st</sup> century learning that promotes collaborative learning is the demand of 2013 curriculum nowadays. Thus, one of the models of learning available is PjBL. Project Based Learning is a fundamental design of the learning environments. The project based learning environments have five key fundamental characteristics Williams M (2003): a. they start with a problem that needs solving; b. learners explore the driving question by participating in enquiry; c. The stakeholders are included together with learners, teachers and the community at large to find an answer to the problem that needs solving; d. students are provided with access to technologies that are normally beyond their usual abilities e. students create tangible answers to the driving problem. Furthermore the four learning pillars of Project Based Learning are active construction, situated learning, social interactions, and cognitive tools.

Shortly, Project-based learning is a dynamic classroom approach in which students actively explore real-world problems and challenges and acquire a deeper knowledge. It really answers the demand of 21<sup>st</sup> century learning.

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### **Research method**

This type of research was classroom action research (CAR) conducted collaboratively by the researcher with her collaborator, and also the students in grade VIII. The team worked together to improve what had gone on in the classroom by formulating the problems, making plans, implementing the actions, and holding the reflection of the action which had been carried out.

Action research is aimed at solving the existing problems, as Burns (2010,p.2) states:

So, one of the main aims of AR is to identify a ‘problematic’ situation or issue that the participants –who may include teachers, students, managers, administrators,or even parents –consider worth looking into more deeply and systematically.

Action research can be used in a variety of areas, for example, in this research, teaching method which is communicative to replace a traditional method , learning strategies which adopt an integrated approach to learning in preference to single subject style of teaching and learning, evaluative procedures which improve teacher’s method of continuous assessment, encouragement of positive attitudes to learn and to teach , management and control – the gradual introduction of the techniques of behavior modification.

### **Plans of Action**

#### *Reconnaissance*

Reconnaissance was the first step in this research. The researcher interviewed the classroom teacher and the school principal to identify the existing problems in the field. The researcher collected the information by observing the teaching learning process, interviewing some students and the teacher and discussing with the English teacher. The researcher and the teacher shared their problems, opinions, ideas, and problems in teaching and learning in the grade VIII of SMPN 10 Pontianak.

### *Planning*

After identifying and selecting the problems that are serious and feasible to be solved, the researcher and the English teacher made some plans to be implemented in the teaching learning process. The aim of the actions was to improve the students' speaking competence through PjBL.

### *Action and observation*

While implementing the action, the researcher observed what was going on in the classroom to find the problems. The actions were implemented in two cycles. Each cycle was done in three meetings. Besides implementing the action plans, the researcher also observed and recorded the students' reactions during the activities and interviewed some students of grade VIII after the action had been done. The English teacher and the collaborator observed and recorded the teaching and learning process. Based on the observation, field notes, and interviews, the team discussed the implemented actions and analyzed the result.

### *Reflection*

The researcher made a reflection in every cycle. The reflection was important to do because it could be used to measure if the actions were successful or not. The successful actions were continued, and the unsuccessful ones were revised in the next cycle. The reflection was derived from the observation and the interview to the students. They commented on the actions done. The reflection was done to see what happened in the actions, to see whether the objectives were achieved or not.

## **III. Research Result and Discussion**

This research consists of four steps. They are reconnaissance, planning, action and observation, then evaluation and reflection.

### **Research Result**

#### *Reconnaissance*

Before doing the teaching in the selected class, the researcher did some observations of the English teaching and learning process at grade VIII. She interviewed the students of grade VIII at SMP N 10 Pontianak in order to get

information concerning the shortcomings, obstacles and suggestions related to the English teaching and learning process. Based on the interviews and observations during the English teaching and learning process at grade eight of SMPN 10 Pontianak, the researcher identified some problems as follows.

**Table 1**  
Problems of English teaching and learning process at grade VIII  
of SMPN 10 Pontianak

No.	Problems	Code
1.	Most students were shy to speak English.	S
2.	The students' willingness in speaking was low.	S
3.	The students' production in the speaking learning process was low.	S
4.	Some students pronounced some words incorrectly.	S
5.	Various teaching techniques were rarely applied in the English teaching learning process in the previous class (Grade VII)	TM/T
6.	The students were not used to do project	S
7.	The students' self-confidence was low.	S

**Note:**

**S: Students T: Teacher**

**TM: Teaching Method**

Derived from the table, it could be identified that the problems occurred in the English teaching and learning process in grade VIII H of SMPN 10 Pontianak that was related to the students, the teacher, and the teaching method.

In this research, the researcher conducted two major actions to overcome the problems of the speaking learning process in grade VIII H of SMPN 10 Pontianak. The first action was conducting PjBL in which the students made video project and another action was requiring the students to speak English in order to improve their speaking skill

Implementing PjBL which required the students to perform in groups was done to improve the students' speaking skills. The criteria to be judged were fluency, pronunciation, vocabulary, and grammar. Through this PjBL, the students practiced the pronunciation, enriched their vocabulary, made sentences in the appropriate grammar, and improved their fluency. In addition, they also maintained their learning motivation as they could compete with each other during the teaching learning process. They had project which boosted their competence.

Another action was requiring the students to speak English during the teaching and learning process. It was aimed to help the students to practice using the language they had learnt. The students interacted during the teaching learning process with the guidance given by the teacher.

### *Report of Cycle 1*

The classroom activities in the 1st cycle were designed covering 5 stages in scientific method . There were five big things to reflect in the discussion as follows.

First, in the first cycle the researcher successfully did modeling, inspiring the students how to do the project well. This was useful in building the students' self-confidence, they had competence in the theory, by having video project they could practice English. However, there were few students who still had low self-confidence so they were still doubtful in practicing English, especially in their video projects.

Second, the students found video project was the fun activity that they could make improvisation though it needed process.

Third, during the teaching and learning process, the students kept on trying to speak English. In this effort, few students seemed to give up by being silent. They were afraid of making mistakes, they thought they were not accustomed to speaking English.

## *Report of Cycle 2*

The teacher researcher planned the lesson for preparing and seeing the videos and for encouraging all of the students to keep on practicing their English. There were some findings to highlight from the reflection.

First, in the second cycle, all of the students were active. Some performed in their videos and the others questioned and gave comments without being instructed by the teacher. They realized that it was the time for them to practice their English since they never got that much time to practice their English before. They were motivated by the teacher's and their classmates' performances and the continuous motivation given by the teacher to realize that they had competence to speak English.

Second, the students' code switchings from English to *Bahasa Indonesia* were still accepted. The students' maximum exploitation of English as a means of communication during the class activities was very important in promoting the English speaking classroom activity. By allowing the students to do code switching, the students were less burdened, they were not afraid of being stuck in speaking because they did not know the English words. However, they were strongly required not to do code switching on the common words which could lead them to be in the black list.

After accomplishing the two cycles in this classroom action research, some findings of the research were drawn to present the results of the research. The implementation of PjBL as the alternative learning model had benefits on the improvements of the students' speaking competence. They are as follows.

First, the implementation of PjBL was effective to improve the students' self-confidence. In the beginning, shy or less active students were not sure with their competences. By giving them motivation and modelling, they could enjoy the activities as they found that making video and displaying it were the fun activities. They could make an improvisation.

Second, PjBL provided the opportunities to communicate in English. They could practice through the interactions with the other students. They learned some expressions used in daily life available in their scripts.

Third, the researcher as the teacher gave model videos. The teacher even gave tips of how to do the video project in short time and the students were not really

burdened. Besides, the teacher was ready to guide the students out of school time. It enabled the students to be well prepared.

Fourth, the teacher insisted on speaking English clearly and allowed the students to ask the difficult words. The students were also required to speak English. They absolutely had problems since they were not accustomed to speaking English patiently and continuously, the teacher guided and motivated them. In the practice, the students were still allowed to use one or two words in Bahasa Indonesia but they were expectedly not to use bahasa for the same words later on. For speaking Bahasa fully in one sentence, they were punished to be listed in the black list. It was supposed to remind them of the requirement set up during the teaching and learning process.

Fifth, giving rewards to the students during the teaching and learning process was effective to gain their motivation as they became more active in the learning activities. Giving rewards by praising them during the teaching and learning process could gain their enthusiasm to be better. Giving rewards in the form of photo session with the teacher which would be uploaded in the social media was successful to motivate them to perform . Giving reward in the form of stationary to the best group right after the action was successful to gain their motivation to do the performance well and they felt appreciated.

Shortly, in PjBL learning model through video project, all of the students could reach the standardized minimum score, that was 82. The participation of the students in the English speaking class increased both in quality and quantity. PjBL as one of the learning models in 21<sup>st</sup> century learning, it also enables the students to be creative, collaborative, responsible and communicative.

### *Discussion*

The research results were discussed as follows:

#### *Improving the Students' Competence in Speaking English*

The competence of the students in speaking English was improved gradually using PjBL model as the table below shows.

**Table**  
**Progress of the Students' Speaking Competence**

Cycles	Excellent	Very Good	Good	Average
1 --> 2	-	25.71 %	0%	-9%

The table shows that the progress of the students' speaking competence was significant at 25.71%. especially for the students whose scores were categorized very good. In cycle 2, no more student scored average.

#### *Enhancing the Students' Thinking Skill*

The students who used to think in low level, after the implementation of PjBL tended to have critical thinking and to be creative, they asked, commented and criticized. They dared to give comments on the students' video and the students were very creative in giving the improvisations in their videos.

The progress of the student numbers who have high thinking skills, not creative and critical in cycle 1 becoming creative and critical in cycle 2. It can be seen in the following table.

**Table 3**  
**Progress of the Students' Thinking Skill**

Siklus	Berpikir Kritis	Kreatif
1 --> 2	42,86 %	31,43 %

Table 3 shows that the number of the students who are critical and creative cycle 1 compared with cycle 2 has increased, 42,86 % for critical thinking and 31,43 % for creative thinking.

#### *Providing More Activities for the Students to Practice English Orally*

During the implementation of PjBL, the students kept on practicing English with the teacher's guidance although it is quite hard. Yet, they were less burdened as they



were allowed to do code switching if they wanted to utter the low frequency words in English.

The students did not only learned the studied materials (some language expressions), they learned how to make the scripts to be presented in their videos as well. They kept on doing interactions in English and judged their friends' video product. Such activities shows that the implementation of PjBL provides more activities for the students to practice English orally. This condition goes with the learning pillars of Project Based Learning are active construction, situated learning, social interactions stated by William (2003).

#### *Improving the Students' Involvement During the Teaching and Learning Process*

The students were active in the teaching and learning process. They observed, questioned, collected information, associated, communicated and created as well. Those are the activities in the scientific method of Curriculum 2013.

They observed the language features and the use of language expressions they learn, they questioned the teacher if any doubt on the language expressions. They learned more by collecting information and before creating they tried to associate the concept of language features with the utterances they made. Thus, how the implementation of PjBL goes with the the principle of PjBL itself.

#### *Making the Students Enjoy the English Lesson.*

The school has brand JAYA stands for joyful learning, amazingness, yes for goodness and achievement orientation. Thus, implementing Project-Based Learning made the students enjoy the English lesson and obviously it goes with the brand of the school.

## **IV. Conclusions and Suggestions**

### *Conclusions*

The research findings and discussion in Chapter IV showed that the students' speaking skill at grade VIII of SMPN 10 pontianak was improved by implementing PjBL. It was implemented in the form of group performance followed by the

interaction, there were also some activities to support the action such as giving simple classroom English during the teaching learning process, learning about some expressions. In addition, the way of how to do video project was also explained by the teacher.

The research findings and discussion also showed that the students learned about local wisdom. The researcher found that the actions implemented could : (1) improve the students' competence to speak English during the English teaching and learning process, (2) enhance the students' collaboration (3) provide more activities for students to practice English orally during the teaching and learning process, (4) improve the students' involvement during the English teaching and learning process, (5) make the students enjoy the English lesson since video project is amusing.

### *Suggestions*

Based on the conclusions, implications that have been mentioned above, some suggestions are presented to some parties.

#### 1. To the English teachers

It is important for teachers to provide various activities for the teaching and learning process. They should be able to create interesting activities so that the students feel excited during their teaching and learning process. To be able to create interesting activities, the teachers should understand the students' characteristics and interests. The implementation of PjBL in the class is included the remarkable practice to improve the students' speaking skill. The teacher is also supposed to manage the class well by recognising the characteristics of the students in advance.

#### 2. To the schools

It is very crucial in learning language that the students need to practice a lot, in this case the schools should provide the opportunity for the students to practice their English. As stated in the previous chapters that the students of SMPN 10 Pontianak have good language competence, the problem was they were not given sufficient opportunity to practice speaking. In order to solve it, the two efforts

suggested are there should be special days at least two days for the teachers and the students and all the entire school if it is possible to speak

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### 5. To the Education Department Office

It is very important for the teacher to master English so that their students can be taught by the qualified teachers who have self-confidence for they are excellent in their pronunciation, grammar, vocabulary and fluency. To upgrade and train the teachers, the education department office should conduct short courses if possible guided by the native speaker in English. The short courses can be on the training for the teachers to become creative teachers in teaching as in the research, the

problems existed triggered by the uncreativity. The teachers are urgently trained to design the teaching and learning process in which the students are exposed to have high order thinking skills.

6. To the other researchers

The research was only focused on improving the speaking skill through video project. However, here were still many problems related to the teaching and learning process that have not been solved yet. Besides, there are still many ways to improve the speaking skill. Therefore, this research can be used as a reading material before the other researchers do the other action research to improve speaking skill of the students' by using the other engaging techniques.

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