

# **IMPROVING STUDENTS' SPEAKING ABILITY BY USING THE PROBLEM BASED LEARNING (PBL) AT SMP SWASTA HARVARD MARTUBUNG**

*Meningkatkan Kemampuan Siswa dalam Menggunakan Preposisi Tempat Melalui Petunjuk Percakapan*

Masta Sarina Pardosi<sup>1</sup>, Ashari P Swondo<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1,2</sup>Department of English Education, Universitas Potensi Utama.

<sup>1,2</sup>Universitas Potensi Utama, K.L. Yos Sudarso KM 6,5 No. 3A Tj. Mulia – Medan

Email: [mastarina896@gmail.com](mailto:mastarina896@gmail.com)<sup>1</sup>, [arieswondo770809@gmail.com](mailto:arieswondo770809@gmail.com)

## **ABSTRACT**

*The objective of this study is to investigate whether the application of Problem Based Learning (PBL) Improves the students' speaking ability at SMP Swasta Harvard Martubung. The study was conducted by using classroom action research. The subject of this research was the eight grade students' of SMP Swasta Harvard Martubung which consisted of 44 students. The research was conducted in two cycles. The first cycles consisted of three meetings and the second cycle consisted of three meetings. The instrument for collecting the quantitative data was essay test for reading and the instrument for collecting qualitative data was interview, observation sheet, questionnaire, and diary notes. Based on the analysis, students' speaking ability is improved in every test. In test I, The mean score was 59. In test II in cycle I, the mean score was 75.04, and in the test III in cycle II the mean score was 82.11. Based on the observation sheet, diary notes, and interview sheet, it was found that the teaching learning process ran well, the students more active, enthusiastic in working in group. It was concluded that Problem Based Learning can improve the students' speaking ability.*

*Keywords: Problem Based Learning (PBL), Report Text, Speaking Ability.*

## **ABSTRAK**

*Tujuan penelitian ini adalah untuk mengetahui apakah penerapan Problem Based Learning (PBL) dapat meningkatkan kemampuan berbicara siswa di SMP Swasta Harvard Martubung. Penelitian dilakukan dengan menggunakan penelitian tindakan kelas. Subjek penelitian ini adalah siswa kelas VIII SMP Swasta Harvard Martubung yang berjumlah 44 siswa. Penelitian dilakukan dalam dua siklus. Siklus pertama terdiri dari tiga pertemuan dan siklus kedua terdiri dari tiga pertemuan. Instrumen pengumpulan data kuantitatif berupa tes uraian membaca dan instrumen pengumpulan data kualitatif berupa wawancara, lembar observasi, angket, dan catatan harian. Berdasarkan analisis tersebut, kemampuan berbicara siswa meningkat di setiap tes. Pada tes I nilai rata-rata 59. Pada tes II siklus I nilai rata-rata 75,04 dan tes III siklus II nilai rata-rata 82,11. Berdasarkan lembar observasi, catatan diary, dan lembar wawancara diketahui bahwa proses belajar mengajar berjalan dengan baik, siswa lebih aktif, antusias dalam bekerja dalam kelompok. Disimpulkan bahwa Problem Based Learning dapat meningkatkan kemampuan berbicara siswa.*

*Kata Kunci: Problem Based Learning (PBL), Teks Laporan, Kemampuan Berbicara.*

## 1. INTRODUCTION

### The Background of the Study

Nowadays, English becomes a global language that is used for international communication. There are two main reasons to determine a language as a global language; the language becomes the official language in many countries, and the language becomes a priority to be learned in the foreign language countries (Crystal, 2003). Understanding these facts, it is a must for learners to learn English to communicate with many people around the world.

In learning to communicate in English, speaking takes place as the most important language in the world. Many students argue that fluency to communicate verbally with others often considers more important than the ability to read or write (Nazara, 2011). Besides, the new parameter used to determine success in the second/foreign language education program is to develop English speaking proficiency. It is followed by the changed paradigm of English learners that a large percentage of the world's language learners study English on the goal of developing proficiency in English (Richards & Renandya, 2002).

The role of teachers is to foster the students to get their speaking ability. Teachers need to apply a strategy which can give students much more opportunity to explore their competence as well as to grow their confidence in speaking English. The strategy proposed in this study would be PBL. PBL is an approach that can "engage students in activities that are interesting to them and important to the course" (Fleming, 2000, p. 1).

At SMP Harvard Martubung, researcher has observed the speaking ability of grade VIII and the result was not good enough. Making students speak English is a difficult job for English teachers. It needs a long process of practice and learning. Students of foreign language learners see that their native language is completely different from English while an opportunity to learn English and practice it in their real life is very limited in time and space. Therefore, they need more practice and specific teaching of English.

The latest curriculum, a curriculum of 2013, recommends the use of the scientific approach in its teaching-learning process. Furthermore, it suggests the application of teaching methods such as project-based learning, Problem Based Learning, and discovery learning. These new methods are much different from the common method used before. These methods emphasize the process of learning, not the outcome of it. The center of teaching-learning itself is the students, not a teacher anymore.

Based on the description above, the researcher applied the PBL to improve the speaking level at a junior high school in Medan. Entitled "Improving Students' speaking ability by Using The Problem Based Learning (PBL) Model (A Study at Junior High School of SMP Harvard Martubung).

### The Problem of the study

Based on the background of the study above, the research problem is stated as follows: "Did Problem-Based Learning (PBL) strategy improve students' speaking ability?"

### The Objective of the study

The objective of this study is to figure out whether PBL strategy could improve students' speaking ability significantly.

### The scope of the study

Problem-Based Learning (PBL) is a teaching method in which can promote the development of critical thinking skills, problem-solving abilities, and communication skills. To focus in one purpose, this study concentrated on PBL strategy to improve students' speaking ability.

### The Significances of the Study

This study was expected to be useful for :

1. English teachers who teach using the PBL strategy.
2. Students can implement PBL to increase their speaking level.

3. Other researchers would have input for their research related to the PBL model.

## 2. REVIEW OF LITERATURE

### Theoretical Framework

Theories are required to solve some concepts of terms applied in this research concern. In conducting research, theories are needed to explain some concepts in the research concern. The concepts which are used must be clarified to have the same perspective of implementation in the field.

### Definition of Speaking

Speaking is a process interaction between two or more people which producing a good understanding of each other. As stated by Byne (1984) says that oral communication is a process between speakers and listeners, involving the productive skill of speaking and the receptive skill of understanding. Both the speakers and the listeners have a positive function to perform. The speakers have encoded the message to be conveyed and appropriate language while the listeners (no less actively have to decode or interpret) the message.

There are some definitions given by linguists. Rahman (1995) stated that speaking is a means of oral communication involving two elements, namely the speaker who gives the messages and the listener who receives the message in other words the oral communication involves the productive skill of speaking and the receptive skill of speaking.

### Speaking Skill

According to the national standards in Indonesia (Depdiknas, 2006), oral communication competence or speaking skill is the goal of English learning in elementary schools. Speaking skill is considered an initial skill that leads learners to develop other communication competences (reading and writing) (ibid.).

It is a common desire for all of us to speak a foreign language well, but we need to know skills' are required to become a good speaker. This description would help you to understand four important skills that you need to develop in mastering the English language:

1. Fluency

Fluency is about how comfortable and confident you are in speaking English. If you can speak for a long period, that indicates strong fluency. It also shows a clear connection between each point that you are trying to make.

2. Vocabulary

If you are lack vocabulary, you don't have any words to say and it caused you unable to make sentences or speak something.

3. Grammar

The more grammar skills were acquired by you, the fewer mistakes you would make and the better speaking skill would be earned. However, do not worry about making mistakes either A good speaker does not have to use perfect grammar.

4. Pronunciation

Pronunciation is a complex area, with a lot of sub-skills that can be practiced. The basic rule of thumb is that an average speaker can speak and be understood.

### The Purpose of Speaking

It was argued that the purpose of speaking can be either transactional or interactional. There are some differences between the spoken language used in both transactional and interactional discourse. In transactional discourse, language is used primarily for communicating information. Language serving this purpose is 'message' oriented rather than 'listener' oriented (Nunan, 1989: 27). Clearly, in this type of interaction, accurate and coherent communication of the message is important, as well as confirmation that the message has been understood. Examples of language being used primarily for a transactional purpose are news broadcasts, descriptions, narrations, and instructions (Richards, 1990: 54- 55). Analyzing speaking purposes more precisely,

Kingen (2000: 218) combines both the transactional and interpersonal purposes of speaking into an extensive list of twelve categories as follows:

1. Personal - expressing personal feelings, opinions, beliefs, and ideas.
2. Descriptive - describing someone or something, real or imagined.
3. Narrative - creating and telling stories or chronologically sequenced events.
4. Instructive - giving instructions or providing directions designed to produce an outcome.
5. Questioning - asking questions to obtain information.
6. Comparative - comparing two or more objects, people, ideas, or opinions to make judgments about them.
7. Imaginative - expressing mental images of people, places, events, and objects.
8. Predictive - predicting possible future events.
9. Interpretative - exploring meanings, creating hypothetical deductions, and considering inferences.
10. Persuasive - changing others' opinions, attitudes, or points of view, or influencing the behavior of others in some way.
11. Explanatory - explaining, clarifying, and supporting ideas and opinions.
12. Informative - sharing information with others.

This list corresponds closely to the language functions explained by Halliday (1975).

#### The Problem Based-Learning (PBL)

This section discusses the definition, the characteristics, and the scheme of the PBL process in teaching, as well as the teacher's and students' role in PBL

#### Definition of PBL

Problem-Based Learning (PBL) is a teaching method in which complex real-world problems are used as the vehicle to promote student learning of concepts and principles as opposed to direct presentation of facts and concepts. In addition to course content, PBL can promote the development of critical thinking skills, problem-solving abilities, and communication skills. It can also provide opportunities for working in groups, finding and evaluating research materials, and life-long learning.

Problem Based Learning uses "real-world problems and tasks as the initial objective in constructing knowledge and enhancing learning experience" (Tai and Yuan: 2007:1). Whereas Addalla and Gaffar (2011:1) state that "PBL education strategy is characterized by using patient's problem as a motive for students learning, to acquire knowledge of basic and clinical sciences related to that problem and acquire problem-solving skills".

#### Conceptual Framework

In concept of teaching speaking, effective strategy is one of the important part. Good strategy can affect the students' speaking ability, especially on report text.

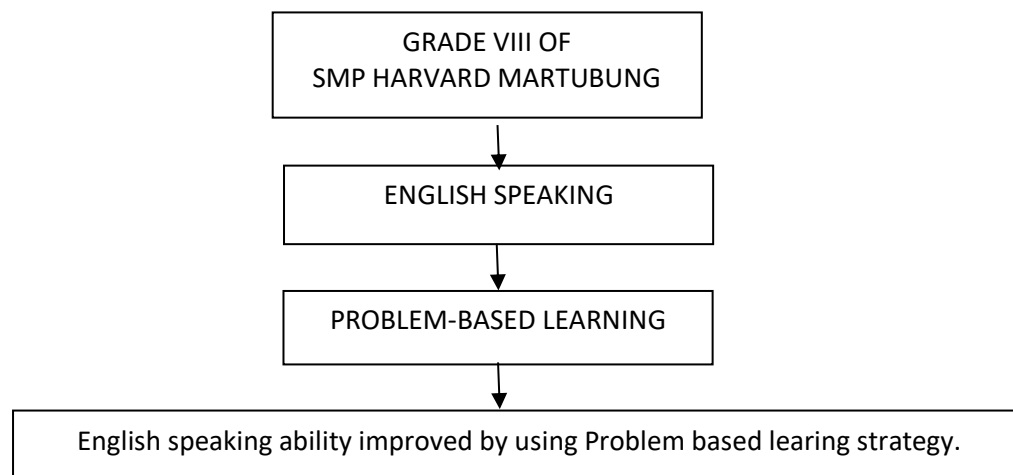


Figure 1 Conceptual Framework of Improving Students' Speaking Ability by using PBL Strategy

### 3. RESEARCH METHOD

#### Research Design

This research conducted through Classroom Action Research (CAR) method. This study took two reflective cycles consisting of four processes proposed by Kemmis and McTaggart (1990), namely planning, action observation, and reflection. This method was used in order to see the process of the improvement of the students' speaking skill from the first cycle to the second one. This study is held at Junior High School on Martubung Region, Medan, North Sumatera Utara. The participants of this study will be 43 students of grade VIII.

To collect the data, participatory observation and speaking assessment are used. Tomal (2003) states that by doing participatory observation, researchers can obtain actual first hand information regarding the subjects because the researchers picture directly what are observed in the real life situation. As for speaking assessments, they are conducted three times (Pre-test, Post-test 1, and Post-test 2). The speaking assessment sheet used contains five aspects of speaking skill, namely comprehension, vocabulary, grammar, fluency, and pronunciation. Each aspect has its own criteria scaled from 1-5 (adapted from Harries, 1984, and Brown, 2004).

In this research, the researcher applied the four phases of Kemmis and Mc Taggart in Burns (2010:8) in each cycle. The phases are planning, acting, observing, and reflecting. The design of this research is presented in the figure and explanation below:

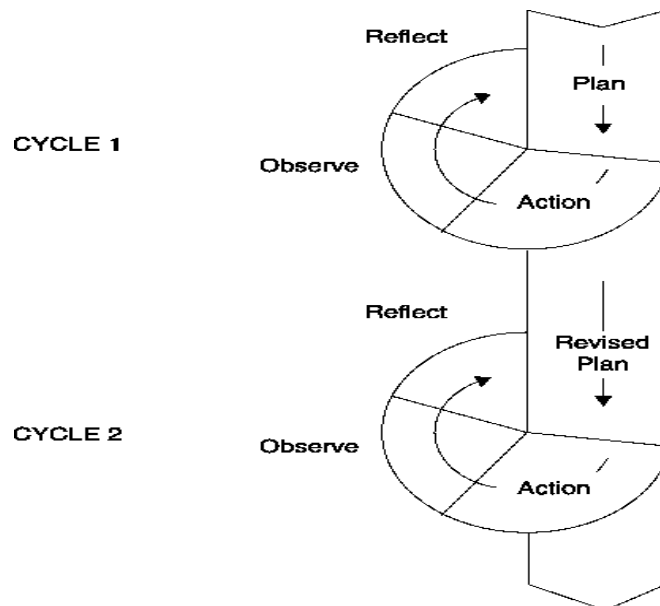


Figure 2. Action Research Process, Model from Kemmis and Mc Taggart

This research consists of two cycles. Each cycle consisted of four meetings. Each cycle consisted

### 4. DATA AND ANALYSIS

#### Data and Data Analysis

The quantitative data were taken from speaking test and the qualitative data were taken from interview, diary notes, observation sheet, and questionnaire. This study was accomplished in two cycles. Each cycle was consisted of three meetings and the second cycle consisted of three meetings. In the end of each cycle, the students are asked to speak with one or two topic to see the improvement of teaching and learning as well as students' score

#### Quantitative Data

The quantitative data were taken from the three speaking test to see improvement of the students' score which were done in two cycles. The score of the students showed that there were

improvements in students speaking scores when they were taught through the application of PBL technique. The improvement of the students' speaking score by applying PBL could be seen in Table 1.

Table 1. The Result Of Students' Scores

No	Initial Name	Score		
		Test 1	Test 2 (Cycle 1)	Test 3 (Cycle 2)
1	AB	48	65	73
2	AL	60	75	79
3	AM	50	71	78
4	AN	55	78	83
5	BI	60	76	81
6	CA	57	78	86
7	CK	56	76	80
8	DI	55	75	80
9	DY	66	80	88
10	DD	67	75	85
11	DA	73	86	90
12	EM	60	75	86
13	ES	56	70	79
14	FA	80	85	90
15	GL	47	72	84
16	LY	65	78	87
17	LAM	79	84	90
18	MY	40	63	71
19	MM	46	78	78
20	NE	63	75	81
21	NA	78	82	89
22	NS	54	69	75
23	NP	78	83	89
24	NH	49	62	70
25	PS	58	76	84
26	PP	65	78	88
27	PN	63	75	87
28	PL	67	79	88
29	PNM	58	75	86
30	PU	71	83	90
31	PO	69	76	85
32	PQ	61	75	83
33	RM	59	79	87
34	RU	48	68	79
35	RS	57	78	80
36	ST	56	77	85
37	SI	49	65	71
38	SK	66	77	84
39	SA	50	70	79
40	SS	65	77	84
41	SY	65	79	85
42	S	38	74	70
43	SD	46	69	76
44	TW	43	69	73
Total $\sum X$		2,569	3,310	3,616
The mean Score		59	75.23	82.18

Students were tested in three phases, they are Test I, Test II (Cycle I), and Test III (Cycle II). The Students' scores from Test I and Test III could be described from the entire test and the teaching process's conducted. The students' score in those phases were different. In Test I, the lowest score was 38 and the highest score was 80. Then Test II the lowest score was 62 and the highest score was 86. Additionally, in test III the lowest score and was 70 and the highest score 90. The Comparison of the student s' speaking scores could be seen in Table 2.

Table 2. The Comparison of the Students' Speaking Score

Types of Score	Test I	Test II (Cycle I)	Test III (Cycle III)
The Lowest Score	38	62	70
The Highest Score	80	86	90
X	59.0	75.23	82.18
N	44	44	44

Where:

- X : The mean of the students' score  
N : The number of the students'

Based on the Minimum Mastery Criteria ( *Kriteria Ketuntasan Minimum: KKM* ) of descriptive speaking in the school, the students' scores have to pass 75 as minimum score. The Description of before and after applying PBL strategy, could be illustrated as follows:

Table 3. The Percentage of Students' Scores after Cycle 1 &amp; Cycle 2

No	TYPE OF TEST	Amount of Students			
		Scores < 75		Scores $\geq$ 75	
		Figure	Percentage	Figure	Percentage
1	Test 1	40	90.91%	4	9.09%
2	Test 2 (Cycle 1)	13	29.55%	31	70.45%
3	Test 3 (Cycle 2)	6	13.64%	38	86.36%

From table 3, we could tell that in test 1, the students who achieved 75 scores or above were only 9,09% and 90,91% of students failed to reached 75 scores as minimum standard scores.

In Second Test (Cycle 1), Students got significant improvement which 70,45% were able to reach 75 or above scores and 29,55% were still not able to reach 75 scores.

Referring to the last implementation of the PBL strategy, the number of the students who passed the *KKM* was 38 people or around 86,36 % and only 13,64% could not reach 75 scores.

From the above data, we suggested more Cycles with PBL strategy to get perfect scores or 100% of students.

At Table 4.4, we could see that there were so many students got improvement in their speaking ability after applying of PBL technique. Even there were several small improvement for four students, but those students already had high scores at Test 1. The table 4 are as follows:

Table 4. The Range Of Score Improvement

The Range of Score Improvement	Initial Student Names	Total Students
30-up	GL, MY, MM, RU, S	5
20-30	AB,AM, AN,BI,CA,CK,DI,DY,EM,ES,LY, NS, NH, PS, PP,PN,PL,PNM, PQ, RM, RS,ST,SI, SA,SD,TW	26
11-20	AL, DD, DA, NE, PU, PO, SK, SS, SY	9
0-10	FA, LAM, NA, NP	4

There were 5 students got the huge scores improvement (more than 30 scores), but majority of students had 20-30 scores increasing after learning through PBL strategy. From observation sheet also showed that students were interested and actively involved during PBL sessions.

#### Qualitative Data

The qualitative data were also taken to measure how PBL strategy can improve Grade VIII students' speaking ability. It could be seen from the value of interview, observation sheet, questionnaire, and diary notes .

## 5. CONCLUSION AND SUGGESTION

### Conclusion

Based on data analysis and discussion presented in the previous, it could be described some conclusions as follows:

First, the purpose of the study is 'to find out how Problem Based Learning is used in teaching speaking to the eight graders of Junior high school SMP Harvard Martubung in the academic year 2020/2021. It is based on the result of analysis from the observation sheets about students' behavior during the treatment, and also the analysis of the questionnaire. The implementation of Problem Based Learning itself was easy and students seemed to like this method based on the questionnaire analysis. This method was applied in class and the students played their role seriously, discussed the solution of the problem together with their group member and constructed the argumentation to back up their solution before they told their solution in front of the class. The application of this method could improve students' speaking ability. The first purpose was accomplished well.

Second, the Problem Based Learning method improves students' achievement in speaking after being taught by this method. Students' improvement in speaking can be seen from the result of pretest and posttest. It can be seen from the aspects of speaking skill which covered grammar, vocabulary, comprehension, fluency, pronunciation, and intonation. The result from the test proved that students' speaking ability was getting better after using this method.

### Suggestion

Based on the conclusion above, there are some suggestions which are presented to improve students' speaking skill.

Firstly, working together in group is one of the methods that can be applied in teaching speaking. Teachers should have interesting techniques to teach their students, for example by using discussion technique. Students need to train their speaking skill by speaking English anytime and anywhere. By using Problem Based Learning method that provides problem to be discussed, it will help the students to be more talkative in their environment and train them to be critical. This method was just an example to encourage students in learning speaking. Teacher should be able to find another method which is interesting.

Furthermore, students need to be more active in learning speaking. They have to be active in every opportunity that requires them to speak in English. Practicing is the best way to learn English, it will make them more fluent in speaking and improve their self-confidence. It will be easier if they have a discussion with their friends and share everything they think of.

Lastly, for other researchers who conduct an action research in speaking skill area, they can explore any other methods to apply in English speaking classroom. Moreover, they can do further research on this topic in the future.

## REFERENCES

- [1] Khotimah, S. (2014). THE USE OF PROBLEM BASED LEARNING TO IMPROVE STUDENTS' SPEAKING ABILITY. In *ELT Forum: Journal of English Language Teaching* (Vol. 3, No. 1).



- [2] SY, R. A. M., Adnan, A., & Ardi, H. (2013). THE EFFECT OF PROBLEM BASED LEARNING STRATEGY TOWARD STUDENTS' SPEAKING ABILITY AT THE FIRST GRADE OF SMAN 1 ENAM LINGKUNG. *Journal of English language teaching*, 2(1), 314-323.
- [3] Kassem, M. A. M. (2018). Improving EFL students' speaking proficiency and motivation: A hybrid problem-based learning approach. *Theory and Practice in Language Studies*, 8(7), 848-859.
- [4] Rohim, A. (2014). Improving students' speaking skill through problem based learning (PBL) strategy. *JP3*, 3(8), 1-7.
- [5] Bahrudin, D. V. Y. (2018). Improving Students' Speaking Ability on Expressing Plan through Problem Based Learning (PBL) Method. *OKARA: Jurnal Bahasa dan Sastra*, 12(2), 271-278.
- [6] Keong, Y. C., & Mohammed, A. H. (2015). Improving Iraqi secondary students' speaking performance through problem based learning approach. *International Journal of Education and Research*, 3(12), 87-96.
- [7] Delisle, R. (1997). *How to use problem-based learning in the classroom*. Ascd.
- [8] Boud, D., & Feletti, G. (Eds.). (1997). *The challenge of problem-based learning*. Psychology Press.
- [9] Sungur, S., Tekkaya, C., & Geban, Ö. (2006). Improving achievement through problem-based learning. *Journal of Biological Education*, 40(4), 155-160.
- [10] Asyari, M., Al Muhdhar, M. H. I., & Susilo, H. (2016). Improving critical thinking skills through the integration of problem based learning and group investigation. *International Journal for Lesson and Learning Studies*.
- [11] West, R. E., Williams, G. S., & Williams, D. D. (2013). Improving problem-based learning in creative communities through effective group evaluation. *Interdisciplinary Journal of Problem-Based Learning*, 7(2), 102-127.
- [12] Oja, K. J. (2011). Using problem-based learning in the clinical setting to improve nursing students' critical thinking: an evidence review. *Journal of Nursing Education*, 50(3), 145-151.