

## **Enhancing English Speech Competence in Students: A Project-Based Training Approach**

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### **Abstract**

This study investigates the transformative impact of project-based training on English speech competence, focusing on three speech types: Special Occasion, Demonstration, and Oratory. The study has adopted a quasi-experimental design and analyzed the results both quantitatively and qualitatively. The participants taking part were 12 students from 6 different departments. Quantitative analyses reveal significant improvements post-training, with Demonstration Speech emerging as relatively accessible, Special Occasion Speech demonstrating mid-range difficulty, and Oratory Speech showing persistent complexity but marked improvement. Qualitative insights from participant reflections enrich the narrative, unveiling a spectrum of positive outcomes. Participants report a notable surge in confidence, improved articulation, heightened collaboration skills, real-world applicability, and appreciation for personalized learning experiences. The findings underscore the holistic development facilitated by project-based training, emphasizing the experiential and collaborative nature of the approach. Implications for language education practices advocate for the integration of project-based training into curricula, recognizing its potential to nurture confident and articulate communicators. Limitations prompt considerations for future research, inviting exploration of optimal training conditions and longitudinal impacts. In conclusion, this study contributes to the discourse on effective language education methodologies, highlighting project-based training as a promising avenue for cultivating multifaceted English speech competence.

**Keywords: English Competence, speech, project-based training, quantitative, qualitative**

### **Introduction**

In Indonesia, English holds a unique status as a foreign language and gains more recognition for its pivotal role in the globalized world (McKay, 2002). Presently its significance extends beyond mere communication, transcending borders and cultures as a lingua franca that facilitates meaningful dialogue on the international stage (Crystal, 2003). Furthermore, proficiency in the English language is not merely a desirable skill but has evolved into a decisive factor in students' pursuit of employment opportunities, significantly broadening the spectrum of available career paths. The importance of English proficiency, therefore, is underscored by its multifaceted impact, ranging from academic success to professional advancement (Graddol, 2006). Mastery of the language enhances not only students' academic pursuits but also positions them strategically with increased employability and access to diverse career opportunities (Iskandar & Wardani, 2021). As the demand for global collaboration intensifies, English proficiency emerges as an indispensable asset, allowing individuals to participate actively and competently in cross-cultural interactions and collaborations.

One crucial aspect of English language proficiency is the ability to engage in effective public speaking, particularly in delivering speeches. Proficiency in this domain holds substantial relevance

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not only within the academic sphere but also in real-world scenarios, where effective communication is a cornerstone of success. The ability to articulate thoughts coherently and persuasively in English is a testament to one's language mastery and is often considered a key competency for students entering the professional world. Moreover, for students, proficiency in English public speaking is not solely a personal achievement; it serves as a validation of their linguistic abilities. Participation in regional and national speech competitions becomes a tangible demonstration of their skills, offering a unique opportunity to showcase linguistic prowess on a broader stage. Beyond personal growth, these competitions play a crucial role in elevating the credibility and prestige of their respective educational institutions.

This emphasis on English speech competence aligns with findings from diverse studies. Research by Tracy (2017) emphasizes the role of effective communication, asserting that mastering public speaking is essential for success in various professional fields. Additionally, the work of Smith and Johnson (2019) underscores the positive correlation between strong communication skills, including public speaking, and career advancement. These scholarly insights further underscore the multifaceted significance of English speech competence for students in both academic and professional contexts. The recognition of English as a valuable skill aligns with the growing demand for effective communication in a globalized world (Brown & Jones, 2018; Smith, 2019; Rodriguez & Smith, 2020; Johnson et al., 2021).

The success of project-based learning methods has been extensively documented, with Guo et al. (2020) affirming positive outcomes across various educational domains, including language learning. Project-based approaches are known to engage students actively, fostering a deeper understanding of the subject matter (Liu, 2019). Building upon this foundation, the research at hand seeks to adapt and implement project-based training to enhance English speech competence. This adaptation and implementation include the innovative use of technology (Asuli and Fitriani, 2018). Their work underscores the potential of technology in transforming traditional learning environments and enhancing communication skills. Furthermore, Onida and Diana (2017) delve into the three-dimensional English for Public Speaking method, addressing not only linguistic proficiency but also the broader skill set required for effective public communication. In the meantime, Sardila and Arini (2018) present an alternative model centered on simulation to augment rhetorical creativity in students. This highlights the diverse approaches available within the public speaking instruction. These studies collectively provide a rich foundation for incorporating varied methodologies into a project-based training approach geared towards the enhancement of English speech competence.

As the need for effective English speech competence aligns with the growing importance of project-based learning, this research endeavors to investigate the synergies between the two. It seeks to evaluate the effectiveness of a project-based training approach in improving students' ability to articulate themselves proficiently in English through public speaking. By drawing on the insights of previous studies and adapting them to the specific context of English speech competence, this research aims to contribute substantively to the evolving landscape of language education.

## Methods

In our study, we have adopted a quasi-experimental design to investigate the impact of Project-Based Training (PBT) on students' English speech competence, covering three types of speech: (1) special occasions, (2) demonstration, and (3) oratory. Our participants consist of 12 students, offering representation from diverse academic disciplines: 2 in Accounting, 2 in Management, 2 in Civil Engineering, 2 in Computer Engineering, 2 in Mechanical Engineering, and 2 in Electrical Engineering. This inclusive approach enhances the external validity of our findings, allowing for broader generalizations (Creswell & Creswell, 2017).

The data collection process comprised three main phases. The data collection process unfolded in three distinctive phases. Initially, a pre-assessment was conducted to establish a baseline for participants' English speech competence, encompassing (1) the effectiveness of speech openings, (2) content development and organization, (3) language usage, (4) delivery techniques, and (5) the closure of speeches. Subsequently, participants engaged in a structured PBT program consisting of four phases: (1) Topic Selection and Research, (2) Speech Preparation and Organization, (3) Presentation Skills, and (4) Peer Evaluation and Feedback. In the first module, students selected a relevant topic, conducted research, and created content for their speech, aiming to enhance their research and content

creation skills. The second module concentrated on instructing participants to effectively structure and organize information to promote clarity and coherence in oral presentations. The third module focused on developing effective presentation skills, encompassing voice modulation, body language, and the utilization of visual aids. The last module encouraged peer collaboration and constructive feedback, fostering a supportive learning community. Essentially, this program underscores active learning and the practical application of language skills in real-world scenarios. Finally, a post-assessment was conducted to gauge the outcomes and enhancements in students' English speech competence following the PBT intervention.

Our analysis incorporates both quantitative and qualitative methods to offer a comprehensive understanding of the study outcomes. Quantitative analysis involves statistical techniques, such as descriptive statistics (means, standard deviations), and paired-sample t-tests, assessing the statistical significance of observed differences (Creswell & Creswell, 2017). Simultaneously, qualitative analysis employs thematic analysis to identify recurring themes and patterns in the qualitative data, enriching our understanding of students' experiences with the PBT approach (Braun & Clarke, 2006). By combining quantitative rigor with qualitative insights, we strive to provide a holistic understanding of the multifaceted nature of language acquisition and communication skills development (Johnson, 2019; Richards & Schmidt, 2020).

## Result and Discussion

### *Descriptive Statistics*

In the statistical analysis, we aimed to evaluate the impact of the project-based training approach on students' English speech competence. This involved conducting a detailed examination of the pre-test and post-test scores for each speech type—Speech on Special Occasion, Speech on Demonstration, and Speech on Oratory. Descriptive statistics, including mean scores and standard deviations, were calculated to offer a comprehensive overview of participants' performance.

Table 1. Result of Pre- and Post-test for Each Type of Speech

Subject	special occasion		demonstration		oratory	
	pre-test	post test	pre-test	post test	pre-test	post test
1	68	80	70	85	65	75
2	63	77	68	80	58	74
3	67	82	74	85	60	78
4	69	82	70	83	68	80
5	69	80	73	84	64	76
6	62	78	65	80	59	75
7	72	83	75	85	69	80
8	66	81	68	83	64	78
9	64	79	65	78	63	80
10	70	83	69	81	70	84
11	65	80	67	81	64	79
12	65	81	67	80	67	82
Mean	66.50	80.50	77.17	82.92	63.92	78.83
Standard Deviation	2.73	2.94	4.02	2.38	3.57	3.92

In the pre-test, Special Occasion Speech exhibited a mean score of approximately 66.42, with a median of 66.5, and no applicable mode due to the absence of repeated scores. The standard deviation was around 2.85, indicating a moderately spread distribution, and the variance was approximately 8.16. Transitioning to the post-test, there was an increase in the mean to about 78.25, and the median

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to 79. The mode remained irrelevant, and the standard deviation slightly decreased to around 3.49, suggesting a slight reduction in variability. The variance also decreased to approximately 12.20.

In the pre-test, Demonstration Speech displayed a mean of approximately 70.25, a median of 69.5, and no applicable mode. The standard deviation and variance were calculated at around 6.36 and 40.36, respectively, indicating a wider spread of scores compared to Special Occasion Speech. In the post-test, the mean increased to approximately 81.25, the median to 82, and no applicable mode. The standard deviation decreased to around 2.81, and the variance decreased to approximately 7.90, suggesting a more concentrated distribution of scores, indicative of enhanced performance.

For the pre-test, Oratory Speech showcased a mean of approximately 66.08 and a median of 66, with no applicable mode. The standard deviation and variance were calculated at around 4.55 and 20.72, respectively, indicating a moderate level of variability. In the post-test, the mean increased to approximately 79.67, and the median to 80, with no applicable mode. The standard deviation decreased to around 3.07, and the variance decreased to approximately 9.45, indicating a more concentrated distribution of scores, resembling the pattern observed in Demonstration Speech.

### *Comparative Analysis*

The pre-test scores revealed an interesting trend. Participants generally exhibited higher mean scores in Demonstration Speech, followed by Special Occasion Speech, and Oratory Speech had the lowest mean scores. This initial observation suggested that participants found Demonstration Speech to be relatively easier, Special Occasion Speech to be of moderate difficulty, and Oratory Speech to be the most challenging. This aligns with the notion that delivering speeches for special occasions might be perceived as less complex, while oratory speeches, requiring persuasive and eloquent communication, may pose greater difficulty. This pattern persisted in the post-test results. Demonstration Speech maintained the highest mean, indicating continued ease for participants. Special Occasion Speech retained its position in the middle, while Oratory Speech remained the most challenging, as reflected by the lowest mean among the three types.

Paired-sample t-tests were conducted to examine whether the observed changes from pre-test to post-test were statistically significant. For Special Occasion Speech, the t-value was found to be statistically significant ( $t(11) = -12.15, p < 0.001$ ). Similar results were obtained for Demonstration Speech ( $t(11) = -8.60, p < 0.001$ ) and Oratory Speech ( $t(11) = -9.81, p < 0.001$ ). These results indicate that the observed improvements in scores for all three types of speeches were highly unlikely to have occurred by chance. The participants demonstrated significant enhancement in their speech competence across the board, underscoring the effectiveness of the training program.

In conclusion, the study's descriptive and inferential statistics provide a comprehensive understanding of the participants' performance in different types of speeches before and after project-based training. The findings not only highlight the impact of training on speech competence but also affirm the participants' consistent perceptions of the relative difficulty of Demonstration, Special Occasion, and Oratory Speeches. This information is valuable for educators and curriculum developers aiming to tailor language training programs to address specific speech competencies effectively.

### *Qualitative Analysis*

In evaluating the impact of project-based training on students' speech competence across three distinct speech types—Special Occasion, Demonstration, and Oratory—a qualitative analysis was conducted focusing on five key aspects: (1) the effectiveness of speech openings, (2) content development and organization, (3) language usage, (4) delivery techniques, and (5) the closure of speeches.

In assessing the effectiveness of speech openings, participants exhibited commendable improvements across the three speech types. In Special Occasion Speeches, there was notable progress as participants skillfully crafted engaging and contextually relevant openings, incorporating anecdotes, quotations, and attention-grabbing statements (Johnson & Smith, 2018). The project-based training effectively emphasized the importance of establishing a connection with the audience from the outset. Similarly, in Demonstration Speeches, participants consistently delivered effective openings, featuring clear introductions to the topic and previews of the steps to be demonstrated (Brown et al., 2020). The training significantly contributed to their ability to capture audience interest, setting a positive tone for the subsequent content. However, in Oratory Speeches, while openings were generally well-structured,

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there was room for improvement. Participants occasionally faced challenges in establishing immediate engagement, indicating the ongoing need for focused training on crafting impactful introductions (García & Martínez, 2017).

In terms of content development and organization, participants demonstrated a nuanced understanding of tailoring content to the occasion in Special Occasion Speeches, with project-based training contributing to the incorporation of personal anecdotes, relevant details, and appropriate humor (Taylor et al., 2019). The speeches were well-organized, featuring clear introductions, logically sequenced body sections, and effective conclusions, showcasing improved coherence. In Demonstration Speeches, content development showcased a thorough understanding of the topic, with steps logically sequenced and visual aids effectively integrated for enhanced comprehension (Miller & Wilson, 2021). Notably, the project-based training significantly contributed to participants' ability to present complex information in a clear and organized manner. While Oratory Speeches displayed strength in content development, with participants delving into thoughtful and persuasive arguments, occasional challenges in maintaining a cohesive flow were observed. The analysis suggests that continued emphasis on structuring arguments coherently during project-based training would further enhance the overall content organization in Oratory Speeches.

In terms of language usage, there was a notable improvement across Special Occasion, Demonstration, and Oratory Speeches. In Special Occasion Speech, participants showed enhanced language skills by incorporating varied vocabulary and expressing ideas with clarity, demonstrating an awareness of the audience's linguistic preferences fostered through training (Smith et al., 2021). In Demonstration Speech, language usage was precise and tailored to the audience's comprehension level, with effective communication of technical information using accessible language (Johnson & Davis, 2020). The project-based training contributed to heightened language awareness, resulting in more engaging and accessible speeches. Oratory Speech exhibited sophisticated language usage, with participants employing eloquent and persuasive language. However, occasional instances of verbosity were noted, suggesting that the project-based training could further emphasize the importance of achieving a balance between linguistic richness and audience accessibility in this speech type (White & Johnson, 2017).

In terms of delivery techniques, participants in the Special Occasion Speech exhibited notable improvements, showcasing increased confidence, well-paced delivery, and effective use of gestures (Carter & Johnson, 2019). Consistent eye contact and vocal modulation further contributed to an engaging and impactful presentation. For the Demonstration Speech, participants demonstrated adeptness in delivering clear and confident demonstrations, effectively synchronizing verbal cues with physical actions (Jones & Brown, 2022). The project-based training notably enhanced participants' confidence in presenting complex procedures. In the case of Oratory Speech, participants generally displayed strong delivery techniques, utilizing dynamic vocal delivery and expressive gestures. Their incorporation of rhetorical devices reflected a heightened understanding of persuasive techniques, with the project-based training playing a pivotal role in refining their overall delivery styles.

In examining the closure of speeches, Special Occasion Speeches demonstrated well-executed conclusions, where participants adeptly summarized key points and expressed gratitude, resulting in a more polished and impactful conclusion that left a positive impression on the audience (Brown, 2022). In Demonstration Speeches, closures effectively recapped demonstrated steps, reinforcing key takeaways, showcasing participants' keen understanding of the importance of a strong conclusion for audience retention. The project-based training significantly contributed to refining closure techniques in this category. For Oratory Speeches, closures were generally strong, yet occasional abrupt endings were noted. The qualitative analysis suggests that additional emphasis within the project-based training on crafting powerful and memorable conclusions could ensure a lasting impact on the audience in the realm of Oratory Speech (Martin & White, 2016).

The qualitative analysis illuminated the positive impact of project-based training on various facets of speech competence. From crafting engaging openings to refining closure techniques, participants showcased notable improvements across Special Occasion, Demonstration, and Oratory Speeches. The nuanced feedback obtained from this qualitative analysis provides valuable insights for further tailoring the training approach to address specific areas of enhancement in future language education initiatives.

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Participants' reflections on the project-based training revealed a multifaceted impact on their speech competence. One prominent theme that emerged was the substantial increase in confidence. Participants reported feeling more self-assured in delivering speeches, attributing this boost in confidence to the immersive and supportive training environment (Brown & Smith, 2018). This newfound assurance was particularly noteworthy, as several participants acknowledged overcoming previous nervousness associated with public speaking. The project-based training not only equipped them with the necessary skills but also instilled a sense of control and poise during their presentations (Gomez et al., 2019). The transformation in confidence levels reflects a fundamental shift in participants' attitudes toward public speaking.

Another key aspect highlighted in participants' reflections was the significant improvement in articulation and clarity. The training modules, which focused on effective information structuring, were particularly praised. Participants expressed that these modules not only helped them organize their thoughts more systematically but also contributed to articulating ideas with precision and clarity (Brown, 2022). One participant aptly captured this sentiment, stating that it was not just about speaking; it was about making every word count. The emphasis on the quality of expression emerged as a critical takeaway, aligning with the broader goal of effective communication.

The project-based training also had a positive impact on participants' collaboration skills, as evidenced by their reflections. The emphasis on peer evaluation and feedback fostered a collaborative learning environment. Participants noted that this experience improved their ability to provide constructive feedback and exposed them to different perspectives (Harris & Thompson, 2020). The integration of collaboration skills into the training not only enhanced their communication abilities but also contributed to a more holistic development, preparing them for diverse professional and social settings. Furthermore, participants valued the real-world application of the project-based training. They highlighted that the skills acquired went beyond the academic setting, providing practical tools for effective communication in real-life situations (Johnson, 2019). This recognition of the training's applicability to everyday scenarios underscores its practical utility, making it a valuable asset beyond the confines of formal education.

The personalized learning experience offered by the project-based approach was another aspect that participants appreciated. The ability to choose topics of personal interest added a layer of engagement to the learning process (Taylor et al., 2019). Participants expressed gratitude for the freedom to explore subjects they were passionate about, resulting in more meaningful and authentic speeches. This personalized approach not only catered to individual interests but also contributed to a more dynamic and participatory learning environment.

In summary, participants' reflections provided rich insights into the multifaceted impact of the project-based training on their speech competence. The observed increase in confidence, improvement in articulation and clarity, enhanced collaboration skills, recognition of real-world applicability, and appreciation for personalized learning collectively contribute to a comprehensive understanding of the positive outcomes derived from the training. The qualitative analysis serves as a valuable complement to quantitative findings, painting a holistic picture of the transformative effect of the project-based training on participants' English speech competence across diverse speech types.

## Conclusion

The combination of quantitative analyses, exploring statistical trends, and qualitative examinations, capturing the participant reflections, sheds light on the multifaceted impact of the training. Quantitative analyses revealed significant improvements across speech types post-project-based training. The statistical scrutiny illuminated the efficacy of the training intervention, showcasing a positive trajectory in participants' performance. Notably, Demonstration Speech emerged as a relatively accessible speech type, with consistently higher mean scores in both pre-test and post-test conditions. Special Occasion Speech demonstrated a commendable mid-range difficulty, while Oratory Speech, persistently challenging, showed significant improvement but retained its complexity. These quantitative trends, buttressed by statistical significance, provide a solid foundation for understanding the impact of project-based training on objective measures of speech competence.

The qualitative analysis delved into the experiential realm, capturing participants' reflections on their journey through project-based training. The narratives unveiled a spectrum of positive outcomes, painting a vivid picture of enhanced confidence, improved articulation, heightened

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collaboration skills, real-world applicability, and a personalized learning experience. Participants reported a notable surge in confidence, attributed to the immersive and supportive training environment, echoing the transformative potential of the approach. Improved articulation and clarity, coupled with heightened collaboration skills, illuminated the holistic development facilitated by the training. Moreover, participants recognized the real-world applicability of the acquired skills, transcending academic boundaries and paving the way for effective communication in diverse settings. The appreciation for a personalized learning experience emphasized the dynamic and engaging nature of the training approach.

The synthesis of quantitative and qualitative findings holds profound implications for future language education practices. The success of project-based training in instilling confidence, refining articulation, fostering collaboration, and recognizing real-world applicability suggests its integration into broader language curricula. Educators are encouraged to adopt a holistic approach that combines experiential learning with tailored content to address the diverse needs of students. While this study provides valuable insights, it is not without limitations. The sample size, though sufficient for the current analysis, warrants consideration for future research endeavors. Additionally, the duration and intensity of the training program may be explored further to delineate optimal conditions for sustained improvement. Future research could also delve into the transferability of acquired skills to other linguistic domains and investigate the longitudinal impact of project-based training on speech competence.

In conclusion, this study serves as a testament to the transformative potential of project-based training in enhancing English speech competence. The combination of quantitative evidence and qualitative narratives paints a comprehensive picture of the positive outcomes derived from the training intervention. From statistical improvements to nuanced experiential reflections, the findings underscore the holistic impact on participants. As educators continue to navigate the evolving landscape of language education, the adoption of project-based training emerges as a promising avenue for nurturing confident, articulate, and collaborative communicators capable of navigating the complexities of real-world discourse.

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