

Enhancing EFL University Students' Speaking Skills Through Project-Based Learning: Authentic Conversations with English-Speaking Visitors in Jakarta

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ABSTRACT

Speaking remains one of the most challenging language skills for English as a Foreign Language (EFL) students due to their limited opportunities to engage in authentic communication outside the classroom. This study aims to investigate the effectiveness of Project-Based Learning in enhancing EFL students' speaking skills through real world interviews with English-speaking visitors at tourist attractions. The study was conducted in the Social Conversation course involving second-semester English Literature students. As part of the project, students designed interview questions based on assigned themes and conducted five to ten-minute interviews with English-speaking visitors at various tourist attractions in Jakarta. This study employed a mixed-methods design by combining quantitative data from pre-tests and post-tests with qualitative data obtained from students' reflective journals. Students' speaking performance was assessed based on fluency, pronunciation, vocabulary, grammar, and comprehension. The findings revealed a significant improvement in students' speaking skills after participating in the project. Qualitative findings further indicated that authentic interactions increased students' confidence, reduced speaking anxiety, and enhanced their ability to communicate spontaneously, improvise during conversations, and adapt to different English accents. The study concludes that Project-Based Learning through real-world interviews effectively enhances speaking skills while preparing students to communicate confidently in English-speaking contexts.

Keywords: *Speaking, Project-Based Learning, Tourist Interview*

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INTRODUCTION

Speaking is widely recognized as one of the most important language skills in learning English as a Foreign Language (EFL) and at the same time it is also considered one of the most challenging skills. Speaking skill forces learners to convey ideas, express opinions, and interact effectively in the foreign language they are learning (Andriani et al., 2025). Unlike other skills, speaking requires learners to combine linguistic knowledge with the ability to communicate directly (Mulyanti Sapna, Nadrun, 2021). However, many EFL students still struggle with speaking English even after years of formal language study. Common challenges include limited vocabulary, grammatical inaccuracies, pronunciation problems, lack of fluency, speaking anxiety, and low self-confidence (Sinaga & Wijaya, 2026). More importantly, students often have few opportunities to use English in real communication situations outside the classroom, so speaking practice is limited and their communication skills are underdeveloped. As noted by (Dahliawati et al., 2025) that it is not easy to master English fluently that quickly, because we live in an environment where English is not used as a daily means of communication. Consequently, students may possess knowledge of English linguistic forms without having sufficient opportunities to apply that knowledge in spontaneous oral interactions.

The development of speaking competence therefore requires learning environments that provide meaningful opportunities for students to use English for authentic

communicative purposes (Madjid, 2020). Active learning environments enable learners to engage in real-world tasks, negotiate meaning, respond to interlocutors, and develop communication strategies beyond the completion of classroom exercises ((Lubis & Siregar, 2021) (Intang et al., 2023)). In this context, speaking instruction should not focus exclusively on the accuracy of linguistic forms but should also support learners' ability to communicate effectively, maintain interactions, and understand spoken English in varied situations. Authentic communication is particularly valuable because it exposes learners to unpredictable questions, different speaking styles, and communicative demands that may not be fully represented in scripted classroom activities.

One instructional approach that supports authentic learning is Project-Based Learning. In this approach, students actively construct knowledge through projects that require collaboration, critical thinking, problem-solving, and communication (Zahra & Baa, 2024). Rather than focusing solely on language forms, students use English to accomplish meaningful tasks and produce authentic outcomes (Nisa & Christanti, 2024). Through project-based activities, students are encouraged to take greater responsibility for their learning, participate actively in communication, and develop confidence through repeated language use. Previous research has reported that Project-Based Learning can contribute positively to speaking development by increasing students' participation, engagement, and self-confidence (Jingga et al., 2025).

The relationship between Project-Based Learning and speaking development becomes more meaningful when project activities are connected to clearly defined speaking performance indicators. In the present study, students' speaking performance was assessed through five indicators: fluency, pronunciation, vocabulary, grammar, and comprehension. These indicators were selected because they represent complementary dimensions of oral communication. Fluency reflects students' ability to maintain speech and express ideas with an appropriate degree of continuity. Pronunciation concerns the clarity and intelligibility of spoken production. Vocabulary indicates students' ability to select and use words to convey meaning, while grammar reflects their ability to organize words and construct understandable utterances. Comprehension represents students' ability to understand questions and respond appropriately during interaction. Together, these indicators provide a multidimensional basis for examining speaking performance, allowing the study to evaluate not only students' linguistic accuracy but also their ability to communicate meaningfully. This assessment framework is particularly relevant to Project-Based Learning because authentic projects require learners to integrate these aspects while completing communicative tasks in real-world situations.

Nevertheless, many speaking projects in EFL classrooms remain primarily classroom-based and commonly involve role-plays, presentations, scripted dialogues, or peer discussions. For example, a study conducted by Rokmanah et al. (2024) found that role-play improved students' speaking performance by creating an enjoyable and engaging learning environment. The activity also supported confidence development and vocabulary expansion. Although such activities are valuable for introducing and practicing speaking skills, they may not fully reproduce the unpredictability of authentic communication. In real-world interactions, learners must respond to unfamiliar questions, interpret different accents, manage pauses, and formulate responses without relying entirely on rehearsed language. Therefore, projects that extend speaking practice beyond the classroom may provide additional opportunities for students to apply linguistic knowledge under more natural communicative conditions.

Authentic interaction with English-speaking individuals has also been associated with positive learning experiences. (Riski, 2023) in a study involving conversations with a native English speaker on campus, reported that direct interaction contributed to students' vocabulary development, encouraged the use of everyday expressions, and strengthened their confidence in speaking English. The study further highlighted the value of real-life communication in helping students understand how English is used in everyday situations.

Similarly [Luthfiyyah et al. \(2025\)](#) reported positive effects of Problem-Based Learning on students' fluency, vocabulary, pronunciation, motivation, and critical thinking through meaningful communicative tasks. Although Problem-Based Learning and Project-Based Learning differ in their instructional processes, these findings support the broader importance of student-centered and meaningful learning activities in developing oral communication. However, the findings also indicate the need to examine how authentic communication projects specifically contribute to measurable speaking performance and students' experiences during the learning process.

Tourist attractions provide a particularly relevant context for authentic English communication because they bring together visitors from different linguistic and cultural backgrounds. In Jakarta, international tourist destinations such as Kota Tua, Monas, National Museum, and other cultural and recreational attractions offer potential opportunities for students to encounter English-speaking visitors in naturally occurring social situations. These environments are appropriate for speaking practice because communication may involve asking and answering questions, discussing travel experiences, explaining cultural information, and responding to spontaneous follow-up questions. Such interactions allow students to use English for genuine purposes rather than merely completing predetermined classroom dialogues. Furthermore, communicating with visitors from different countries may expose students to variations in pronunciation, accent, vocabulary, and communication styles. This context can therefore encourage students to develop not only linguistic competence but also the flexibility and confidence required to communicate with unfamiliar interlocutors. For EFL students in Jakarta, where English is not generally used as the primary language of daily communication, tourist attractions provide a meaningful setting for extending speaking practice beyond the classroom.

Despite the growing interest in authentic learning, few studies have explored the implementation of Project-Based Learning through direct interaction with English-speaking visitors at tourist attractions. Most previous studies have focused on classroom-based simulations, role-plays, or online speaking activities, while limited attention has been given to projects requiring students to conduct real-world interviews in authentic communicative settings. Moreover, prior research has primarily measured speaking improvement using quantitative approaches, with less emphasis on students' learning experiences during authentic communication. Therefore, there is a need for studies that integrate quantitative evidence of speaking development with qualitative insights into students' perceptions and experiences throughout authentic speaking projects.

To address this gap, the present study implemented Project-Based Learning in a Social Conversation course for second-semester English Literature students. The project was conducted during Weeks 9–14 following the midterm examination. During the first seven weeks, students were introduced to common expressions, conversation strategies, and communication techniques used in everyday English to prepare them for authentic interactions. Then, they designed interview questions based on assigned themes and conducted five- to ten-minute interviews with English-speaking international visitors at various tourist attractions in Jakarta. Each student was required to interview five different English-speaking visitors from different countries. Through these authentic interactions, students were encouraged to initiate conversations, respond spontaneously to unpredictable situations, negotiate meaning, and adapt to different English accents and communication styles. By engaging in real-world communication beyond the classroom, the project provided meaningful opportunities for students to develop their speaking proficiency, communicative confidence, and intercultural awareness.

Accordingly, this study aims to investigate the effectiveness of Project-Based Learning in improving EFL students' speaking performance through authentic interviews with English-speaking international visitors at tourist attractions in Jakarta. The study also explores students' learning experiences and the challenges they encounter during the interview project. Specifically, this study addresses the following research questions:

Is Project-Based Learning effective in improving EFL students' speaking performance through authentic interviews with English-speaking international visitors?

How do students perceive their experiences of conducting authentic interviews with English-speaking international visitors at tourist attractions in Jakarta?

What challenges do students encounter when conducting authentic interviews in English?

The findings are expected to contribute to research on authentic language learning by providing quantitative and qualitative evidence concerning the implementation of Project-Based Learning in speaking instruction. Furthermore, the study offers practical implications for integrating real-world communication tasks into higher education EFL courses to better prepare students for meaningful English communication beyond the classroom.

METHOD

The participants of this study were second-semester students enrolled in the Social Conversation course in the English Literature Study Program. The study involved 28 students who participated in the speaking project during the second half of the semester. The participants were selected based on their enrolment in the course and their involvement in the project. The project was conducted as part of the regular learning activities in Weeks 9–14 following the midterm examination. Before participating in the project, students had received instruction on common English expressions, conversation strategies, and communication techniques used in everyday conversations.

Design and Procedures

This study employed a mixed-methods research design to investigate the effectiveness of Project-Based Learning in enhancing EFL students' speaking skills and to explore their learning experiences during the project. The quantitative component used a one-group pre-test and post-test design to examine changes in students' speaking performance before and after the implementation of the project. The qualitative component was used to explore students' experiences, perceptions, and challenges during their participation in authentic speaking activities.

The project was implemented through a series of authentic interview activities. First, students selected or received assigned interview themes related to everyday conversations, tourism, and visitors' experiences. Second, they designed interview questions based on their assigned themes. The questions were prepared to guide the interviews while allowing students to respond flexibly to the visitors' answers. Third, students prepared for the interviews by reviewing relevant vocabulary, practicing conversation expressions, and discussing strategies for initiating and maintaining conversations with unfamiliar speakers. This preparation was intended to reduce students' dependence on memorized dialogues and encourage more spontaneous communication. Fourth, students conducted authentic interviews with English-speaking international visitors at tourist attractions in Jakarta. Each student was required to interview five different English-speaking visitors from different countries. Each interview lasted approximately five to ten minutes. During the interviews, students were expected to initiate conversations, ask questions related to their assigned themes, respond to visitors' answers, and manage unexpected questions or responses. The interviews were conducted in English to provide opportunities for students to apply their language knowledge in real-world communication settings.

Fifth, students documented each interview activity through video recordings. The five recordings produced by each student were analyzed and compared chronologically, from the first interview to the fifth interview, using the same speaking assessment rubric described above. The rubric consisted of five indicators: fluency, pronunciation, vocabulary, grammar, and comprehension. Applying the same assessment criteria to each recording enabled the

researcher to examine observable changes in students' speaking performance across the five interview sessions. The analysis focused on students' ability to maintain conversations, use vocabulary appropriately, produce clearer pronunciation, apply grammatical forms, and understand and respond to their interlocutors. Changes in hesitation, pauses, confidence, and responses to unexpected questions were also considered as supporting evidence of speaking development.

Data Collection and Data Analysis

The quantitative data were collected through students' speaking pre-test and post-test. The speaking assessment focused on five aspects: fluency, pronunciation, vocabulary, grammar, and comprehension. Fluency referred to students' ability to maintain a conversation with an appropriate flow and without excessive hesitation or pauses. Pronunciation concerned the clarity and intelligibility of students' speech. Vocabulary referred to students' ability to use appropriate words to express their ideas. Grammar focused on students' ability to construct grammatically appropriate sentences. Comprehension referred to students' ability to understand their interlocutors' questions and respond appropriately.

The pre-test was administered before the implementation of the interview project, while the post-test was conducted after students completed the project. In both assessments, students participated in conversations with classmates based on predetermined topics. The same speaking assessment rubric was used to evaluate students' performance in both assessments. Students' pre-test and post-test scores were compared to identify changes in their speaking performance following the implementation of Project-Based Learning.

The qualitative data were obtained from students' five video-recorded interview sessions, reflective journal, and follow-up interviews after completing the project. The five video recordings produced by each student were reviewed and compared chronologically, from the first interview to the fifth interview, to observe the development of students' authentic communication performance throughout the project. The videos were not scored statistically, instead, they were used as qualitative evidence of students' speaking progress. The video analysis focused on observable changes in students' fluency, pronunciation, vocabulary use, grammar, and comprehension. It also examined students' ability to initiate and maintain conversations, respond to unexpected questions, communicate spontaneously, deal with different accents, and interact with unfamiliar English-speaking visitors. Particular attention was given to changes in hesitation, pauses, confidence, response length, vocabulary selection, pronunciation clarity, and the ability to sustain interaction. The comparison of the five recordings was used to identify patterns of development and continuing difficulties across the interview sessions.

In addition, students' reflective responses and follow-up interviews focused on their experiences in initiating conversations, responding to unexpected questions, dealing with different accents, using English spontaneously, and communicating with international visitors. These data were analyzed thematically by identifying recurring patterns and themes related to students' confidence, speaking anxiety, spontaneity, communication strategies, vocabulary development, and perceptions of authentic interaction.

The quantitative and qualitative findings were subsequently integrated during the interpretation stage. The quantitative results provided statistical evidence of changes in students' speaking performance based on the pre-test and post-test scores. The video analysis provided qualitative evidence of students' observable progress across the five interview sessions, while the reflective responses and follow-up interviews offered deeper insights into students' experiences and the factors that influenced their development. The integration of these findings enabled the study to provide a more comprehensive understanding of the role of Project-Based Learning in developing EFL students' speaking skills through real-world communication.

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

The quantitative findings were obtained from the students' speaking performance before and after the implementation of the Project-Based Learning project. Students' speaking performance was assessed through a pair conversation with a classmate based on a predetermined topic. In both the pre-test and post-test, students were asked to engage in a conversation with their peers on an assigned theme, allowing them to demonstrate their ability to express ideas, respond to questions, and maintain an interaction in English. Their performance was assessed based on five aspects: fluency, pronunciation, vocabulary, grammar, and comprehension. The pre-test was administered before the implementation of the project, while the post-test was conducted after students had completed the real-world interview project. The comparison of the two assessments was used to identify changes in students' speaking performance following their participation in the project.

Table 1. Descriptive Statistics of Students' Pre-test and Post-test Scores

Statistic	Pre-test	Post-test	Change
Mean	63.36	81.57	+18.21
Minimum	50.00	63.00	+13.00
Maximum	83.00	94.00	+11.00
Standard deviation	10.47	10.04	-0.43

The table above shows descriptive statistics of students' speaking performance before and after the implementation of the real-world interview project. The results show an increase in the average speaking score from 63.36 in the pre-test to 81.57 in the post-test, an improvement of 18.21 points. The minimum score also went up from 50.00 to 63.00, while the maximum score increased from 83.00 to 94.00. These results indicate that students experienced a significant improvement in their speaking performance after participating in this project. Additionally, the standard deviation slightly decreased from 10.47 in the pre-test to 10.04 in the post-test, showing a small reduction in the variation of students' speaking scores. Overall, these descriptive statistics give an initial indication that the real-world interview project is associated with an improvement in speaking performance among the participants.

Table 2. Normality Test of Difference Scores Using the Shapiro-Wilk Test

Data yang diuji	N	Shapiro-Wilk (W)	Sig. (p)	Interpretation
Difference scores	28	0.929	0.057	Normal

Normality test hypothesis:

H_0 : Difference scores are normally distributed.

H_1 : Difference scores are not normally distributed.

Since the results show: $p = .057 > .05$. H_0 is not rejected. Thus, the difference scores between post-test and pre-test can be considered normally distributed. So, based on this normality test, the normality assumption for the paired-samples t-test is met.

Table 3. Results of the Paired-Samples t-Test

Paired Samples Test	Mean Difference	Std. Deviation	t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)
Pre-test - Post-test	-18.21	4.49	-21.458	27	0.000

The Paired Samples t-test was conducted to see if there was a significant difference in students' speaking ability before and after implementing Project-Based Learning. The analysis results showed a mean difference of -18.21, which means the post-test scores were higher than the pre-test scores. This can be seen from the increase in the average student score from 63.36 in the pre-test to 81.57 in the post-test, with a rise of 18.21 points. The test results also showed a t-value of -21.458 with a degree of freedom (df) of 27 and a significance value of $p < 0.001$. Since the significance value is less than 0.05, H_0 is rejected and H_1 is accepted. So, there is a statistically significant difference in students' speaking ability before and after participating in

Project-Based Learning. These results suggest that implementing Project-Based Learning through authentic conversation projects is related to an improvement in students' speaking ability.

Table 4. Improvement of Students' Speaking Performance across Speaking Aspects

Speaking Aspect	Pre-test Mean	Post-test Mean	Improvement
Fluency	12.43	15.18	2.75
Pronunciation	13.21	16.00	2.79
Vocabulary	12.82	16.54	3.72
Grammar	10.64	14.71	4.07
Comprehension	14.25	19.14	4.89

Based on the analysis results of the five speaking skill aspects, it can be seen that all aspects improved after the implementation of Project-Based Learning. This improvement can be seen from the comparison of the mean pre-test and post-test scores in the aspects of fluency, pronunciation, vocabulary, grammar, and comprehension. The mean score of the fluency aspect increased from 12.43 in the pre-test to 15.18 in the post-test, representing an improvement of 2.75 points. This indicates that the students experienced progress in their speaking fluency after participating in the project-based learning activities. Furthermore, the mean score of the pronunciation aspect increased from 13.21 to 16.00, representing an improvement of 2.79 points. This improvement indicates that the students developed their ability to pronounce words and produce utterances in English more effectively. Although fluency and pronunciation also improved, their increases were relatively smaller than those of the other speaking aspects. This suggests that developing fluent and accurate speaking skills requires more sustained practice. The limited number of authentic conversations provided valuable exposure for the students; however, repeated and continuous speaking practice may still be necessary for fluency and pronunciation to develop more optimally. The findings of this study are consistent with previous research by (Hidayati et al., 2024) who reported that Project-Based Learning can improve students' speaking skills, particularly fluency, coherence, and pronunciation.

The qualitative findings support this interpretation. Students reported that they attempted to complete the conversations successfully but sometimes hesitated or stumbled when responding to questions that were not included in their prepared scripts. Some students also encountered unfamiliar vocabulary and were uncertain about its pronunciation, which occasionally affected the clarity of their speech. These findings suggest that although students became more willing to communicate spontaneously, they still needed additional practice to produce fluent and accurate utterances.

The vocabulary aspect showed a larger increase, from a mean score of 12.82 in the pre-test to 16.54 in the post-test, representing an improvement of 3.72 points. These results indicate that the students developed their vocabulary use and mastery through the project activities. The improvement may be related to the authentic nature of the conversations, as the students were required to respond spontaneously to questions and responses from English-speaking visitors that were not included in their prepared scripts. This situation encouraged the students to expand their vocabulary and select appropriate words according to the context of the conversation. The improvement in vocabulary was also supported by the qualitative findings. The students reported that unexpected questions and responses encouraged them to expand their vocabulary because they realized that the words they had prepared were not always sufficient to maintain a conversation. Some students responded to this challenge by independently learning new vocabulary through reading English texts, listening to English songs, watching films, listening to English-language podcasts, and memorizing five to ten new words each day.

In terms of grammar, the mean score increased from 10.64 in the pre-test to 14.71 in the post-test, representing an improvement of 4.07 points. Grammar showed the second-largest increase among the five speaking aspects. These results indicate that after participating in the

project activities, the students became more capable of using appropriate English structures when formulating questions and providing responses during conversations. The improvement in grammar may be related to the repeated need to formulate questions and responses throughout the project. Although the students prepared questions before conducting the interviews, the actual conversations required them to produce additional responses based on their conversation partners' answers. This situation provided students with opportunities to apply grammatical structures in meaningful communication rather than merely practicing them through isolated exercises. In addition, repeated experiences of conducting interviews helped students develop a better understanding of how grammatical structures could be applied in everyday conversations. This development was also reflected in one of the students' reflection journals, in which the student reported gaining a better understanding of grammar after engaging in several conversations with English-speaking visitors. Through these experiences, the student became more aware of the use of different tenses according to the context of the questions. For example, the present tense was used when answering questions about current situations, the past tense when responding to questions about past experiences, such as their most memorable experience while visiting Jakarta, and the future tense when answering questions about their hopes or expectations for Jakarta.

The comprehension aspect showed the highest improvement among the five speaking aspects. The mean score increased from 14.25 in the pre-test to 19.14 in the post-test, representing an improvement of 4.89 points. This increase indicates that the students experienced substantial development in their ability to understand information, questions, and responses conveyed by their conversation partners during the speaking activities. The greater improvement in comprehension may be attributed to the authentic nature of the project, in which students were required to engage in conversations with English-speaking visitors at tourist attractions in Jakarta and respond to questions that were not always predictable or included in the scripts they had prepared beforehand. This situation was clearly different from classroom conversations, which were generally structured based on predetermined scripts. In contrast, interactions with English-speaking visitors required students to listen carefully and understand naturally occurring questions and responses before producing their own responses. Classroom conversations tended to be more structured and rigid, as students generally followed the scripts they had prepared. This interpretation is supported by qualitative findings from student interviews and reflection journals, which revealed that students became more accustomed to handling unexpected questions and responses during conversations. They attempted to respond to these questions to the best of their ability and made efforts to keep the conversations flowing smoothly and remain understandable to their conversation partners, despite having a limited vocabulary.

In addition to the quantitative data obtained from the pre-test and post-test scores, including the scores for each speaking aspect, the researcher also conducted interviews with the students and asked them to write reflective journals about their experiences and responses to the activities.

The interview results and students' reflective journals revealed several positive changes in their speaking experiences after participating in the project. Most students reported increased confidence in speaking English, particularly when initiating conversations with English-speaking visitors. They stated that they were no longer as afraid or hesitant to start conversations in English as they had been before participating in the project. Regular opportunities to communicate directly with English-speaking visitors helped them become more comfortable using English in authentic communication situations.

Another finding was the students' improved ability to respond to spontaneous questions and unexpected responses. The students explained that the conversations did not always follow the prepared scripts. English-speaking visitors sometimes asked questions or provided responses that the students had not anticipated. Because the students had become accustomed to communicating with English-speaking visitors, they gradually became more capable of handling these unexpected situations and continuing the conversations.

The students also reported that dealing with questions and responses outside their prepared scripts encouraged them to expand their vocabulary. They realized that having sufficient vocabulary was important for responding appropriately during spontaneous conversations. To improve their vocabulary, students reported using several strategies, such as reading English texts, listening to English songs, and memorizing approximately five to ten new English words each day. These activities were perceived by the students as helpful in preparing them to communicate more effectively during authentic conversations.

Despite the positive outcomes, the project also presented several challenges. Some students experienced nervousness and difficulty initiating conversations with unfamiliar visitors, while others hesitated when responding to unexpected questions outside their prepared scripts. Unfamiliar vocabulary and different accents also made it difficult for some students to understand visitors and pronounce new words accurately. These difficulties are consistent with [Husein & Purnawarman \(2019\)](#), who reported challenges related to vocabulary, fluency, accuracy, and confidence among students with limited English proficiency during oral interactions with native speakers. In addition, some visitors were unwilling or unavailable to participate, which limited students' opportunities to conduct interviews. These challenges indicate that Project-Based Learning does not automatically eliminate speaking difficulties. Instead, it places students in situations where they must develop confidence, flexibility, and communication strategies. Such challenges highlight the importance of instructional support and structured guidance in project-based speaking activities [Gunawan \(2026\)](#). They may also explain why fluency and pronunciation showed smaller increases than vocabulary, grammar, and comprehension. Thus, further practice, repeated interaction, pronunciation training, and preparation for different conversational situations remain necessary.

The quantitative and qualitative findings support each other. Students' overall speaking scores increased from 63.36 to 81.57, with a statistically significant difference, $t(27) = -21.458, p < .001$. All five speaking aspects also showed descriptive improvement, particularly comprehension (+4.89), grammar (+4.07), and vocabulary (+3.72). The qualitative findings explain these improvements through students' increased confidence, greater ability to respond to spontaneous questions, vocabulary-learning efforts, and improved understanding of different accents. At the same time, students' nervousness, hesitation, pronunciation difficulties, limited vocabulary, and encounters with unwilling visitors demonstrate that their development was not uniform. This pattern is consistent with [Yen \(2026\)](#), who associated speaking anxiety with limited vocabulary, lack of confidence, fear of making mistakes, and concerns about negative evaluation. Overall, the findings suggest that authentic interview-based Project-Based Learning supported students' speaking development while encouraging them to become more independent, adaptable, and responsible for improving their English communication skills. However, continued guidance and opportunities for authentic interaction remain important for sustaining these improvements.

CONCLUSIONS

This study concludes that Project-Based Learning (PjBL) provided meaningful opportunities to develop the speaking skills of second-semester English Literature students in a Social Conversation course. Improvements in overall speaking scores and all five speaking aspects, together with qualitative findings, suggest that authentic interviews with English-speaking visitors supported students' confidence, spontaneity, adaptability, and independence in communicating beyond prepared classroom interactions. Pedagogically, interview-based projects can encourage spontaneous communication, exposure to different English accents, and the practical application of vocabulary and grammar in real-life situations. However, successful implementation requires adequate preparation, guidance, and alternative activities when visitors are unavailable or unwilling to participate. This study was limited by its small sample from one institution, tourism-related themes, short intervention period, absence of a control group, and reliance partly on self-reported data. Therefore, the

findings should not be generalized to all EFL learners. Future research should involve larger and more diverse samples, longer interventions, comparison groups, classroom observations, and recorded conversations to examine the sustainability of speaking improvements over time.

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