

The Use of Problem-Based Learning (PBL) in Teaching Speaking to the Seventh-Grade Students at Mts NWDI Pangsor Gunung

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Abstract

This study aims to explore the implementation of Problem-Based Learning (PBL) in speaking classes and to examine its effectiveness in improving the speaking skills of seventh-grade students at MTs NWDI Pangsor Gunung. A pre-experimental design and a quantitative approach have been used in the present research. The sample consisted of 18 seventh-grade students who participated in PBL lessons. Pre- and post-test speaking assessments were used to gather information on speaking abilities. The average score on the preliminary test was 55.38, and the average score on the post-test was 66.88. After PBL was implemented, students' speaking abilities significantly improved, as indicated by the paired sample t-test's significance score (p-value) of $0.000 < 0.05$. Thus, it can be concluded that the implementation of Problem-Based Learning has a positive and significant effect on improving the speaking skills of seventh-grade students at MTs NWDI Pangsor Gunung. Therefore, it is recommended that teachers use PBL as an effective speaking learning method at the junior high school level.

Keywords: Problem-Based Learning; Speaking Skills; English Language Teaching

INTRODUCTION

Speaking is one of the basic skills that every foreign language learner needed to master, especially in the context of learning English (Natasia & Angelianawati, 2022). Natasia & Angelianawati (2022) explained that speaking is a person's ability to convey ideas or conceptions to others orally. In the process of oral communication, this ability includes not only the use of words, but also sentence structure, voice intonation and the ability to respond appropriately in a conversational situation. Furthermore, speaking is not only the oral transmission of information, but was also a complex form of social communication (Bulut & Kirbas, 2022). Uzun (2020) stated that the process of speaking occurs through an interaction between two or more people that involves mutual understanding and is supported by body language, facial expressions and tone of voice. This shows that speaking skills cannot be separated from verbal and non-verbal aspects.

In the context of globalization, English language skills has a very important role as they were the most important tool to communicate both cross-culturally and professionally (Hossain, 2024; Sabirova et al., 2021). According to Parupalli (2019), speaking is the most important skill in foreign and second language learning because it allowed a person to convey ideas directly and effectively in various situations to communicate. However, many students still had difficulties to develop their speaking skills. In addition, students often felt insecure, had limited vocabulary, and could not pronounce words correctly (Purwananda et al., 2023). According to Ani & Sinaga (2021), the ability to speak in this foreign language is influenced by adequate mastery of grammar and vocabulary and had to be accustomed to practice through active social interaction.

In the context of English language learning, the application of Problem-Based Learning model allowed students to actively participate, especially when they were faced with challenges in understanding texts, developing an idea, discussing in English, and expressing opinions orally (Mansyur & Karopak, 2025). According to Fahmi et al. (2021), besides increasing student engagement, the Problem-Based Learning approach to English instruction thoroughly developed the four language skills of speaking, writing, listening, and reading. Especially in the speaking part, through this approach learners were encouraged to use English in real-life contexts to solve problems, which had a positive impact on improving their learning outcomes. Based on observations made in class VII of MTs NWDI Pangsor Gunung, it was known that students' speaking skills in learning English were still relatively low. This could be seen from their lack of participation in communication activities, such as group discussions and question and answer sessions in class. Many students showed passivity, lack of confidence and hesitation in expressing their opinions orally, even when given the opportunity to speak. Most of them focused more on memorizing vocabulary or sentence structures, but still had difficulty using them in real contexts. Students also admitted that they were not yet fluent and felt afraid to speak in English for fear of making mistakes. As a result, they experienced obstacles in constructing sentences as well as responding spontaneously during learning.

Several studies had been conducted by previous researchers on the Project Based Learning effect on the speaking skills. The first investigation was by Mansyur & Karopak (2025) who showed that students' motivation and speaking skills both increase when the PBL model is used to help them improve their speaking abilities. The second study conducted by Sutrisna & Artini (2020) who showed that PBL not only has a good impact on students' speaking skills, but also on their attitude towards learning English as a foreign language. Furthermore, Fahmi et al. (2021) demonstrated that implementing the Problem-Based Learning (PBL) strategy can significantly enhance students' speaking proficiency. This study employed a quantitative approach and was conducted with second-grade students at a boarding school in Banda Aceh. This study was relevant and similar to previous research in that they both use the PBL approach to improve students' speaking ability. However, this study differs from the previous one in terms of its experimental design, the grade level of the learners, their characteristics and the research location. The previous study was conducted in a boarding school environment at a higher level. This circumstance highlights the necessity for a teaching approach that may boost students' engagement while strengthening their confidence when speaking in English. Therefore, the goal of the current research is to look into how the Problem-Based Learning (PBL) paradigm might be used to help seventh grade 3 students at MTs NWDI Pangsor Gunung enhance their speaking abilities. Specifically, the study seeks to examine how PBL can enhance students' participation, confidence, and fluency in English by engaging them in problem-solving activities, group discussions, and collaborative teamwork. Through this approach, it is expected that students will not only learn to construct sentences accurately but also develop the ability to express their ideas and opinions in English more confidently and effectively.

METHOD

A quantitative research method was used in this work, more precisely a pre-experimental approach with a single- group pre-test and post-test model (Busetto et al., 2020). Quantitative research was rooted in positivism, a philosophical perspective in which data obtained through research instruments was analyzed statistically to test hypotheses (Sugiyono 2022). This approach was selected to evaluate how students' speaking abilities were affected by applying the Problem-Based Learning (PBL) methodology. This design involves three main steps: (1) administering a pretest to assess students' initial speaking ability, (2) applying the PBL model during English speaking lessons as the treatment, and (3) administering a posttest to measure

improvement in students' speaking performance after the treatment. Since this study does not involve a control group, only one experimental group is observed. However, the researcher can ascertain whether using PBL considerably enhances students' speaking abilities by analyzing the pre and post-test outcomes. This research design could be illustrated follows:

Group	Pre-test	Treatment	Post-test
One group	O ₁	X	O ₂

Note:

O₁: Pre-test (speaking test before the treatment to assess students' initial speaking skills)

X: Treatment (implementation of Problem-Based Learning in speaking activities)

O₂: Post-test (Speaking test after the treatment to observe improvement)

This research was conducted at MTs NWDI Pangsor Gunung, which was located in Sembalun Bumbung Village, East Lombok. The population in this study of all seventh grade students at MTs NWDI Pangsor Gunung in the 2025/2026 school year. The sample in this study included all seventh grade students of MTs NWDI Pangsor Gunung. At this school there are two classes, but only one class which amounted to 18 students was used as a sample, namely class B because the selection of this class was based on the consideration of the English teacher, who stated that the class had a varied level of speaking ability and was representative to be used as a research subject.

Data for this study was gathered using two research tools: speech testing (pre-test and post-test) and observation. Observations were conducted directly during the learning process to obtain objective data on the extent to which the Problem-Based Learning (PBL) model was implemented and to assess the level of student engagement in each stage of learning, such as identifying problems, discussing in groups, expressing opinions, and presenting solutions. The goal was to evaluate activity, participation, and response to the implementation of Problem-Based Learning in improving their English speaking skills. Additionally, a speaking assessment including a preliminary test and a post-test was employed to gauge seventh-grade students' speaking capability both before and after PBL was implemented. This test included tasks such as describing pictures, answering questions, and conducting simple conversations in front of the class. The pre-test was used to gauge the students' initial ability in English speaking, and the follow-up exam was given following the intervention to evaluate if the students had improved and to verify if their performance had increased from the pre-test results.

The pre-test and post-test data were analyzed quantitatively to determine the extent to which there were significant differences in students' speaking skills between the pre-test and post-test results. Before conducting the T-test, a normality test was performed to confirm the normal distribution of the data. All data analysis procedures were carried out using statistical software, such as IBM SPSS Statistics 25.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Results

1. Descriptive Statistics

In this study present researcher use the descriptive statistics in analyzing the data. Table 1 shows that the students' speaking scores improved after the implementation of Problem Based Learning (PBL). The mean score increased from 53.11 in the pre-test to 60.67 in the post-test. The minimum score also improved from 32 to 36, while the maximum score increased from 76 to 80. These results indicate that PBL contributed positively to students' speaking development.

Table 1. The result of Descriptive Statistics

	N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Deviation
Pre-test	18	32	76	53.11	11.866
Post-test	18	38	80	60.67	12.443

2. Statistic Required for Test Hypothesis

a. Normality Testing

Before conducting the hypothesis test, it was necessary to examine whether the data were normally distributed. Since the number of samples in this study was fewer than 50, the Shapiro-Wilk test was applied. A significance value (Sig.) of more than 0.05 indicates that the data are regularly distributed. Table 2 presents the findings of the Shapiro-Wilk test, with a pre-test significance value of 0.817 and a post-test significant value of 0.461. The pre- and post-test data were found to be regularly distributed, as indicated by the fact that both values were greater than 0.05. This fulfilled the assumption of normality and allowed for additional parametric analysis.

Table 2. The Result of Shapiro-Wilk

	Statistics	df	Sig
Pre-test	.971	18	.817
Post-test	.952	18	.461

b. Homogeneity Test

Following a normality test, the researcher tested for homogeneity to find out if the data variances were equal. Levene's Test of Homogeneity of Variances was employed. If the significance value (Sig.) is higher than 0.05, the data are considered homogeneous. As shown in Table 3, the Levene statistic for the pre-test of speaking was 0.687 with a significance value of 0.415. Since the Sig. value was greater than 0.05, it can be concluded that the data were homogeneous and fulfilled the assumption of homogeneity for further parametric testing.

Table 3. Test of Homogeneity of Variances

Levene Statistic	df1	df2	Sig.
.687	1	25	.415

3. Testing Hypothesis

The students' speaking performance before and after the introduction of Problem-Based Learning (PBL) was compared using a paired samples t-test to assess if there was a significant change. The outcome is displayed in Table 4, where the significance value

(Sig. 2-tailed) was 0.000 and the t-value was -6.269 with $df = 17$. It is reasonable to conclude that there was a statistically significant difference between the pre-test and post-test scores because the significance value was less than 0.05. This suggests that the seventh-grade pupils at MTs NWDI PangsorGunung's speaking abilities were significantly enhanced by Problem-Based Learning (PBL).

Table 4. Paired Sample Test

		t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)
Pair 1	Pretest - Posttest	-6.269	17	.000

Discussion

The findings indicate that Problem-Based Learning (PBL) was implemented through several stages: presenting real-life contextual problems, facilitating group discussions, encouraging independent exploration, guiding presentations, and conducting reflections. During speaking activities, students were asked to engage in meaningful communication by solving problems relevant to their daily lives, such as role-playing dialogues and group problem-solving tasks in English. These findings support Purnami & Widiadnya (2024) who found that PBL engages students actively in learning and provides opportunities to practice language in authentic contexts, thereby facilitating improvements in speaking skills. According to Ali (2019), PBL is a student-centered approach where teachers act as facilitators, guiding students to collaboratively solve problems. This method encourages learners to take responsibility for their own learning and apply language skills in real situations. The study found that PBL significantly improved students' speaking skills, evidenced by increased fluency, richer vocabulary, greater confidence, and better organization of ideas. Students became more willing to participate actively and expressed themselves more clearly in English after the PBL implementation. These results are consistent with the research of Agustina et al. (2025) who reported that PBL enhances students' fluency, vocabulary acquisition, and confidence in speaking. Furthermore, Mammadova (2025) emphasizes that learning through problem-solving allows students to internalize and use language structures contextually, which leads to more natural and meaningful communication. Overall, the implementation of PBL at MTs NWDI PangsorGunung effectively supports the development of speaking skills in seventh graders by providing authentic communication tasks, fostering active learning, and encouraging collaboration, all of which are strongly supported by both theory and empirical research.

CONCLUSION

Based on the results of the data analysis, it can be concluded that the implementation of Problem-Based Learning (PBL) in teaching speaking has a positive and significant impact on the speaking skills of seventh grade students at MTs NWDI PangsorGunung. This is evidenced by the improvement in students' performance during the speaking activities, as shown by higher scores in aspects such as fluency, vocabulary, pronunciation, and confidence after the implementation of PBL. The results of peer assessment and observation sheets show a consistent increase in students' active participation and speaking ability throughout the learning process. Students were more engaged in classroom discussions, more confident in expressing ideas, and more capable of using English in meaningful contexts. The findings are supported by the results of interviews with students and teachers, which revealed positive perceptions toward the use of PBL as it fosters critical thinking, collaboration, and real communication. This improvement

confirms that Problem-Based Learning is an effective strategy to enhance students' speaking skills. The method allows students to practice English in real-life situations, encourages interaction, and builds confidence. Therefore, it is recommended that PBL be used as an alternative teaching model in speaking classes, especially at the junior high school level.

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