

CHAPTER I INTRODUCTION

This chapter introduces the research on enhancing junior high school students' English-speaking competence through Project-Based Learning (PBL) with a drama project. It begins with the Background of the Research, discussing the challenges students face, such as limited vocabulary, low confidence, and lack of engaging activities. The Research Questions focus on how PBL can address these issues, while the Objectives of the Research aim to explore its effectiveness in improving pronunciation and fluency. The Significance of the Study highlights its contribution to English education and practical teaching strategies. The Scope of the Research defines the study's context and participants, followed by Clarification of Key Terms to ensure a clear understanding of concepts. Lastly, the Organization of the Thesis outlines the structure of this document for coherence and guidance. In the following section, the background of the study is explained in more detail.

1.1 Background

Mastering English at secondary school level is becoming increasingly important in the age of globalization (Hidayati, 2022). However, many students find it difficult to enhance their confidence in speaking (Wang, 2014). Speaking competence is one of the most essential and challenging skills for students learning English as a foreign language. In many classrooms, including the one under investigation, students rarely respond to questions in English. Only one or two students are accustomed to answering in English, while the majority hesitate or remain silent. When asked why they were reluctant to speak in English, many students expressed that they lack the ability to form sentences in English due to limited vocabulary. This aligns with findings by Nurhadi (2020), who revealed that vocabulary limitations are a significant barrier to speaking competence among Indonesian students.

Furthermore, students in this study also admitted to lacking confidence, fearing they would make mistakes while speaking. This is consistent with the findings of

Brown (2018), who noted that fear of making errors and lack of self-confidence significantly hinder students' speaking performance.

In research regarding the effect of drama method in improving English speaking competence, some previous studies have made significant contributions. Research by Istanto (2018) to enhance the English-speaking skills of vocational students through drama method with the results of classroom action research of the analysis shows that the interest of English on the implementation of interactive drama influences TOEFL speaking test value.

Meanwhile, a study by Isnani (2013) found that the drama method plays an important role in improving pronunciation and intonation skills in English pronunciation in elementary school students. In addition, research by Bardiyono (2017) revealed that drama activities play a good role in efforts to enhance students' speaking skills in high school, namely an increase in the average value of student speaking in the pre-cycle of 52.47, and 61.96 in cycle I and 71.34 in cycle II.

Incorporating creative and contextualized learning methods, such as drama projects, has been shown to help students overcome these challenges. Rahman and Putri (2022) found that drama projects not only enhance students' vocabulary and confidence but also foster a more interactive and enjoyable learning environment.

The integration of drama projects into English learning has proven to be highly effective in enhancing students' speaking skills, particularly at the secondary school level. Drama provides an authentic context that encourages active participation, boosts confidence, and helps students overcome their fear of making mistakes when speaking in a foreign language. Lestari et al. (2018) demonstrated that implementing drama in English teaching at SMK Negeri 1 Metro significantly enhanced students' speaking competence, especially in terms of fluency and intonation.

Sutanto et al. (2019) explored the use of musical drama in English learning and found a significant enhancement in students' speaking performance and confidence. The study revealed that drama not only enhances speaking ability but also positively affects students' affective factors, such as reducing anxiety and building self-

assurance. This finding is particularly relevant for secondary school students, who often face psychological barriers when practicing English speaking skills.

Research on using drama as a project in teaching speaking has demonstrated its effectiveness in enhancing students' speaking skills, including fluency, pronunciation, and confidence (Lestari et al., 2018; Sutanto et al., 2019). However, most of these studies focus on higher levels of education, such as university or vocational high schools, leaving a gap in understanding its impact at the junior high school levels.

While previous studies have highlighted the benefits of drama in improving speaking competence, few have explored its application in classrooms with diverse learner profiles, such as kinesthetic learners who are highly active and often struggle with focus and motivation. These students may benefit more from interactive and movement-based activities like drama, but limited research has explicitly addressed this potential benefit. The teacher will conduct the research on a class with low interest in learning and rather use the case study method. Therefore, this study aims to fill the gap by analyzing the effectiveness of using the drama method on students to increase their interest in learning and speaking English.

1.2 Research Questions

The research question plays an important role in a thesis, as it forms the main foundation that guides the entire research process. In this section, the formulation of the research question aims to provide a suitable direction for data collection and analysis, while also ensuring that the research conducted is able to answer the problems raised in a comprehensive and in-depth manner. Therefore, in this section, the study will present the key question that will guide the research in uncovering the problems and achieving the research objectives in a systematic and directed manner. The research questions of this study were:

1. How does the use of Project-Based Learning (PBL) enhance students' English-speaking competence, particularly in terms of pronunciation and fluency?
2. How does the implementation of Project-Based Learning (PBL) influence students' confidence in speaking English?

1.3 Research Objectives

Based on the research questions above, there were the aims of the present study. This study aims to explore the effects of Project-Based Learning (PBL) on students' English-speaking competence and confidence. Specifically, the research objectives are as follows:

1. To explore how the use of Project-Based Learning (PBL) enhances students' English-speaking competence, particularly in terms of pronunciation and fluency.
2. To examine how the implementation of Project-Based Learning (PBL) influences students' confidence in speaking English.

1.4 Significance of Research

It is hoped that this study could make a useful contribution to English language education at the junior high school level. By focusing on Project-Based Learning (PBL), this research aims to provide some insights into how creative teaching methods might potentially enhance both students' English-speaking proficiency and their self-confidence in using the language. It would be beneficial for students to develop these skills, as they will help them to perform well academically and communicate effectively in real-world situations.

It is also hoped that this study will also offer some practical implications for teachers who are seeking innovative approaches to engage learners actively and address some of the common challenges in English language teaching, such as a lack of motivation and anxiety during speaking tasks.

The use of drama activities as a project-based learning (PBL) approach holds considerable potential to enhance junior high school students' English-speaking proficiency, specifically in areas such as fluency, vocabulary, and pronunciation. By engaging students in structured drama activities, they can immerse themselves in real-life language use, which naturally enhances their ability to speak more fluently and accurately.

Furthermore, this approach could also positively influence students' self-confidence when speaking English, both in public settings and within the

classroom. Evaluating the impact of drama-based learning on students' confidence is crucial, as confidence often plays a central role in successful language acquisition. Thus, incorporating drama in language instruction not only aids language mastery but also fosters a supportive environment that encourages students to express themselves with greater assurance.

Integrating drama activities into English-speaking exercises provides teachers with practical strategies to enhance student engagement and involvement. By using drama, teachers can create a dynamic and interactive learning environment that encourages students to actively participate, thereby improving their language skills through experiential learning.

Drama projects promote collaboration and performance, which are effective methods to boost students' confidence in speaking English. Through activities such as role-playing, group presentations, and improvisation, students can practice language use in a supportive setting, making it easier to overcome hesitation and build the confidence needed to speak English more fluently in various contexts.

Providing a dynamic and engaging platform for language practice can significantly aid students in developing their English-speaking abilities. Interactive activities, such as role-playing, group discussions, and presentations, not only make language practice more enjoyable but also offer students valuable opportunities to use English in real-life contexts.

This approach also helps to reduce students' anxiety and build their confidence when speaking English, creating a supportive environment that encourages them to express themselves freely. By minimizing fear of making mistakes, students can foster a more positive outlook towards language learning, allowing them to progress with greater enthusiasm.

1.5 Scope of Research

This study focuses on exploring the application of Project-Based Learning (PBL) through drama activities to enhance junior high school students' speaking

competence. Specifically, the research investigates how this method can improve students' pronunciation and fluency in speaking English.

The research was conducted in a Grade IX classroom of a public junior high school in Bandung, Indonesia. This urban school represents a diverse student population with varying socio-economic backgrounds, ranging from middle to low-income families.

The participants consisted of 40 Grade IX students, selected based on their varying levels of English-speaking proficiency and motivation. The diversity in their language competence allowed for a comprehensive evaluation of the drama project's effectiveness.

The study emphasizes the integration of PBL with drama to address challenges faced by students in speaking English, such as limited of pronunciation, fear of making mistakes, and lack of confidence. Drama activities are employed as tools to create interactive and engaging learning environments.

This research adopts a qualitative case study method. Classroom observations, pre-tests, post-tests, and student interviews are utilized to measure improvements in speaking skills and assess students' perceptions of the learning process.

The study focuses solely on speaking competence without addressing other language skills such as reading, writing, or listening. Additionally, the findings are specific to the selected school and may not be directly generalizable to other contexts.

The expected outcomes include enhanced speaking competence, increased confidence, and a greater interest in learning English among students. These results aim to provide insights for teachers on the potential of drama-integrated PBL in English language teaching.

1.6 Clarification of Key Terms

Several terms are used throughout this study and are defined here in the context of their application.

1. Drama Project

A drama project refers to a structured activity in which students participate in theatrical performances, including acting, scriptwriting, and staging. It is used as a medium to enhance language skills through creative expression and collaboration in an educational setting. In this study, the drama project serves as a tool to improve students' speaking competence by engaging them in real-life communication scenarios.

2. Enhancing

Enhancing refers to the process of improving or increasing the quality, value, or effectiveness of something. According to Oxford English Dictionary (2023), *enhance* means to intensify, increase, or further improve the quality or value of something. In the context of this study, enhancing relates to deliberate efforts to improve junior high school students' speaking competence through the implementation of drama projects. This involves fostering better pronunciation, fluency, and confidence in their spoken English abilities (Richards & Renandya, 2002).

3. English Learning

English learning is the process of acquiring proficiency in the English language, encompassing the development of listening, speaking, reading, and writing skills. According to Harmer (2007), effective English learning integrates active participation and meaningful communication. In this study, English learning focuses on improving students' speaking abilities through project-based drama activities.

4. Junior High School Students

Junior high school students are learners aged approximately 12 to 15 years who are in the transitional phase between primary and senior high school education. This group often requires engaging and interactive methods to maintain motivation in learning, particularly in language acquisition (Brown, 2001).

5. Fluency

Fluency refers to the ability to speak a language smoothly and effortlessly without unnecessary pauses or hesitation. Richards (2006) defines fluency as the ability to produce spoken language at a normal conversational speed. In this study, fluency is measured by the students' ability to communicate ideas during drama performances with minimal hesitation.

6. Project-Based Learning (PBL)

Project-Based Learning (PBL) is a student-centered teaching approach that involves collaborative projects to solve real-world problems or complete tasks. As Thomas (2000) explains, PBL engages students in active exploration and meaningful learning. In this study, PBL is implemented through drama projects to enhance students' speaking competence.

7. Pronunciation

Pronunciation is the aspect of speaking that involves producing sounds of a language correctly, including stress, intonation, and rhythm. According to Kelly (2000), accurate pronunciation is essential for clear communication. This study focuses on improving students' pronunciation as part of their speaking competence development through drama activities.

8. Speaking Competence

Speaking competence refers to the ability to communicate effectively in spoken language, including elements such as fluency, pronunciation, vocabulary, and grammar. Brown (2004) emphasizes that speaking competence is a critical component of language proficiency. This study examines how drama projects can enhance the speaking competence of junior high school students.

9. Confidence

Confidence in the context of this study is defined as the students' self-assurance and comfort in expressing themselves orally in English. As Bandura (1997) suggests, confidence plays a vital role in performance and motivation. This research explores how participating in drama projects can boost students' confidence in speaking English in front of an audience.

1.7 Organization of the Thesis

This thesis is divided into five chapters. Some brief information on the organization of the thesis was presented as follows:

1. Chapter I

In the first chapter of this thesis, the teacher gives the information about the background of the research, the research question, the purpose of this study, the clarification of the key terms and the structure of the thesis.

2. Chapter II

In the second chapter of the paper, it consists of a review of the literature related to this research, they are speaking competence theory, The Project-Based Learning (PBL) method, and theories that support PBL and drama.

3. Chapter III

In the third chapter of the thesis, a brief explanation of the research methodology used in this research to answer the research question will be given. It includes a research design, data collection techniques, data analysis and research intervention.

4. Chapter IV

The fourth chapter provides the findings and discussions where the details of the teaching programme are conducted, steps taken in the process of data collection, as well as analyses of some parts of the data obtained, particularly from observations.

5. Chapter V

In chapter five, the teacher concludes and discusses the findings, as well as describes the limitations of the current study and the direction of future research.