

Improving Students' Speaking Skills Through Project-Based English Health Promotion Activities

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Abstract

This study aimed to examine the effectiveness of Project-Based English Health Promotion Activities in improving students' speaking skills. The study used a quasi-experimental design with two groups : a control group taught using conventional methods and an experimental group taught using project-based learning. The participants were 50 fourth-semester undergraduate Public Health students, divided into two classes of 25 students each. Students' speaking skills were assessed through a pre-test and post-test focusing on fluency, accuracy, pronunciation, vocabulary, and confidence. The data were analyzed using t-tests. The results showed that both groups improved their speaking skills, but the experimental group achieved significantly higher improvement than the control group ($p < 0.05$). The study concludes that Project-Based English Health Promotion Activities are effective in enhancing students' speaking skills and can be applied in English for Specific Purposes (ESP) instruction, particularly in health-related programs.

INTRODUCTION

The ability to speak English is a very important skill in the era of globalisation, especially for health students who will interact in international settings, seminars, conferences, global health literacy and the world of work. However, in reality, many students still experience difficulties in speaking English due to a lack of confidence, fear of making mistakes and a lack of practical, applicable training. Speaking is a common way we use to communicate every day. Speaking allows us to express ideas, feelings and thoughts verbally and spontaneously. Speaking is one of the arts of language because speaking provides interaction with others. Speaking performance is a person's speaking style which is measured based on accuracy and fluency.

Harmer (2021) states that speaking is a real-time process that requires learners to think, organize ideas, and produce language simultaneously. Therefore, speaking development depends heavily on frequent practice and exposure to authentic communication. Speaking is a language skill or means of communication through which a person can communicate thoughts, feelings, and facts to others verbally. The ability to speak plays an important role in communication, namely to convey

ideas, opinions, messages, and feelings to others, as well as to express thoughts and desires, and to socialise and communicate or interact.

Hung (2019) Project-Based Learning promotes deeper learning by integrating content knowledge with critical thinking, creativity, communication, and collaboration. Through project work, students are encouraged to apply concepts, analyze information, and produce concrete outcomes that demonstrate their understanding.

Currently, many students still experience difficulties in mastering speaking skills, such as limited vocabulary, low confidence, and a lack of practice in conversing in English. One approach that can be used to address this issue is to integrate speaking learning into health promotion activities for the community using English-language media. The use of English language media such as speaking applications, watching videos, writing infographics and listening to English podcasts. Appropriate learning strategies so that students are able to speak English and become agents of change in disseminating health information through the media.

This indicates a research gap regarding how English speaking skills can be developed through project-based health promotion tasks that utilize digital media such as speaking applications, videos, infographics, and podcasts. Moreover, limited studies examine the role of health students as agents of change who disseminate health information in English to the community. Therefore, this study aims to address this gap by investigating the effectiveness of integrating English speaking learning into community-based health promotion projects, providing students with practical, meaningful, and applicable speaking experiences.

This study was made to find out Improving Speaking Skills Through Project-Based English Health Promotion Activities by public health students of fourth semester public health Department Faculty of Public health Institut Kesehatan Medistra Lubuk Pakam 2024/2025.

REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE

Defenition of Speaking

According to Richards (2018) Speaking is defined as the ability to communicate meaning effectively and appropriately in various contexts. Recent perspectives emphasize that speaking competence includes fluency, accuracy, pragmatic use, and strategic communication.

In recent educational research, Bell (2021) emphasizes that PjBL supports learner autonomy and motivation by allowing students to take responsibility for planning, implementing, and presenting their projects. This approach shifts the teacher's role from instructor to facilitator, providing guidance and scaffolding throughout the learning process.

Furthermore, Kokotsaki, Menzies, and Wiggins (2022) highlight that Project-Based Learning fosters meaningful learning experiences because it connects classroom instruction with real-life contexts. Students develop problem-solving skills and gain practical experience that enhances long-term knowledge retention.

WHO (Ottawa Charter, 1986) Health promotion is the process of enabling people to increase control over, and to improve, their health. Health promotion is the process of enabling individuals and communities to increase control over and improve their health. It focuses not only on individual behavior but also on social, environmental, and policy-related factors that influence health.

Previous Research

Several previous studies have shown that Project-Based Learning (PjBL) is an effective approach to improve students' English speaking skills, particularly when integrated with real-life contexts such as health promotion activities. Their study emphasized that meaningful projects provide authentic opportunities for oral communication.

A study by Bell (2010) revealed that PjBL enhances students' communication skills by engaging them in problem-solving and presentation-based tasks. Students were required to present

project outcomes orally, which led to improvements in pronunciation, vocabulary use, and speaking confidence. In the context of English for Specific Purposes (ESP), Tseng (2014) reported that project-based activities related to students' academic or professional fields significantly increased speaking motivation and communicative competence. Health-related topics were found to be particularly effective because they are relevant to students' future careers.

Research by Wahyuni and Ibrahim (2020) showed that Project-Based Learning improved students' speaking skills in terms of fluency, accuracy, and interaction. The study highlighted that project presentations encouraged students to practice English more intensively and meaningfully. Furthermore, Rahmawati et al. (2021) integrated health campaign projects into English speaking classes and found that students demonstrated better speaking performance and higher confidence. The use of health promotion themes made students more engaged because the projects were connected to real social issues. More recently, Sari and Putra (2023) examined the use of English health promotion videos as project outcomes. The findings indicated that students' speaking skills improved significantly, especially in pronunciation and public speaking ability, as students practiced repeatedly before delivering health promotion messages.

METHOD

Research Design

The research design is an experimental research design using a quantitative research with one group pre-test-post-test. This design only involves one group as the subject and it involves three steps: pretest, treatment, and post-test. Pretest is given before treatment. To find out students' speaking skill they have been taught using project based english. Post-test is given after treatment. Meanwhile, during the treatment, researchers applied project based english as a strategy for learning to speaking.

The data of this research is to use a research instrument is a device used by researchers when collecting data to make work easier and get better complete and systematic results so that data is easily processed (Arikunto, S, 2008).

Research Subject

The subjects of this research were fourth-semester public health undergraduate students in classes A and B. The population consisted of 50 fourth-semester students enrolled in the Public Health study department at the Faculty of Public Health, Medistra Health Institute, Lubuk Pakam. Data were obtained using random sampling with a lottery technique. With random sampling, the entire population had an equal chance of being sampled. The students were divided into two groups, namely one group for the experimental group and one group for the control group. Therefore, each group consisted of 25 students.

The Instrument of Collecting the Data

Data collection was conducted using an oral test as the research data instrument. This test was divided into two parts: a pre-test and a post-test.

The Technique of Collecting Data

Students selected relevant topics, formed groups, developed projects, and made presentations (podcasts). After that, students were given the opportunity to present their work in the form of podcasts. The testing procedure was recorded on camera and documented.

The Technique of Analyzing the Data

Data analysis explained the kind of statistics analysis using t-test which is used. In this study, the data obtains from the experimental.

FINDINGS

There was a significant improvement in speaking skills class A and class B. The improvement in class B (project based english health promotion activities) was much higher than class A. An independent t-test on the post-test scores showed a significant difference between the two classes ($p < 0.05$).

Table 1. Score Pre-test and Post-test

Students	Pte-test	Post-test
1	58	78
2	59	80
3	56	76
4	60	82
5	57	77
6	61	83
7	55	75
8	62	85
9	57	77
10	59	80
11	56	76
12	60	82
13	58	78
14	57	77
15	61	83
16	59	80
17	55	75
18	63	86
19	58	78
20	56	76
21	60	82
22	57	77
23	59	80
24	58	78
25	61	83

Rate scores

Pre-test = 58,6 and Post-test = 79,9

Tabel 2. Paired Test (Pres-test and Post-test)

Class	T-count	Sig.(p)	Descrip
A class (Conventional)	6,12	0,000	Significant
B (PjBL)	14, 85	0,000	Significant

Tabel 3. Independent- Test (Post-test A and B)

Mean A	Mean B	t-count	Sig.(p)
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64,4

79,9

9,72

0,000

Project based english health promotion activities are more effective in improving speaking skills than conventional methods.

DISCUSSION

The findings of this study indicate that both the control group (Class A), which was taught using conventional methods, and the experimental group (Class B), which was taught using Project-Based English Health Promotion Activities, showed improvements in their speaking skills after the intervention. However, the improvement in the experimental group was substantially greater than that in the control group. The mean score increase in Class B was 21.3 points, compared to only 5.0 points in Class A. These results suggest that integrating Project-Based Learning with English health promotion activities provides more meaningful and contextualized speaking practice for students. Through project work, students actively engaged in real-world communication tasks, such as delivering health messages, collaborating in groups, and producing English-based health promotion media. This learning environment encouraged frequent language use, enhanced students' confidence, and improved their fluency and accuracy in speaking.

Furthermore, the independent sample t-test conducted on the post-test scores revealed a statistically significant difference between the two groups ($p < 0.05$), confirming the superior effectiveness of the project-based approach. This finding supports previous studies which argue that Project-Based Learning fosters deeper learning by promoting active participation, collaboration, and authentic communication. In the context of health education, this approach is particularly relevant as it prepares students to communicate health information effectively in English.

RECOMMENDATIONS FOR FURTHER RESEARCH

1. For educators, it is recommended to implement Project-Based Learning in English language instruction, especially in health-related study programs, to provide students with authentic and practical speaking experiences.
2. For educational institutions, the results of this study may serve as a reference for developing English curricula that are aligned with professional and disciplinary needs.
3. For future researchers, it is suggested to employ more rigorous research designs, such as quasi-experimental or true experimental designs, with larger sample sizes and longer intervention periods.
4. Future studies may also investigate additional variables, such as students' motivation, confidence, and attitudes toward using English in digital and community-based health promotion activities.

CONCLUSION

Based on the results of the study, it can be concluded that both conventional teaching methods and Project-Based English Health Promotion Activities are able to Improve Students' Speaking Skills. However, students who participated in Project-Based English Health Promotion Activities demonstrated significantly greater improvement compared to those who received conventional instruction. This finding confirms that Project-Based Learning is an effective approach for enhancing the English speaking skills of undergraduate public health students, particularly in the context of health communication and promotion.

From a pedagogical perspective, these results imply that ESP instructors, especially those teaching English for health-related disciplines, should consider integrating project-based and context-specific speaking tasks into their instruction. Such an approach can provide more authentic speaking practice, support students' communicative confidence, and better align English learning with professional communication needs in the health field.

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