

## Student's Challenge Speaking Skill Toward Merdeka Curriculum By Using Project Based Learning In Junieur High Skill

Ulya Maulani Subhan<sup>1</sup>, Roni Subhan<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1)</sup> Fakultas Tarbiyah, Universitas Al-Falah As-Sunniah, Jember

\*e-mail corespondency: [ulyasubhan22@gmail.com](mailto:ulyasubhan22@gmail.com) \*

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### Info Artikel

### Abstract

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#### KEYWORDS:

Speaking Skills, Merdeka Curriculum, Project-Based Learning

This study explores the challenges and opportunities associated with developing speaking skills among junior high school students within the framework of the Merdeka Curriculum through Project-Based Learning (PBL). The purpose of this research is to know the character building of student's speaking skill and to find out the student ability who are able in speaking. This study employs a descriptive qualitative research to explore the challenges faced by junior high school students in developing their English-speaking skills through Project-Based Learning (PBL) under the Merdeka Curriculum. The observation is doing in the second grade of Junieur High School. The data collection was carried out by observation and using video to test the speaking ability. The findings reveal that while students showed notable improvement in their speaking skills when engaged in PBL, several challenges hindered its full effectiveness. These challenges include students' initial reluctance to participate in speaking activities due to anxiety and a lack of confidence, particularly among those with lower English proficiency. Additionally, time constraints within the school curriculum made it difficult for teachers to balance content coverage with providing adequate speaking practice.

### INTRODUCTION (Pendahuluan)

In today's globalized world, English-speaking proficiency is an essential skill for students, as it enhances their ability to communicate and compete internationally. However, in Indonesia, many students, particularly those in junior high school, face significant challenges in developing their speaking skills in English. Traditional teaching methods, which often emphasize rote learning and passive reception of knowledge, have been insufficient in fostering the active use of English in real-life contexts. This has led to a growing concern among educators and policymakers about how to effectively improve students' speaking abilities.

The introduction of the "Merdeka Curriculum" in Indonesia represents a shift towards a more flexible and student-centered approach to education. The implementation of merdeka curriculum is consist of independently with three alternative choices those are, the independent learning, independent change, and independent share (Andari: 2022). Merdeka curriculum is oftenly used by most of school. Because, most of teacher think that merdeka curriculum give positive impact for students learning. Students will have creative thinking, good character, and try to speak easily, exactly in Junior High School.

However, students feel if English is difficult lesson exactly in speaking. Many students in junior high school do not feel confident when speak English, they are afraid it will be wrong, and less vocabulary. According to Brown (2015) states that, speaking is a useful expertise that can be straight forwardly and experimentally noticed. So, by speaking skill teacher wants to give challenge

to the students toward merdeka curriculum. In order, the students can be free when they are speaking, can be confident, and can be brave to speak. One of the key strategies promoted by this curriculum is the use of Project-Based Learning (PBL). PBL is an instructional method that encourages students to engage in meaningful projects that are relevant to their lives, fostering collaboration, critical thinking, and active communication (Trianto:2014).

Based on the phenomenon of new policy changes in Indonesian education, namely implementing an independent curriculum with the characteristics of a Project-Based Learning (PjBL) method. According Almulla (2020) found that PBL method improves student engagement by enable knowledge and information sharing and discussion. So that, speaking is conclude to PBL which conducted by similar issues. On the other hand, PBL also make student to change their character. However, when student still junior high school, they feel speaking is not their favorite skill. So, PBL is becoming for learning English exactly in speaking skill.

In addition, Ina, Achmad, and Nanin (2024), stated that an English teacher is faced with the task of developing a variety of language skills, with a special focus on speaking skills, which are an important component in language learning. While another research said that, PBL is a suitable media for students to gain more real and to improve students competence (Shofiyuddin &dkk: 2023). Then, a study by Sari & Muamaroh (2023) conclude that, When applying the Merdeka Curriculum within the classroom, a challenge arised in accommodating differentiated learning, which tailors instruction based on the individual characteristics and students competencies. Research conducted by Putri and Dewi (2024), implementing merdeka curriculum is make student to be freedom about learning and discussion, in order the character of student make to be confident and creative about lesson.

The purpose of this research is to know the character building of student's speaking skill and to find out the student ability who are able in speaking. Because, in Junior High School still many student who do not feel confident to speak English, still feel wrong to constainable the sentence. Therefore, the teacher use PBL in learning English exactly in speaking skill toward merdeka curriculum.

## **RESEARCH METHODS (Metode Penelitian)**

This study employs a descriptive qualitative research to explore the challenges faced by junior high school students in developing their English-speaking skills through Project-Based Learning (PBL) under the Merdeka Curriculum. The observation is doing in the second grade of Junior High School. The data collection was carried out by observation and using video to test the speaking ability.

The teacher will give 3 themes about to the speaker those are, Social Media , bullying in the environment school, and Attitude in Pesantren. The students will give the opinion about those themes. Then, the teacher will take video, in order student's challenge will be known to the teacher from grammatically, and character of students when they are speaking. The speaker in the second grade of Junior High School will be taken of 25 students. The student may choose about the theme, in order the teacher will know the ability of students speaking skill.

## **FINDING**

### **1. Students Challenge Speaking Ability**

Based on the results about the observations many students are still broke in speaking English. They still free to give the opinion about it. Then, the teacher order the student to

give the opinion based on the theme which they choose. When the teacher gives the video to the student, it can find students' challenge in speaking ability. Below the researcher explains the research findings which are divided into two findings:

### **1.1. Students Challenge Grammatically**

In the first challenge, after giving the theme to the student, the teacher finds most of them choosing about bullying in the school environment and the impact of social media for students 5.0. In the theme of bullying in the school environment the students mostly said disagree about that. Based on the video the teacher finds the speaking of grammatically error.

Student 1: *"Bullying in the school so very much, many students like doing bullying. Whereas teachers stay in the school, always say no bullying. It can give impact for your friend, try to accompany your friend by kind, friendly, not enemy each other. Bullying is one of activities which not forbid for our friends. Moreover, we stay in pesantren, we have to be kind, polite, and keep our attitude"*.

From students' challenge speaking's ability still many grammatical errors which have been found by the writer. Which the colour is red that is grammatical error. The blue writing is right grammar. Then the second student will give challenge speaking about the impact of social media in 5.0.

Student 2: *"Social media is one of media that most of students like. Impact using social media is we can use by using many applications. Those are, WA, Tik tok, YouTube, IG, dll. The impacts are, people can communicate far distance, can see the friends' face, can chat each other, and soon. But, social media is not only have positive impact, it has negative impact also"*.

Based on the data, students' speaking challenge more decrease than student 1, they still pay attention about the grammar and writing. While, the writer found two sentences in grammatical error. However in student 3, he will speak about attitude in Pesantren.

Student 3: *"Attitude is very important for our life. Without attitude our life is uncomfortable. Attitude is not only for life, but when we do communication with our friend, our parents, teacher, and another person. Attitude will be there in ourselves when we still new born until old."*

Based on the data, when the teacher uses Merdeka curriculum the student feels free on their self. But, the teacher also found still many students still confuse about grammar when they are doing speaking. It can be found 70 % of 25 students in junior high school still have wrong grammatically. Either that another student has already right in grammar when they do speaking.

#### **1.1.1. Students Character in Speaking English**

In the second challenge, teacher will know about students' character based on the data in the video, it can be concluded is not only students' grammar when they are speaking, but also student's character when they are speaking. 50 % has been found they still do not confident, they are afraid it will be wrong to say, to wrong in grammatically. Then, in 30 % students feel shy to say their opinion.

## **RESULTS AND DISCUSSION (Hasil Dan Pembahasan)**

Based on the data can be concluded in students' challenge grammatically, most of students do not able to speak English by grammatical correctly. It is caused they are not usually to speak English, it is not habitual activity for students Junior High School. Another that, its give positive impact when the students try always to speak English. When the teacher gives them to make video they feel its free moreover the teacher and the students use PBL.

Additionally, the challenges identified, particularly students' reluctance to speak and time constraints, suggest areas where additional support and adjustments are needed. The initial reluctance of students to participate in speaking tasks highlights the need for strategies to build their confidence. This could include more structured and scaffolded speaking activities that gradually increase in complexity, allowing students to develop their skills incrementally (Vygotsky, 1978)

However, in the half of students still have low speaking, the teacher state that is not all students like English. So, when the teacher order the student to make video they will feel annoyed and uncomfortable. In addition, English teachers have the Merdeka to interpret the curriculum and are even encouraged to contribute to it. Learners no longer being administrators but also co-creators of the curriculum (Makarim, 2019). So, Exactly speaking skill is very important for the students.

According to Emery (2012), one of the most often mentioned problems encountered by English teachers is "overcrowded classes and the effect of such condition can have on teaching and learning". In this case, the researcher has prepared an observation sheet containing several method used in learning English by English teachers.

In the second challenge students character in speaking English. The teacher has already found when students doing speaking. Based on the data most of students still feel confuse, in the data students feel confuse and are not confident has already gotten 60 %, while students who are not feel shy is 20%, they will afraid to do speaking is 20%. So, in can be conclude students character in speaking English skill still have many character who does not confident, feeling shy, and afraid about speaking. It is caused, the student seldom to speak English, seldom to speak English. Their reason because, half of them do not like English, half of them feel lazy, and half of them feel confuse to speak. So, many kinds students character in speaking English, moreover when the teacher use PBL method. But, actually PBL method give good impact for all students exactly in Junior High School.

The issue of time constraints within the school schedule also requires attention. Integrating PBL more effectively into the curriculum may involve revising the curriculum structure to allow for longer PBL sessions or finding ways to incorporate PBL across different subjects to maximize the use of time (Thomas, 2000). Teachers also had difficulty in preparing creative and innovative teaching modules. This is because the teaching modules in the *Merdeka* Curriculum give students freedom in the process of creating learning that suits the students

## **CONCLUSION(KESIMPULAN)**

At the end, it can be conclude the implementation of Project-Based Learning (PBL) within the Merdeka Curriculum presents both significant opportunities and challenges for improving speaking skills among junior high school students. The study demonstrates that PBL can effectively enhance students' fluency, confidence, and ability to engage in meaningful communication in real-world contexts.

These improvements align with the Merdeka Curriculum's emphasis on student-centered learning and practical skill development. However, the challenges identified, such as students' initial reluctance to participate in speaking tasks and the time constraints within the school schedule, highlight the need for strategic adjustments. Building students' confidence through scaffolded activities and revising the curriculum to allow more time for PBL are essential steps for

maximizing the effectiveness of this approach. The role of the teacher is also crucial in ensuring the success of PBL.

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