

CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

A. Background of the Research

Speaking skills enable one to communicate effectively in everyday situations, as speaking is an essential skill for second language learners to communicate with native and non-native speakers and participate in real-life situations (Jabber & Mahmood, 2020). Speaking skills are the most difficult English language skills to master. English-speaking classes in many countries have many problems that reduce opportunities to improve speaking accuracy and familiarity, such as having insufficient time, crowded classroom environments, missed opportunities to practice outside of lessons, and waste of interactive media frameworks in class, and others (Omar, 2024). Furthermore, in the context of EFL, English is often only used in class or during exams, and is rarely used in everyday communication. This results in a lack of speaking practice opportunities, making speaking skills difficult for students to master (Riswanto et al., 2022). Project-based learning methods offer a suitable way for contemporary curriculum as students get hands-on experience in using English in real-world situations. Project-based learning is an effective method used to improve learners' English learning and skills, especially in the development of speaking skills (Sirisrimangkorn, L. 2021).

There are many factors that cause students to have low English speaking skills, such as what happens at SMPN 16 Bengkulu City, some of the causes are the first because the teacher does not use the right method when teaching English speaking. Conventional teaching methods that focus on memorization and are not student-centered cannot actively involve students in the learning process. Secondly, the methods used by teachers are not varied, many teachers still rely on the lecture method, thus giving little room for active participation and speaking practice in the classroom. Another problem is students' lack of motivation to practice speaking in English. This lack of enthusiasm can stem from a variety of factors, such as fear of making mistakes, and low self-esteem. Without engaging activities and adequate encouragement, students may struggle to overcome these speaking challenges and improve their skills. Thus, many students experience difficulties in expressing their thoughts orally due to lack of practice, low self-confidence, and lack of exposure to authentic communication activities.

In a previous study, Sirisrimangkorn (2021) found that project-based learning can improve English speaking skills by 0.01 compared to before the application of project-based learning. Urgilez (2022) found project based learning has resulted in considerable improvement in students' oral production. Tu (2024), found that improving the speaking

ability of English as a Foreign Language (EFL) learners by using project-based learning (PjBL) with local materials is very effective. Combining active project-based tasks with culturally relevant content enhances a more dynamic learning environment and supports the development of language skills and soft skills such as cooperation and thinking.

Based on the above phenomenon, the researcher is interested in exploring the effectiveness of project-based learning and conducting a study with the title “The Effect of Project Based Learning Method on Students’ English-Speaking Skills at SMPN 16 Bengkulu City”. This title was chosen because it fits the need to find practical and evidence-based solutions in learning English speaking skills. This research aims at the implementation of project-based learning. In addition, this study aims to measure the level of effectiveness of project-based learning in improving students' speaking skills. The results of this study are expected to provide empirical data supporting the application of communicative methodology to improve learners' speaking skills.

B. Identification of the Problem

There are several factors that contribute to students' low English-speaking skills. As the case at SMPN 16 Bengkulu city, the main factor is that teachers usually use the wrong teaching method, with lots of lectures in English with little

interaction or discussion. This method emphasizes more on mastering vocabulary and grammar, but not using them in real communication. Secondly, the methods used are not varied, students often learn through lectures and rarely use methods that can make students more involved.

Students have low motivation to learn to speak in English, which is an additional influencing factor. Many students are reluctant to try for fear of making mistakes. Uninteresting learning activities and inadequate support make students bored and unmotivated to participate actively. Everything shows that teachers rarely involve students in creative activities that can enhance their learning, such as educational games, group presentations, or interactive discussions. As a result, students have difficulty conveying their ideas orally.

C. Limitation of the Problem

The problem limitation in this research is focused on the impact of the implementation of Project-Based Learning (PjBL) method on students' English-speaking skills at SMPN 16 Bengkulu City. This study will only evaluate the effect of the PjBL method in the aspect of speaking skills, which includes fluency, accuracy, and comprehensibility. This study does not cover other English language skills such as reading, writing or listening, nor does it address other factors beyond the application of PjBL.

D. Research Question

Is there a significant effect of using project-based learning method on students' English-speaking skills at SMPN 16 Bengkulu City?

F. Research Objective

The purpose of this study is to determine whether there is an effect of applying project-based learning methods on students' English-speaking skills at SMPN 16 Bengkulu City.

G. The Significances of the Research

The following is the significance of this research:

1. Theoretical significance

This research provides benefits to the development of language teaching theories, especially about the effectiveness of project-based learning applications in improving speaking skills. The results of this study can strengthen or update the theoretical basis regarding the application of the project-based learning method.

2. Practical significance

- a. For teachers: This research can be a guide for teachers in choosing and implementing project-based learning in English language learning.
- b. For students: Project-based learning can help students improve their confidence, pronunciation, and fluency

in speaking English.

- c. For further research: This research can serve as a reference for further studies that compare the effectiveness of project-based learning with other methods in improving speaking skills or explore its application using modern technology for language learning.

