

The Effect Of Social-Emotional Learning On The Tenth-Grade Students' Speaking Skills At SMK PGRI 3 Denpasar

Ni Putu Witari Dita Siwi¹, Ni Wayan Satri Adnyani², Putu Santi Oktarina³

I Gusti Bagus Sugriwa Denpasar State Hindu University, Indonesia¹⁻³

Email Korespondensi: : witaridita0304@gmail.com , satri.adnyani@uhnsugriwa.ac.id , putusantioktarina@uhnsugriwa.ac.id

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ABSTRACT

This study investigated the effect of Social-Emotional Learning (SEL) enhanced Project-Based Learning (PjBL) on students' speaking skills at SMK PGRI 3 Denpasar. A quasi-experimental design was employed involving 90 students in the 10th grade from classes X KUL 5 and X KUL 6. The students were assigned to two groups, an experimental group and a control group, and there were 45 students in both groups. The experimental group received SEL-integrated Project-Based Learning, while the control group received conventional Project-Based Learning without SEL. Data were collected through speaking pre and post-test using a speaking assessment rubric adapted from Cyril, covering grammar, vocabulary, comprehension, fluency, and pronunciation. The data were analyzed using descriptive statistics, normality and homogeneity test, Independent Samples t-test, and ANCOVA. The results showed the experimental group had a higher post-test mean score of 64.56, while the control group had a score of 59.33. Moreover, the ANCOVA result showed a significant effect of Sel-enhanced PjBL on students' speaking performance after controlling for pre-test scores ($p=0,011$). Among the assessed speaking aspects, vocabulary and fluency showed the greatest improvement in the experimental group. These findings suggest that integrating SEL into PjBL can effectively enhance students' speaking skills in English learning at vocational high schools.

Keywords: Social-Emotional Learning, Project-Based Learning, Speaking Skills, EFL, Vocational High School

ABSTRAK

Penelitian ini bertujuan untuk mengetahui pengaruh Social-Emotional Learning (SEL) yang diintegrasikan dengan Project-Based Learning (PjBL) terhadap kemampuan berbicara siswa di SMK PGRI 3 Denpasar. Penelitian ini menggunakan desain kuasi-eksperimen yang melibatkan 90 siswa kelas X dari kelas X KUL 5 dan X KUL 6. Siswa dibagi ke dalam dua kelompok, yaitu kelompok eksperimen dan kelompok kontrol, yang masing-masing terdiri atas 45 siswa. Kelompok eksperimen memperoleh pembelajaran PjBL yang terintegrasi dengan SEL, sedangkan kelompok kontrol memperoleh PjBL konvensional tanpa integrasi Sel. Data dikumpulkan melalui pre-test dan post-test berbicara menggunakan rubrik penilaian yang diadaptasi dari Cyril, yang mencakup aspek tata bahasa, kosakata, pemahaman, kelancaran, dan pelafalan. Analisis data menggunakan statistik deskriptif, uji normalitas, uji homogenitas, uji t Independent Samples, dan Analysis of Covariance (ANCOVA). Hasil penelitian menunjukkan bahwa kelompok eksperimen memperoleh rata-rata skor post-test yang lebih

tinggi (64,56) dibandingkan dengan kelompok kontrol (59,33). Selain itu, hasil ANCOVA menunjukkan adanya pengaruh yang signifikan dari PjBL terintegrasi SEL terhadap kemampuan berbicara setelah mengontrol skor pre-test ($p=0,11$). Di antara aspek kemampuan berbicara yang dinilai, kosakata dan kelancaran menunjukkan peningkatan kemampuan berbicara siswa dalam pembelajaran bahasa Inggris di sekolah menengah kejuruan.

Kata kunci: Social-Emotional Learning, Project-Based Learning, Kemahiran Berbicara, EFL, Sekolah Menengah Kejuruan

INTRODUCTION

In the 21st century, English proficiency has become a fundamental requirement for educational and professional success. As globalization continues to shape communication across countries, students are expected to develop effective English communication skills to meet academic and workplace demands (Nurarifah et al., 2025). English is recognized as the most widely used international language, with approximately one out of four people speaking it as a first, second, or foreign language (Reima Al-Jarf, 2023). Consequently, students are required not only to master linguistic knowledge but also to develop productive language skills, particularly speaking, which enables them to express ideas, thoughts, and feelings effectively (Fauzi & Asi, 2023).

Speaking is considered one of the most essential skills in English language learning because it serves as the primary medium of communication (Ayşe et al 2024; Ahmed Al-Hassaani & Mahmood Qaid Al-Saalmi (2022). However, many learners in English as a Foreign Language (EFL) contexts continue to experience difficulties in speaking English. Besides linguistic limitations, students often face psychological barriers such as anxiety, fear of making mistakes, shyness, low self-confidence, and lack of motivation, which hinder their willingness to communicate (Franco, 2019). These challenges are particularly evident in vocational high schools, where students are expected to develop communication skills that support their future professional careers (L. Studies et al., 2021). Previous studies have reported that vocational students frequently encounter difficulties in speaking English due to limited confidence and motivation (Hidayani et al., 2023; Purwati et al., 2023).

To address these challenges, many schools have implemented Project-Based Learning (PjBL), which promotes active learning, collaboration, and problem-based learning through authentic tasks (Tendrita, 2025). Although PjBL has been widely recognized as an effective student-centered approach, some students still demonstrate reluctance and low confidence during speaking activities (Ceronio et al., 2025). This condition suggests that improving speaking performance requires not only instructional strategies that facilitate collaboration but also approaches that address students' emotional and psychological needs (Purwanto et al., 2023).

One approach that may complement PjBL is Social-Emotional Learning (SEL), which focuses on developing self-awareness, self-management, social awareness, relationship skills, and responsible decision-making (Houghton-katipa, 2024). Research has shown that emotionally supportive learning environments encourage students to participate actively, take learning risks, and build confidence in communication (Berlin & Cohen, 2020; Guenther, 2023). Furthermore, SEL helps

learners manage emotional interpersonal relationships and develop the confidence necessary for successful language learning (Sukklang & Wilang, 2025; Stankovska et al., 2025). Through these benefits, SEL has gained increasing attention as a framework that supports both students' academic achievement and emotional well-being.

Several previous studies have highlighted the positive contribution of SEL to language learning. Melani et al. (2020) found that SEL supports communication development by reducing speaking anxiety and creating a supportive environment for language use. Similarly, Song et al. (2022) reported that socially and emotionally responsive teaching practices enhance students' confidence, participation, and classroom engagement. Despite these findings, research examining the integration of SEL and speaking performance remains limited, particularly in vocational high school contexts. Moreover, few studies have investigated the effectiveness of integrating SEL into Project-Based Learning to improve students' speaking performance in EFL classrooms.

Based on these gaps, the present study investigates the effect of Social-Emotional Learning on tenth-grade students' speaking skills at SMK PGRI 3 Denpasar. Specifically, this study aims to determine whether students who learn through SEL-integrated Project-Based Learning demonstrate better speaking performance than those who learn through conventional Project-Based Learning.

METHODOLOGY

This study employed a quasi-experimental research design using a non-equivalent pre-test and post-test control group design to investigate the effect of Social-Emotional Learning (SEL) integrated with Project-Based Learning (PjBL) on students' speaking skills. The study was conducted at SMK PGRI 3 Denpasar during the second semester of the 2025/2026 academic year. The population consisted of 374 tenth-grade students distributed across eight classes. Cluster random sampling was employed because random assignment of individual students was not feasible. Two intact classes, X KUL 5 and X KUL 6, were selected as the research sample, comprising a total of 90 students. Class X KUL 5 was assigned as the experimental group, while X KUL 6 served as the control group. Each group consisted of 45 students. The experimental group received Social-Emotional Learning (SEL) integrated with Project-Based Learning, whereas the control group received conventional Project-Based Learning without SEL integration. Data were collected through speaking pre-tests and post-tests. The speaking tasks were designed based on the topic "Describing Food and Beverages," which was relevant to the vocational learning context. Students' speaking performance was assessed using a rubric adapted from Cyril that covered five aspects: grammar, vocabulary, comprehension, fluency, and pronunciation. The treatment was implemented over four instructional sessions. In the experimental group, Project-Based Learning activities were integrated with Social-Emotional Learning competencies, including self-awareness, self-management, social-awareness, relationship skills, and responsible decision-making. Meanwhile, the control group participated in the same Project-Based Learning activities without integrating SEL components. The collected data were analyzed using descriptive and inferential statistics with the assistance of SPSS version 25. Descriptive statistics were used to

obtain the mean and standard deviation of the pre-test and post-test scores. Before hypothesis testing, the assumptions of normality and homogeneity were examined using the Shapiro-Wilk and the homogeneity of variance test. An Independent Samples t-test was conducted to examine the equivalence of the groups before treatment. Furthermore, Analysis of Covariance (ANCOVA) was employed to determine the effect of SEL-integrated Project-Based Learning on students' speaking skills while controlling for pre-test scores as a covariate. All statistical analyses were conducted at a significance level of $\alpha = 0.05$.

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

Descriptive Statistics

The descriptive statistics indicated that both groups demonstrated improvement in speaking performance after the intervention. As shown in *Table 1.1*, the experimental group achieved a higher post-test mean score ($M = 64.56$, $SD = 8.24$) than the control group ($M = 59.33$, $SD = 8.30$). Although the experimental group also obtained a higher pre-test mean score ($M = 45.44$) than the control group ($M = 40.22$), further analysis was conducted using ANCOVA to control for these initial differences.

Table 4.1 Descriptive Statistics of Pre-Test and Post-Test Scores

Group	Pre-Test Mean	Post-Test Mean
Experimental	45.44	64.56
Control	40.22	59.33

The results suggest that students who participated in SEL-integrated Project-Based Learning demonstrated greater improvement in speaking performance compared to those who experienced conventional Project-Based Learning.

ANCOVA results

Before hypothesis testing, the data met the assumptions of normality and homogeneity. Therefore, Analysis of Covariance (ANCOVA) was employed to determine the effect of SEL-integrated Project-Based Learning while controlling for pre-test scores.

Table 4.2. ANCOVA Results

Group	F	Sig.
Experimental	0.322	0.572
Control	6.767	0.011

The ANCOVA results revealed a significant effect of group on students' speaking performance ($F = 6.767$, $p = 0.011$). Since the significance value was lower than 0.05, the null hypothesis was rejected. This finding indicates that SEL-integrated Project-Based Learning significantly improved students' speaking performance after controlling for differences in initial speaking ability.

DISCUSSION

This research aims to examine whether there is a significant difference in speaking performance between the tenth-grade students who were taught using

Social-Emotional Learning-enhanced Project-Based Learning and students who were taught using Conventional Project-Based Learning.

This study finds that project-based learning (PjBL) integrated with social-emotional learning (SEL) has a significant positive effect on students' oral skills, compared with traditional, standard PjBL. Before conducting hypothesis testing, this study completed three prerequisite tests to ensure data compliance: descriptive statistics, normality testing, and homogeneity testing.

This study divided participants into two groups: an experimental dan control group. First, the researcher used descriptive statistics for the pretest to sort out baseline conditions and rule out excessive interference from initial differences between groups. The pre-test recorded a mean oral score of 45.44 for the experimental group and 40.22 for the control group. After completing the intervention that spanned the full learning cycle, the post-test found the experimental group scored a mean of 64.56, while the control group scored a mean of 59.33. Both groups saw improvements in their oral performance. However, the experimental group, which received a project-based learning intervention that integrated SEL, achieved a significantly greater improvement than the control group, which adopted the conventional project-based learning approach.

This study adopted the Shapiro-Wilk normality test to conduct preliminary statistical validation. The pre-test significance values of the experimental group and the control group were 0.076 and 0.059, respectively, while their post-test significance values were 0.064 and 0.065, respectively. All these values are higher than the statistical threshold of 0.05, so the data meet the normality assumption and are suitable for subsequent parametric statistical analysis.

This study adopted Levene's test to conduct the homogeneity of variance test. The measured pre-test significance value was 0.668, and the post-test significance value was 0.816, both of which exceeded the 0.05 judgment threshold. The variances of the experimental and control groups were homogeneous, satisfying the study's assumptions and establishing methodological validity for subsequent between-group analyses.

This study first applied the independent samples t-test to complete hypothesis testing for the pre-test results of the two groups. This study found that before the intervention, the experimental group and the control group differed significantly ($p=0.001$), which confirmed that the two groups had unequal initial oral proficiency. Therefore, this study adopted analysis of covariance (ANCOVA) with pre-test scores set as the covariate to accurately estimate the intervention effect.

Results of the analysis of covariance (ANCOVA) test showed that after accounting for this control variable, there was a significant difference between the experimental group and the control group. The significance value of the group variable was 0.011, which falls below the widely adopted threshold of 0.05. The null hypothesis was therefore rejected, confirming that project-based teaching integrated with social-emotional learning (SEL) yields a significantly greater effect in improving students' speaking performance than conventional project-based teaching.

This study finds that the implementation of social-emotional learning (SEL) is effective: it helps students build greater speaking performance, deepen their emotional

engagement, and take the initiative to participate in classroom interactions. By centering core activities such as self-awareness and self-management, SEL creates more opportunities for oral language practice, improves students' speaking skills across multiple dimensions, and confirms that SEL integrated with project-based learning can effectively enhance students' speaking skills.

The results of this research indicated that the use of Social-Emotional Learning (SEL)-enhanced Project-Based Learning had a significant impact on the speaking performance of students at SMK PGRI 3 Denpasar. The combination of SEL and Project-Based Learning fostered a collaborative, communicative, and emotionally supportive educational atmosphere that motivated students to engage more actively in speaking exercises. Through Project-Based Learning, students engaged in relevant and meaningful learning experiences aligned with their vocational training, particularly through activities such as restaurant role-play and menu description tasks. Simultaneously, SEL facilitated students' emotional preparedness, classroom involvement, communication abilities, and peer interactions throughout the learning journey. Consequently, students were able to practice speaking more actively and naturally during classroom activities. This study first completed preliminary statistical analysis, confirming that the data fully met all applicable assumptions for parametric testing. After obtaining official research approval from SMK PGRI 3 Denpasar, the researcher designated the school's two selected classes, X KUL 5 and X KUL 6, as the experimental group and control group, respectively, to launch the intervention process. At the study's first meeting, the researcher organized students from both groups to complete the role-play task paired with the pre-test scale to assess the students' baseline oral proficiency before the intervention.

After the pre-test for this study was completed, the researcher arranged to carry out two rounds of intervention courses for the two study participant classes, themed around descriptive texts about food and drinks. The supporting learning materials covered the social functions, general structure, linguistic features, and relevant vocabulary of this type of text, to equip students with the necessary knowledge and language input for their subsequent project activities.

In this study, project-based oral tasks were assigned to all students during the third and fourth experimental teaching classes. Both groups received instruction through project-based learning (PjBL). The experimental group adopted a PjBL model integrated with social-emotional learning (SEL), while the control group only used conventional PjBL with no SEL integration. Both groups were required to collaborate, share content, and articulate their stances to practice their oral language skills.

In the educational experiment of this study, the intervention group implemented a custom-designed social-emotional learning intervention. The intervention centered on the CASEL framework and developed four guided activities aligned with the framework's five core competencies: emotional expression, learning reflection, peer support, and classroom participation (Franco, 2019). Supplemented by Vygotsky's sociocultural theory, the intervention adopted matching learning pathways, including collaboration, peer discussion, and teacher-guided learning, and ultimately achieved improvements in students' knowledge construction and oral language ability (Takeaways, 2025).

After completing the full course of teaching interventions for this study, the researcher administered a speaking performance post-test with a design similar to that of the pre-test to participants in both the experimental group and the control group. The results showed that the experimental group's oral performance was significantly affected compared to that of the control group, with particularly prominent improvements in the dimensions of fluency and vocabulary. Project-based teaching that integrates social-emotional learning can promote learners' speaking skills by boosting their self-confidence, increasing communication opportunities, and creating a supportive classroom environment.

This study proposes that the first core mechanism by which SEL integrated with project-based learning improves English oral learning outcomes is that it enhances students' self-confidence and reduces their English-speaking anxiety. The experimental group established for this study guided students throughout the entire process to express emotions, share personal experiences, and participate in class discussions (Pham, 2024), which helped students adapt to using English in front of their peers and eventually gain the courage to speak up and practice. We cite the self-awareness and self-management dimensions of the authoritative CASEL framework to corroborate this finding, confirming that after students gain emotional security and self-confidence, they become more willing to participate in oral English activities and achieve stronger oral performance.

This study finds that the second core factor driving the effectiveness of SEL-enhanced project-based learning (PjBL) is the availability of sufficient opportunities for social interaction and collaborative learning. Empirical observations collected for this study show that students in the intervention experimental group collaborated, communicated, shared feedback, and split project tasks throughout the entire project period, which prompted them to engage in meaningful English use far more frequently. This underlying logic is supported and explained by classic educational theories from Vygotsky: sociocultural theory demonstrated to significantly enhance students' social and emotional skills, increase their engagement in learning, and improve academic performance, with these benefits having long-lasting effects (Yoder et al., 2021). This study further finds that these collaborative activities helped students expand their vocabulary, improve their oral English fluency, and build greater confidence in their English expression; the integration of SEL aligns with the requirements of the CASEL framework, supporting two core competencies: social awareness and interpersonal skills. The experimental group also had a significantly better classroom collaborative atmosphere than the control group. The combination of social interaction, collaboration, and emotional support ultimately produced a significant improvement in students' oral English performance (Atkins et al., 2023).

This study elaborates on the third core mechanism through which integrating SEL into project-based learning generates positive impacts on the oral proficiency of second language learners: the creation of a supportive learning environment that encourages students to actively participate in oral activities. Compared with traditional classroom settings, this SEL-integrated model fosters an atmosphere rooted in mutual respect, recognition, and support between teachers and students, effectively reducing students' fear of making mistakes and motivating them to volunteer to

express themselves (Coli et al., 2024). Oral language learning is often accompanied by anxiety and fear of negative evaluation, so emotional safety is particularly critical for oral language courses, as it drives students to participate in communicative activities and use the target language more frequently (Id et al., 2022). The experimental group in this study incorporated multiple sessions, including idea sharing, reflection on learning experiences, and communication for project tasks, which granted students more opportunities to practice their oral skills. In the end, participants achieved proficiency improvements across four dimensions: fluency, vocabulary use, pronunciation, and overall speaking performance. This model also boosted students' learning engagement and provided the language input and output opportunities required for second language acquisition (Relationships, 2023). This framework not only supports students' emotional development but also creates favorable conditions for the improvement of oral skills.

This study has some limitations. The two sample classes selected for this research are both large classes with 45 students each. When carrying out research tasks, including oral activities, project assignments, and SEL interactive tasks, it is impossible to fully provide personalized guidance or effectively monitor every student's level of participation. It is recommended that future similar studies be conducted in small classes of 20 to 30 students, to support in-depth interaction and detailed observation, and to better implement project-based learning that integrates SEL. Future researchers should explore how Social-Emotional Learning can help improve other English skills, such as reading, listening, and writing. This will provide a broader understanding of the effectiveness of SEL in learning English. Third, this study was done in a vocational high school with culinary students. Future research can examine the use of SEL-enhanced learning in other schools, such as junior high or senior high, to determine whether the results are consistent across different students and grade levels. Fourth, this study combined Social-Emotional Learning (SEL) with Project-Based Learning (PjBL). Future researchers can explore how effective SEL is when used with other teaching methods or learning models to find different ways to help students learn languages and stay engaged in class. This study looked at descriptive texts about food and drinks in restaurant role-play activities. Future research could explore other English learning topics, types of texts, or themes beyond food descriptions to see how SEL works in different English learning settings.

CONCLUSION

This study investigated the effect of Social-Emotional Learning (SEL) on the tenth-grade students' speaking skills at SMK PGRI 3 Denpasar. The findings revealed that students who participated in SEL-integrated Project-Based Learning achieved significantly better speaking performance than those who learned through conventional Project-Based Learning. After controlling for students' initial speaking ability through ANCOVA, the effect of the treatment remained statistically significant ($p = 0.011$), indicating that the improvement was attributable to the integration of SEL within the learning process. The findings suggest that integrating SEL into Project-Based Learning supports students' speaking skills by fostering greater confidence, emotional engagement, classroom participation, and collaborative interaction. Among

the assessed speaking components, vocabulary and fluency demonstrated the most noticeable improvement. These results highlight that speaking performance is influenced not only by linguistic competence but also by students' social and emotional development. This study contributes to the growing body of research on Social-Emotional Learning by providing empirical evidence of its effectiveness in enhancing speaking performance within a vocational high school context. Therefore, the integration of SEL into English language instruction may serve as an effective pedagogical strategy for improving students' communication skills and preparing them for future academic and professional environments. Future research is recommended to examine the long-term effects of SEL and explore its implementation across different educational contexts, language skills, and learning models.

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