

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

A. Background of the Study

Speaking skill is one of the most important language skills in mastering English. It does not only function as a tool of communication but also serves as an indicator of students' success in applying the knowledge they have learned. However, in the real teaching practice at schools, speaking skill often receives less attention because the learning process is still more focused on reading and writing aspects. This condition affects students' confidence and their ability to express ideas, opinions, and thoughts orally in English.

Many students often experience high levels of anxiety when learning speaking skills. Shamsuri, Anita, Kamaruddin, and Azhan (2021) explain that this anxiety usually comes from low self-confidence, fear of making mistakes, lack of practice, and the pressure to speak spontaneously. These factors make it difficult for students to improve their speaking skills. However, there are several ways to reduce this excessive anxiety. According to Shamsuri, Anita, Kamaruddin, and Azhan (2021), a supportive classroom environment, opportunities given by the teacher, two-way communication, and constructive feedback can significantly help lower students' speaking anxiety.

Based on the initial observation, SMAN Keberbakatan Olahraga Kota Bengkulu is a senior high school with special

characteristics, where most of the students focus on sports. This situation sometimes makes English learning considered less of a priority compared to other academic fields. In addition, the teachers in this school have not yet applied innovative teaching methods, especially Project-Based Learning (PjBL), in teaching English. In fact, Project-Based Learning can be an effective alternative to improve students' speaking skills because it provides opportunities for them to learn through real projects, work collaboratively, and communicate their thoughts and creativity in spoken form.

Therefore, this research is conducted to examine the effect of using Project-Based Learning on the improvement of speaking skills of eleventh-grade students at SMAN Keberbakatan Olahraga Kota Bengkulu. This study is expected to contribute to the development of more varied and innovative English teaching methods that meet students' needs, especially in the context of a sports-based school. Through the implementation of Project-Based Learning, students are expected not only to improve their speaking ability but also to gain higher motivation in learning English as an essential skill in today's global era.

According to Sirisrimangkorn (2021), project-based learning (PjBL) with presentations proved effective in improving EFL students' speaking skills through presentation tasks, scaffolding activities, and integrated skill practice, as well as creating a supportive collaborative learning

environment. However, the study also identified time constraints as a major challenge and recommended the integration of community-based contexts for more optimal results.

The Project-Based Learning (PjBL) method has been empirically proven to make a significant contribution to improving students' speaking skills in language learning, particularly in English. The implementation of PjBL not only focuses on final outcomes in the form of quantitative improvements in speaking ability, but also enhances the learning process through collaborative, participatory, and problem-solving-oriented approaches (Firdaus & Septiady, 2023; Widiyati & Pangesti, 2022). By involving students in real-world projects that require active and contextual language use, PjBL creates a more dynamic and enjoyable learning environment, thereby facilitating the development of students' self-confidence and intrinsic motivation in communication. Furthermore, this approach fosters the development of 21st-century skills such as teamwork, creativity, and innovation, which are highly relevant to the needs of modern education. On the other hand, traditional teaching methods are considered less effective in addressing students' needs in developing speaking skills due to limited active student engagement and insufficient opportunities for real communicative practice. PjBL emerges as a pedagogical solution that offers project-based learning experiences, emphasizing active student involvement in every

stage of the learning process. This allows students to build vocabulary, improve fluency, and refine grammatical structures through repeated practice in authentic situations (Maros et al., 2021). Nevertheless, the implementation of PjBL also faces several challenges, such as difficulties in time management, unequal distribution of roles within groups, and the need for intensive teacher facilitation. Therefore, further in-depth research is required to explore optimal strategies for the implementation of PjBL in order to fully maximize its potential in holistically improving students' speaking skills (Mayekti et al., 2025).

Based on various previous research findings, the Project-Based Learning (PjBL) method has been proven effective in improving the speaking skills of English as a Foreign Language (EFL) students. The implementation of PjBL not only has a positive impact on linguistic aspects such as fluency, vocabulary mastery, grammatical accuracy, and pronunciation, but also contributes to increased active participation, creativity, and students' positive attitudes in the speaking learning process. The effectiveness of this method is further strengthened through the integration of supporting strategies such as presentations, peer assessment, and the use of relevant community-based contexts. However, challenges such as limited time remain obstacles in optimizing the comprehensive implementation of PjBL. Based on preliminary observations, it has been identified that SMAN Keberbakatan

Olahraga Kota Bengkulu has not yet implemented the PjBL method in its teaching activities, particularly in the instruction of speaking skills. Therefore, the researcher is interested in further investigating The Effect of Using the Project-Based Learning (PjBL) Method on Improving Students' Speaking Skills at SMAN Keberbakatan Olahraga Kota Bengkulu as an innovative effort to enhance the effectiveness of English language learning at the school.

B. Identification of the Problems

This study aims to investigate the effect of using the PjBL method in improving students' speaking ability at this school. By focusing on this approach, this study sought to determine whether PjBL can improve students' ability to communicate effectively and provide the skills needed for academic and professional contexts.

1. Limited variety in teaching methods

Some teachers have not yet implemented a variety of teaching methods in the teaching and learning process. The process is still largely dominated by the conventional use of Student Worksheets (LKS) without the application of innovative approaches.

2. Lack of implementation of Project-Based Learning (PjBL)

Although some teachers have adopted certain teaching methods, Project-Based Learning has not been optimally implemented in the learning process. A lack of

understanding or training related to the PjBL method may be one of the contributing factors.

3. Low speaking ability among students

Students demonstrate a low level of speaking ability, particularly in foreign language learning. One of the main causes is their lack of self-confidence in using the language orally, both in the classroom and in other contexts.

C. Limitation of the Problem

This research is limited to improving speaking skills through the Project-Based Learning (PjBL) method. The focus is only on how the Project-Based Learning (PjBL) method affects students' speaking skills at SMAN Keberbakatan Olahraga Kota Bengkulu.

D. Research Question

Is there any effect of the project-based learning (PjBL) method on improving students' speaking skills at SMAN Keberbakatan Olahraga Kota Bengkulu?

E. Research Objective

To investigate if there is or not the effect of the project-based learning (PjBL) method on improving students' speaking skills at SMAN Keberbakatan Olahraga Kota Bengkulu.

F. The Significants of the Research

1. Theoretical Benefits

This study can provide teachers with practical evidence of the impact of PjBL in improving students'

speaking skills. It may encourage more teachers to implement communicative tasks in their teaching methods, fostering a more interactive and engaging language learning environment.

2. Practical Benefits

This study provides teachers with concrete evidence on how PjBL can improve speaking ability among students. The findings can serve as a guide for teachers to effectively incorporate PjBL into their teaching methods, thus creating a more engaging and student-centered classroom, which can improve students' language skills and prepare them to face the real world.

3. Further Research

This study will add to the existing references on PjBL, particularly in the context of secondary schools in Indonesia. Future researchers can use this study as a basis to explore other aspects of PjBL, such as its impact on different language abilities or its applicability in various educational settings.

G. Definitions of Key Terms

1. Project-Based Learning (PjBL)

Project-Based Learning (PjBL), according to John Dewey, is an experiential learning approach that positions the school as a "social laboratory," where students actively engage in exploration, interpretation, and the creation of new knowledge. PBL serves as a reconstruction or reorganization of experience aimed at enhancing students'

understanding and skills in directing their own learning through direct interaction with the environment and critical reflection (Maida, 2011, pp. 759-768).

2. Speaking Skills

Speaking skills refer to the ability to use spoken language in various communication contexts, including social interactions, information exchange, and formal message delivery. These skills encompass aspects such as fluency, accuracy, topic management, questioning strategies, and the use of expressions appropriate to the situation and communication objectives (Richards, 2008).

