Perceptions of Selected College Students on the Impact of Project-based Learning on their English Oral Communication Skills

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ABSTRACT	Published Online: July 07, 2025

Project-based Learning is an instructional method that emphasizes the purpose and meaning of communication through series of projects assigned. This study aimed to determine the perceptions of selected college students on the impact of Project-based Learning on their English oral communication skills particularly in the context of the Philippines. The study particularly employed the convergent mixed methods design to analyze the quantitative survey responses elicited from thirty-three (33) participants who were first year college students from a private institution in Manila, Philippines who at the time of data gathering, were taking a face-to-face English communication class. Out of the said participants, six (6) students were purposively invited for an online interview to generate qualitative data. Descriptive statistics and thematic analysis were used to make sense of the data gathered. The survey had four main segments with varied items on the connection between PbL and the enhancement of spoken communication skills; the interview focused on six (6) questions about the perceived impact of PbL on the development of English oral communication skills. The findings affirm that Project-based Learning is an effective technique in enhancing the English speaking skills of students. Both data sets emphasize that PbL does not only pave the way for linguistic development such as vocabulary growth, comprehension, and content knowledge, but also cultivates soft skills needed to accomplish English oral communication projects. The positive perceptions of respondents on the integration of PbL in English communication emphasizes its roles in academic and personal enhancement, which strengthen the existing literature.

KEYWORDS: Project-based Learning, English Oral Communication, Perceptions

1. INTRODUCTION

1.1. Background of the Study

In the constantly changing landscape of education, various effective teaching techniques for developing English oral communication skills are employed to respond to students' needs. These techniques are used to make students learn more about English communication. Some students deem that English speaking skill is complicated to learn. Students' difficulty in speaking is caused by various factors, including inappropriate teaching and learning methods (Widiyati & Pangesti, 2022), hence, it is a need that proper techniques are utilized in class to address the said issue. In the tertiary level, good English communication skills are essential. With this, learners are provided with multiple opportunities to hone their skills while they are studying in preparation for their future careers. English oral communication skill is important particularly in the workplace, that is why educational institutions come up with steps to train their students for the workforce (Sirisrimangkorn, 2021). The said skill is an essential part of everyday interaction and it fulfills a number of general and specific purposes. Being able to speak is certainly a life essential that individuals can take advantage of.

Communicative competence is one of the aims of the 21st century language teaching and learning (Eaton, 2010, as cited in Bakar et al., 2019). In the field of English language teaching, several strategies are employed by teachers to hone the communicative competence of learners. One of the techniques employed by educators is Project-based Learning (PbL). Project-based Learning is a pedagogical framework that highlights that learning should be interactive, practical, and collaborative. It is a student-centered approach that allows students to experience situations based on real-world

occurrences (Siminto et al., 2024). According to Dewi (2016, as cited in Widiyati & Pangesti, 2022), learning speaking by using this approach can help students overcome barriers, expand knowledge, and increase motivation to study. El-Sayed (2020) claims that Project-based learning is a method that situates students at the core of the teaching process. The said approach allows learners to have that sense of ownership over their academic work.

This study envisions to determine the perceptions of selected college students on the impact of Project-based Learning on their English oral communication skills particularly in the context of the Philippines. Based on the literature review, there is a dearth of research on how Project-based Learning affects the English oral communication skills specifically of tertiary level students. Further studies are recommended to encompass a real-world based context for English oral communication skill improvement that provides learners with authentic English speaking experiences (Sirisrimangkorn, 2021). Determining students' perceptions on the implementation of PbL in their English communication class is a means to ascertain if this teaching method is able to meet the needs of students.

1.2. Review of Related Literature
1.2.1. Significance of English Oral Communication Skills

In this 21st century, English has become an international language which has an important role in many fields such as business, commerce, entertainment, education, science, and technology (Pinphet, 2020). English is widely used in various countries and situations with several varieties of the language spoken by different speakers. Specifically, English oral communication skills are very important means of communicating both verbal and non-verbal messages that the speaker aims to share with the audience. These are a set of skills that involve various pedagogical functions. Students have to learn how to confidently express themselves orally. Students should be motivated to communicate orally and to get rid of their anxiety while utilizing the English language (El-Sayed, 2020). In relation to this, Wuryantari Winasih et al. (2019) claim that a number of students find English oral communication as a challenge due to limited experience in speaking. They tend to lose confidence and feel anxious when tasked to accomplish activities in relation to oral communication. This difficulty may rise from the inappropriate use of instructional teaching techniques by teachers and the shortage of contextualized speaking opportunities for students. They then have to be exposed to learning experiences based on real-world situations for them to hone their English oral communication skills.

Effective oral communication is an important skill that learners must exhibit, but often, students have difficulty to speak with confidence (Purnami & Widiadnya, 2024).

Speaking skills play a very important role in learning English communication. These skills provide opportunities for learners to constantly use the language to express their thoughts and engage in meaningful conversations. Students who are table to take advantage of their skill in speaking are able to partake in several circumstances based on real-life scenarios such as daily discussions, work environments, and academic situations (Villalba, 2022, as cited in Purnami & Widiadnya, 2024). Additionally, speaking contributes to the enhancement of listening skills, as it hones the ability of an individual to engage in meaningful discussions, at the same time to pay attention to the message delivered to fully comprehend it. Proper grammar, vocabulary, and pronunciation are some of the factors that affect the process of English oral communication. Brown (2004, as cited in Dewi, 2020) adds that speaking is an interactive process of making meaning that involves the following steps: production, receipt, and analysis of message. In the tertiary level of education, English oral communication aids students to express their thoughts succinctly and confidently. In this level, cohesive and logical delivery of spoken messages are focused on.

1.2.2. Nature of Project-based Learning

Nowadays, a number of teaching strategies are utilized to aid students in reaching the target competencies. Project-based Learning is one of these techniques. Project-based Learning is a student-centered approach that highlights the importance of interactions inside the classroom. It is based on the belief that students learn best when exposed to actual issues or topics from the real world. It also links to the idea that topics are absorbed well by learners when they are tasked to solve problems based on real-world scenarios (Al-Bahadli et al., 2023). According to Thomas (2000, as cited in Al-Bahadli et al., 2023), realistic outputs which include presentations, publications, and exhibition are expected from learners of a class where Project-based Learning is observed. Students' engagement with these activities could increase their motivation to learn while their critical thinking skills and other capabilities are trained. Additionally, according to Shin (2019), Project-based Learning capitalizes on students' experiences and John Dewey's philosophy that learning is an activity that is social where students have to ideate as well as cooperate with others to solve real-world issues. Students' problem solving skills are honed through activities that are not just imaginative, instead, projects are based on actual issues and occurrences in the society. This in turn could make students more independent and ready to address issues that they would face in the real world.

The significance of using Project-based Learning stems from its nature being an approach that is based on real situations. Through this, students experience authentic assessments. Students are trained to decipher how to solve problems by analyzing it in general and addressing it by formulating and considering specific steps (Al-Bahadli et al.,

2023). With this said, Project-based Learning usually involves a valuable length of time for students to work together to craft a significant product, reflect on the process, and evaluate their experiences. Dewi (2020) adds that PbL also relates to the scientific approach as students acquire knowledge through a step-by-step procedure where practical applications are emphasized. Project-based Learning is a student-centered methodological approach where communication, participation, and independence are given emphasis. The said approach could help students improve their communicative competence (Becerra-Posada et al., 2022). According to Cocco (2006, as cited in Al-Bahadli et al., 2023), Project-based Learning is based on the three constructivist concepts of learning which include active participation of learners, successful achievement of learning outcomes, and constant transmission of information. Autonomy is given to students in planning, crafting, executing, and finalizing their projects. Hence, PbL also makes students become more creative to arrange a plan and produce a project that could increase their motivation to study and turn into practice what they learn from the usual class discussions.

1.2.3. Impact of Project-based Learning on the Enhancement of English Oral Communication Skills

A number of studies were conducted that aimed to ascertain how Project-based Learning affects the development of oral communication skills of students. Zare-Behtash and Sarlak (2017, as cited in Wuryantari Winasih et al., 2019) conducted a research that found that Project-based Learning served as an effective method to hone students' speaking skills. In the same study, it was revealed that PbL motivated students to amplify oral production and it aided them to lessen their anxiety when speaking; these data were acquired through various means of data collection (Wuryantari Winasih et al., 2019). Furthermore, Firdaus and Septiady (2023) claim that Project-based Learning improved the teaching and learning process in an English oral communication class. The said approach helped students improve their creative presentation skills from the planning to the execution stage. The said researchers found that Project-based Learning also tested the management skills of educators involved in the study as the said approach required a reasonable amount of time for students to systematically work on the projects expected from them. In return, students had to balance their time to accomplish the projects assigned to them that were created to aid them in improving their English oral communication skills. The study found that Project-based Learning positively impacted the students' oral communication skills as well as their capacity in collaborating, thinking critically, presenting, and carrying themselves confidently (Firdaus & Septiady, 2023).

Project-based Learning is connected to problems that are occurring in the real world. In the case of English communication classes, students are given time to go through some steps that allow them to enhance their communication skills, and in the end, craft the output that is usually expected from English oral communication classes – speeches (Kurniawati et al., 2019). Language fluency is also honed as the target language is used during the completion of speaking-related projects. The completion of these tasks may involve collaboration as well as group conversations. While completing the projects, students can express their thoughts to solve the issues for them to craft the speaking-related tasks (Torres & Rodriguez, 2017, as cited in Kurniawati et al., 2019). Project-based Learning is related to spoken communication skills; it emphasizes the purpose and meaning of communication through series of projects assigned. Menggo et al. (2023) state that spoken communication skills are strengthened by PbL through the assignment of tasks that make them competent as English language users. In terms of aspects that could be improved by the implementation of Project-based Learning, Ichsan et al. (2019) found that correctness and concreteness of delivery were the main areas addressed by the said instructional method. Project-based Learning turns traditional approaches to unconventional ones as students' speaking skills are reinforced.

1.3. Research Questions and Significance of the Study

This study aimed to determine the perceptions of selected college students on the impact of Project-based Learning on their English oral communication skills particularly in the context of pure face-to-face classes. To attain this, the following questions were posed:

1. To what extent does Project-based Learning contribute to the enhancement of English oral communication skills based on the perceptions of college students?

2. How does the implementation of Project-based Learning impact the development of English oral communication skills based on the perceptions of college students?

Based on the literature review, there is a dearth of research on how Project-based Learning impacts the development of English oral communication skills of college students based on their perceptions, specifically in the Philippine setting. The study could determine how Project-based Learning engages learners in assessments based on real-world scenarios and how these could impact the enhancement of their English speaking skills that entail clear, confident, and effective delivery. This study could dive into the details of PbL, which gives learners the practical opportunities to work on their communication skills, which are needed for academic and future success. Additionally, knowing the perceived impact of Project-based Learning on English oral communication skill enhancement could aid teachers, school administrators, and educational designers to improve their work in response to students' needs. The

findings of this study could also contribute to the growing field of education specifically to the area of language studies.

2. METHODS

2.1. Research Design

Mixed-method design was employed in this study. The said design was chosen to comprehensively address the research problem by taking advantage of both quantitative and qualitative methods. The use of mixed-method design converges the findings from both quantitative and qualitative data collection approaches. With this, different aspects of the research problem are paid attention to. Additionally, answers to research questions are discussed from different angles, leading to a balanced analysis. The study particularly employed the convergent mixed methods design which according to Creswell and Creswell (2017), involves the collection of both quantitative and qualitative responses. After the collection of data, it requires a separate analysis, and it ends with the comparison of results to determine the connection of the two sets of data.

2.2. Participants

The participants of the study were first year college students from a private institution in Manila, Philippines who were taking a face-to-face English communication class at the time of data gathering. Purposive sampling was employed to tap college students to be the respondents of the study in response to the identified research gap. Thirty-three (33) students consented to participate in the study, particularly in the survey. Afterwards, six (6) students were purposively invited for an online interview. Before the participants were asked to take part in the study, they were informed of the research's purpose and their consent was secured. They were notified that their participation was purely voluntary.

2.3. Instruments

Two instruments were utilized to gather responses from the research participants. Survey questionnaire through Google Forms was used to gather numerical data from the participants in response to the first research question which aims to determine the extent on how Project-based Learning contributes to the enhancement of English oral communication skills based on the perceptions of college students. Likert scale was used where 5 served as the highest mark and 1 as the lowest. The survey instrument was adapted from the study of Bakar et al. (2019), which contained the following segments: Improvement of language skills in English oral communication, Development of soft skills in English oral communication, Motivation and attitudes towards English oral communication, and Learning opportunities in English oral communication.

Interview was also conducted via Zoom to answer the second research question which is all about the perceptions of college students on the implementation of Project-based Learning and its impact on the development of English oral communication skills. Interview questions were based on the study of Sirisrimangkorn (2021). Questions were modified in consideration of the present study's context. The following questions were asked:

1. What is the importance of projects in a face-to-face English communication class?
2. What are the characteristics of a meaningful oral communication-related project?
3. Which oral communication-related projects did you find helpful in your face-to-face English communication class?
4. Which oral communication-related projects did you find challenging in your face-to-face English communication class?
5. How did Project-based Learning affect your oral communication skills?
6. How could Project-based Learning be improved to enhance students' oral communication skills?

2.4. Procedures and Data Analysis

Once the permission from the school administrators was given, the researcher started to conduct the survey. The respondents of the study were given a week to complete the survey. A total of thirty-three (33) students participated in the said quantitative data collection. Out of the mentioned respondents, six (6) were tapped to be interviewed. Within the succeeding week, these interviews were held based on the preferred schedule of the participants. Before data collection was held, the research purpose and procedures to be done were explained to the participants. They were informed that their participation was voluntary and they were also given the freedom to withdraw in case they need to. An informed consent form was accomplished by all research respondents.

In terms of data analysis, descriptive statistics was used to make sense of the survey responses gathered. Microsoft Excel was employed to analyze the numerical data, particularly the mean and standard deviation. On the other hand, thematic analysis was utilized to interpret the interview answers of the participants following the steps elucidated by Braun and Clarke (2006): being familiar with the data, determining the codes, looking for themes, checking the themes, naming the themes, and finalizing the report. The website voyant-tools.org was utilized as an aid in determining the codes and themes. A side-by-side approach was observed in presenting the data in compliance with the convergent mixed methods design discussed by Creswell and Creswell (2017).

3. RESULTS

3.1. Extent on How Project-based Learning Contributes to the Enhancement of English Oral Communication Skills Based on the Perceptions of College Students

The following tables reflect the summarized results of the survey that was conducted in response to the first research question:

Table 1. Improvement of Language Skills in English Oral Communication

Survey Items	Mean	Standard Deviation
I am a better English language speaker than I was before because of project-based learning.	3.70	0.81
I understand English conversations that I hear now more than I did before because of project-based learning.	3.76	0.75
I am able to express my ideas more freely now than I was before because of project-based learning.	3.73	0.67
My knowledge of English oral communication content has improved because of project-based learning.	4.00	0.79
I know more English words now than I did before because of project-based learning.	3.82	0.92

Table 1 shows consistent agreement across all items on the improvement of language skills in English oral communication with mean scores ranging from 3.70 to 4.00 on a 5-point Likert scale. The increase of knowledge about English oral communication content due to Project-based Learning received the highest average of 4.00. The perception on being a better English language speaker had the lowest average of 3.70; this still shows agreement although the rating implies a room for development. These findings support the integration of PbL for the continuous improvement of oral communication skills.

Table 2. Development of Soft Skills in English Oral Communication

Survey Items	Mean	Standard Deviation
The projects improve my collaborative skills in English communication.	3.94	0.79
The projects improve my research skills in English communication.	3.94	0.75
I think more creatively than before because of the projects in English communication.	3.70	0.81
I am able to manage my work according to my plan because of the projects in English communication.	3.82	0.77
I work better in groups now than I did before because of the projects in English communication.	3.82	0.64

Table 2 reflects that the respondents had a generally positive attitude towards the development of soft skills in English oral communication with mean scores ranging from 3.70 to 3.94. The items on collaborative skills and research skills needed in English oral communication shared the highest average of 3.94. Students neutrally responded to the item on how PbL impacts their creative presentation with a mark of 3.70. These findings mirror the value of PbL in improving the soft skills needed in English oral communication.

Table 3. Motivation and Attitudes towards English Oral Communication

Survey Items	Mean	Standard Deviation
I enjoy the projects during the lessons in English communication.	3.88	0.78
I am always excited about the projects I am doing in English communication.	3.61	0.75
I appreciate the feedback received about my projects in English communication.	4.18	0.85
I communicate in English confidently during the lessons because of the projects in English communication.	3.73	0.80
I no longer feel anxious to communicate because of the projects in English communication.	3.52	0.87

Table 3 presents the motivation and attitudes toward English oral communication of the respondents because of Project-based Learning where mean scores range from 3.52 to 4.18. It is notable that the respondents exhibited appreciation of the feedback they received after accomplishing their projects in their English communication class. Additionally, the respondents claimed that their anxiety was lessened because of the projects they were exposed to, however, it is the item that received the lowest average of 3.52 suggesting that it may still be a point for improvement for some respondents. This implies that projects have to be designed by educators in such a way that communication anxiety would be addressed.

Table 4. Learning Opportunities in English Oral Communication

Survey Items	Mean	Standard Deviation
I have many opportunities to speak in English because of project-based learning in English communication.	3.88	0.70
I have many opportunities to correct my mistakes because of project-based learning in English communication.	3.85	0.71
I have many opportunities to share my learnings because of project-based learning in English communication.	3.67	0.78
I have many opportunities to be involved in real life communication situations because of project-based learning in English communication.	3.91	0.80
I have the freedom to determine how I learn because of project-based learning in English communication.	3.94	0.79

Table 4 shows the learning opportunities offered to students in English oral communication where mean scores range from 3.67 to 3.94. The highest mean score of 3.94 was received by the item on freedom to determine how to learn due to PbL in English communication; this indicates that students felt that they had autonomy and flexibility in their learning of English oral communication due to the integration of PbL. On the other hand, the item on sharing the learnings acquired through PbL had a mean score of 3.67 which implies that students could be provided with more opportunities for them to share what they learned from their English class.

Overall, these findings imply that Project-based Learning is a highly engaging approach for language acquisition.

3.2. Impact of the Implementation of Project-based Learning on the Development of English Oral Communication Skills Based on the Perceptions of College Students

The figures below present the themes and codes identified out of the interview that was conducted in response to the second research question:

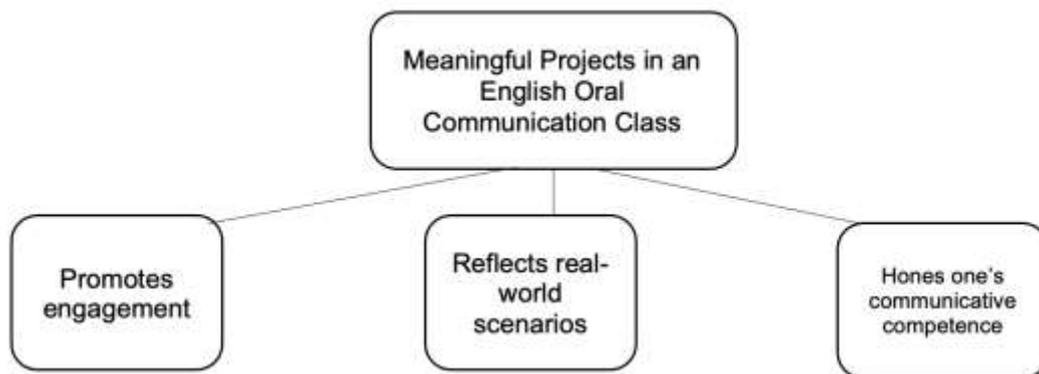**Figure 1. Meaningful Projects in an English Oral Communication Class**

Figure 1 shows that based on the interview answers of the participants, meaningful projects in an English oral communication class have to promote engagement, reflect real-world scenarios, and hone one's communicative competence. For them, the alignment among personal interest, actual application, and communicative development makes projects an impactful avenue to develop one's speaking skills. As stated by Interviewee 1, *"the characteristics a meaningful oral communication-related project should have are that it should develop each skill needed to excel in oral communication, it should be engaging and fun, and it should present the what, why, and how."*

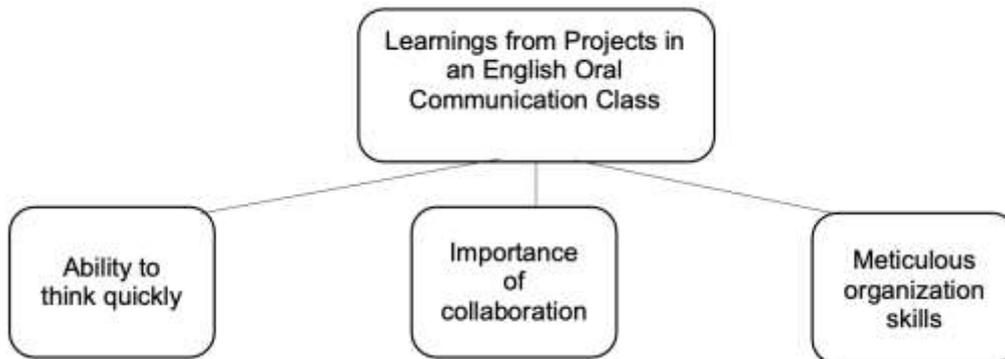**Figure 2. Learnings from Projects in an English Oral Communication Class**

Figure 2 reflects that through PbL in English oral communication, the participants gained more than language proficiency – they learned the practical application of rapid thinking, the importance of collaboration, and meticulous organization skills. In relation to this, Interviewee 2 said: *"Debating taught me how to structure my arguments logically, think critically, and present my points persuasively. It also challenged me to respond to opposing viewpoints on the spot, which helped me improve my ability to think quickly and communicate effectively under pressure."* Projects, hence, contribute to students' communicative development for both academic and professional challenges.

Figure 3. Impact of Projects on the Development of English Oral Communication Class

Figure 3 exhibits the impact of Project-based Learning on the development of English oral communication skills of the participants – increased confidence, improved critical thinking skills, and better presentation skills. Interviewee 3 said this: *"Project-based Learning in oral communication skills has helped me develop my critical thinking and reflective skills. It developed my critical thinking skills as projects are more lenient towards problem-solving and addressing real-world challenges. On the other hand, it developed my reflective skills as it made me contemplate and give thoughts about the different circumstances that created the problems in the first place."* This solidifies the claim that PbL is a tool for spoken language development.

4. DISCUSSION

The survey that was conducted in response to the first research question revealed that based on the perceptions of college students, Project-based Learning contributes to the development of English oral communication skills. In terms of language development in English communication, students reported notable improvements in comprehending spoken English with a mean of 3.76, vocabulary with a mean of 3.82, and content knowledge with a mean of 4.00, implying that PbL supports both productive and receptive language skills. However, self-assessment of speaking ability with a mean of 3.70 and idea transmission with a mean of 3.73 were slightly lower, indicating that while the respondents feel knowledgeable, they could still be given more opportunities to improve their confidence in speaking. This finding aligns with moderate mean scores related to communication confidence (3.73) and reduced anxiety (3.52). Beyond language skills needed in English oral communication, PbL appears to have a significant role in cultivating soft skills. Items under motivation and attitudes towards English oral communication showed that students had a high appreciation of feedback given with a mean of 4.18 and overall enjoyment with a mean of 3.88, though the slightly lower enthusiasm levels with a mean of 3.61 suggests that sustained engagement may vary among learners. Significantly, PbL offers enough opportunities for meaningful practice of spoken communication, with respondents recognizing their real-life communication experiences with a mean of 3.91 and independence in learning with a mean of 3.94. These findings link to Fitria et al.'s (2022) claims that Project-based Learning could be used to enhance the speaking skills of students through increased learning motivation, improved problem-solving skills, and better creativity. It is made possible by the careful selection of learning strategies that enables students to collaborate in accomplishing projects (Ikhsanudin & Ali Purwoko, 2022).

To respond to the second research question about the implementation of Project-based Learning and its impact on the English oral communication skills of college students, an interview was conducted. The participants perceived PbL as a transformative technique that develops their language competence. For the participants, meaningful projects foster engagement by connecting tasks to real-world scenarios, which in turn sharpens their communicative abilities. The participants also revealed that through their exposure to PbL, they learned the importance of rapid ideation, collaboration, and careful organization – skills that are all needed in English oral communication. Based on the interview responses, the perceived benefits of PbL on spoken communication development are improvements in confidence, critical thinking, and presentation skills which refer to the qualities that are needed in public speaking according to Suhroh et al. (2020). The connection between insightful projects and skill acquisition implies that PbL paves the way not just for language development, but for a number of opportunities for personal growth, teamwork, and analytical thinking. The positive perceptions of the respondents align with the results of the study of Alfatihah et al. (2022) where students also had good insights on the implementation of PbL in teaching spoken communication. These findings corroborate Benlaghrissi and Ouahidi's (2024) statement that PbL is a creative mode of providing instructions in enhancing students' speaking skills.

There are notable connections between the quantitative and qualitative data that were gathered. The survey results show a generally high perception among college students that Project-based Learning develops their English speaking skills. There is an alignment between the qualitative themes where students perceived to have increased confidence and improved presentation skills and the quantitative indicators on confident communication and reduced anxiety. As stated by Interviewee 4, *"Projects in a face-to-face English communication class allow for students to practice effectively."* Furthermore, the learnings of research participants from the implementation of PbL in their English oral communication class intersect with the strong mean scores in collaboration and task organization. It is also noticeable that there is a connection between the perceived meaningful projects that highlight the relevance of projects in the real world and the importance of engagement of participants as well as the mean scores in speaking in real situations and autonomy in learning. As mentioned by Interviewee 6, *"Incorporating speaking opportunities such as presentations, debates, and discussions with peers ensures that the students practice active listening and speaking skills."* Establishing a connection between projects and real-world scenarios results in students' increased interest in speaking and deepens their understanding of lessons (Kemaloglu-Er & Sahin, 2022). Learners could develop their ability to address complex real-world problems through Project-based Learning (Qisthi & Arifani, 2020).

4.1. Conclusion

The triangulation of qualitative and quantitative results affirms that Project-based Learning is an effective technique in enhancing the English speaking skills of students. Both data sets emphasize that PbL does not only support linguistic development such as vocabulary growth, comprehension, and content knowledge, but also nurtures soft skills needed to accomplish English oral communication projects. The positive perceptions of respondents on the integration of PbL in English communication underscores its roles in academic and personal enhancement, which reinforce the existing literature. It is recommended that more studies be conducted on the implementation of PbL in English communication classes to constantly assess its effectiveness as an instructional strategy to hone students' communicative competence.

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