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Integrating Project-Based Learning in Preparing Students' Interpersonal Communication Skills on Speaking Courses in Indonesia

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Abstract. Interpersonal communication competence plays a crucial part in the educational interaction space, as it directly impacts the behaviour of students who require a straightforward communication flow. This study aims to analyse the integration of project-based learning (PjBL) in preparing students' interpersonal communication skills in speaking courses in Indonesia, the proficiency of students' interpersonal communication skills, and the challenges of achieving them. The design of this study was a cross-sectional survey conducted in May 2023, involving 315 college students from six English Study Programmes at six universities across three provinces. Data were collected using questionnaires and interviews and were then analysed with the assistance of Jeffreys Amazing Statistics Program. The total number of interviewees was 60, with 10 from each university. The data indicate that the interpersonal communication profiles of the 315 respondents fell into the Medium category (mean = 3.26), and the most common obstacle (mean = 4.6) in achieving interpersonal communication skills on a speaking course is a difficult-to-understand speech partner's accent. This finding has implications for college students, as these interpersonal communication skills should be strengthened through PjBL and communicative competence understanding. Both micro and macro components of communication competence are essential for English learners and speakers. Syntax, morphology, semantics, and phonology are all areas where micro components perform. The three macro components also strongly contribute to the achievement of communicative competencies, including discourse competence, sociolinguistics, and communication techniques. These two components

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are essential for creating a more dynamic and enactive educational interaction space and are mutually reinforcing.

Keywords: college student; interpersonal communication skills; project based learning; speaking courses

1. Introduction

Communication is one of the ways by which people and communities interact in their daily activities. Communication affects every aspect of a human being's life, and the majority (70%) of human time is spent on communicating (Elsa, 2021; Light, 2009), with no exception to the type of interpersonal communication. Indeed, humans are social beings (*Homini Socius*), indicating that they are collaborative by nature and continually communicate with other humans. The concept of humanisation through educational interaction space involves other individuals or colleagues. Interpersonal communication competence is essential in human life, as it contributes directly to human behaviour, including that of students who require an easy-to-understand flow of communication between speakers (educators) and receivers (students). Interpersonal communication is a process of conveying information, ideas, or self-potential verbally (through utterances) and paralinguistically or non-verbally (through symbols, body language, or pictures), aimed at achieving a common goal (speaker and hearer) (Nath, 2019; Petrovici & Dobrescu, 2014; Ramaraju, 2012). In interpersonal communication, the sender and receiver should be fully aware of the components of communicative competence so that the meaning of the message is not confused in both participants' interactions. Each vocabulary item or diction that is spoken or produced could assist the conversation's partner in understanding the numerous goals that the speaker or sender has in mind.

The requirement for interpersonal communication skills stimulates college students in Indonesia and worldwide to become skilled interpersonal communicators to avoid interaction stagnation. College students' self-esteem, linguistic proficiency, and ability to engage in meaningful conversations can all benefit from a strong foundation in interpersonal communication skills. Therefore, applying grammatical competence (linguistic performance) in various communicative contexts is essential to interpersonal communication skills (Daniluk, 2020; Koopmans, 2022; Nath, 2019).

In fact, every lecturer in higher education, including those in speaking courses, expects their students to correctly and appropriately demonstrate interpersonal communication competence in public settings. This expectation encourages educators to select and employ teaching methods that align with this standard. Project-based learning is a viable approach to fulfil this objective due to its fundamental principles (Kusumawati, 2021; Woodward et al., 2010). Project-based learning offers an exciting opportunity for fostering optimism by facilitating the development of English communicative competence, a pressing need in today's society, particularly regarding crucial interpersonal communication skills among students.

College-level learners must possess strong verbal and written communication skills in this twenty-first-century education. It is impossible to separate functional communication from understanding the micro and macro components of communicative competence. These two elements are the primary basis for demonstrating an individual's interpersonal communication skills. Grammatical competence as the ability to understand and use grammar, syntax, semantics, and phonology, and discourse competence as the ability to understand and apply this understanding to various texts (Sun, 2014). The speaker must add the necessary conjunctions to make the argument sound logical. Macro-level elements include (1) sociolinguistic competence, which emphasises awareness of the social context in which communication occurs (including participant relations, information, and the purpose of communication), and (2) strategy competence, which enables speakers to determine the most effective way of initiating and sustaining interactions, addressing problems, and extending conversations (Al-Shamiry, 2020; Fromkin, 2003; Kanaza, 2020; Nath, 2019).

Both micro and macro aspects facilitate all conversations simultaneously, as signals are conveyed to the interlocutor. Significant verbal capacity (the 'micro' component) unquestionably supports confirmed performance excellence (the 'macro' component). Both are developed here as realistic means by which college students can generate usable English communication. Additionally, the micro and macro aspects of fluency in English interpersonal communication are mutually beneficial. Knowledge of phonology, syntax, fluency, accuracy, discourse, and vocabulary make up the speaker's micro-elements, while knowledge of sociolinguistics, pragmatics, and communication strategy make up the speaker's macro elements (Piazzalunga, 2021; Pishghadam, 2022; Susanto, 2014).

Implications for English interpersonal communication skills follow directly from the need to meet all the micro and macro components. Communication in English requires the ability to articulate one's ideas clearly and convincingly to the interlocutor (Burns, 2019; Elsa, 2021). Consequently, college students are expected to incorporate all micro and macro components into their interpersonal communication, whether with classmates or lecturers. College students are encouraged to excel in both micro and macro components of communication to meet the standards set by higher education courses. This proficiency in English interpersonal communication not only helps them succeed academically but also paves the way for a promising career in public speaking. Additionally, the understanding of communicative competence can be viewed in various ways, from achieving the above-mentioned English interpersonal communication skills. Language and communicative competency skills provide a route to meet the requirements of English-speaking courses (Campos, 2021).

Previous studies conclusively demonstrate that English interpersonal communication skills are essential for interaction in public spaces. For example, Cherepynska et al. (2022) and Kondo et al. (2020) claimed that interpersonal communication skills are fundamental in public spaces to create an atmosphere

of positive interaction between the sender and recipient of a message. English interpersonal communication skills ensure that college students can perform their roles effectively, as these skills directly affect the rate at which they acquire English-speaking abilities. Furthermore, previous researchers have affirmed that interaction tends to be less efficient without English interpersonal communication skills, especially when an English speaker cannot present their thoughts, ideas, or comments correctly and accurately to the interlocutor. Interpersonal communication is crucial in speaking courses because it adapts to contextual changes, uses varied language codes depending on the conversation partner, and allows spontaneous events to significantly influence interactions. This form of communication fosters a flexible and dynamic two-way interaction between the speaker and the listener (Breen & Giacalone, 2019; Kwiatkowski, 2019). To develop proficient English speakers, speaking courses should emphasize strong interpersonal communication, supported by communicative competence and effective teaching techniques.

No research has been conducted on student competency profiles in interpersonal communication skills, the challenges of achieving them, or how to integrate PjBL principles to accelerate the attainment of interpersonal communication skills in speaking courses in Indonesia. Previous research findings (Nameni, 2019; Rubin et al., 2020; Sujaya & Yudianto, 2023) have only focused on the essence of interpersonal communication skills in public spaces and have not delved into the strong relationship between interpersonal communication skills and speaking courses. They have also not explored the challenges that students majoring in English education face in achieving interpersonal communication skills in speaking courses or how to integrate PjBL principles to accelerate the attainment of these skills. Researchers need to analyse the integration of PjBL in preparing students' interpersonal communication skills in speaking courses in Indonesia, as there is a significant link between the aspects that should be met in speaking courses and the indicators of interpersonal communication skills. These indicators determine the use of suitable instructional components in teaching English speaking (Cherepynska et al., 2022; Sun, 2014). In light of this gap, the present work investigates college students' competency, the obstacles to acquiring interpersonal communication skills, and the integration of PjBL in preparing students for interpersonal communication skills in speaking courses in Indonesia. More research is required to refine and expand upon the current corpus of knowledge. This research aims to analyse the incorporation of PjBL principles, students' competence, and challenges in acquiring interpersonal communication skills in speaking courses. For this reason, the researchers examined the following issues:

1. What is the competency profile of college students' interpersonal communication skills in speaking courses?
2. What are the challenges faced by college students in achieving interpersonal communication skills?
3. How could PjBL be integrated to prepare college students' interpersonal communication skills in speaking courses?

2. Research Method

The research, conducted in May 2023, employed a cross-sectional design and included participants from diverse levels and classes across six English study programs at universities in three different provinces in Indonesia: Bali province (Universitas Pendidikan Ganesha Singaraja and Universitas Mahasaraswati Denpasar), West Nusa Tenggara province (Universitas Hamzanwadi and Universitas Bumigora Mataram), and East Nusa Tenggara province (Universitas Nusa Cendana Kupang and Universitas Katolik Indonesia Santu Paulus Ruteng). The primary goal of this concept is to assess the educational service requirements of the surrounding area in terms of programmes, classes, school building improvements, parent and student involvement, and comprehensive community planning (Creswell, 2014). This design was selected to enhance and develop learning methods to improve interpersonal communication skills in speaking courses in the six English study programmes, which is the primary objective of this study.

The research population comprised 3,558 students in English departments at six universities in three provinces in eastern Indonesia. Three hundred and fifteen students at six universities were selected as samples using the multistage cluster random sampling technique. The researchers set some rules for choosing the sample from the English departments of the six universities. For example, the students had to have passed the Speaking for Daily Communication course and have spoken in an informal setting before taking the Speaking for Academic Purposes course. They also had to be willing to fill out the questionnaire on a mobile phone or personal computer, have sufficient internet access, and be willing to participate in interviews to triangulate the research data. The research sample of 315 students is detailed in Table 1 below.

Table 1. Sample demographics

Demographic		Number of Samples	Percentage
Gender	Male	102	32.38
	Female	213	67.62
Age	17-18 years old	86	27.29
	19-20 years old	202	64.11
	21 years old and above	27	8.6
Grade	First grade	114	36.20
	Second grade	172	54.60
	Third grade	29	9.20
Education Background	Vocational school	123	39
	Senior high school	192	61
Marital Status	Single	307	97.46
	Married	8	2.54
	Divorced	-	-

Questionnaires were used to obtain data via a Google Form, while interviews were conducted using a recording form for each research site. The questionnaire

employed a five-point Likert scale with 11 very similar items. Scores closer to five indicated a stronger connection, and the scale ranged from one (strong disagreement) to five (strong agreement). Respondents had to use a necessary Google Form tool to answer each question. This survey's questions aligned with Hargie's (2016) concepts regarding indicators of interpersonal communication. Meanwhile, online interviews were conducted with respondents from each university to explore data related to their challenges in acquiring interpersonal communication skills in the scheduled speaking courses. The total number of interviewees was 60, with 10 from each university.

This study used a four-step process to collect data: first, indicators of interpersonal communication skills and speaking evaluation aspects were distributed to lecturers at six universities; second, respondents completed a Google Form to provide their information; third, the collected data were analysed using The Jeffreys Amazing Statistics Program; and finally, the results were presented in a narrative format. Percentages were used to display findings from the Google survey. Based on the data collected from the survey, college students' interpersonal communication abilities were analysed using a score table as soon as a score was assigned to each response.

The purpose of the four-category data analysis in Table 2 is to make it easier for researchers to classify the mean value of respondents' responses regarding their interpersonal communication competency profile. The present study involved the analysis of data pertaining to challenges in interpersonal communication skills encountered in speaking classes. The Guttman scale was employed as a method of analysis, whereby participants were required to provide binary responses in the form of 'yes' or 'no.' This was done in accordance with the particulars of the questions and the research's orientation. The data analysis procedure is as it is in the context of this research because the focus of the study is to find out what the respondents' level of communication skills is, what the challenges are, and what appropriate learning methods are offered to help the respondents strengthen their interpersonal communication competence and overcome the problems faced in the pursuit of enhancing their interpersonal communication skills. The respondents' ability to communicate with others was also categorised into four levels: weak, moderate, low, and very low. The possible range of scores for each category is shown in Table 2.

Table 2. Score category table

Score	Category
1.1 - 2.1	Very low
2.2 - 3.1	Low
3.2 - 4.1	Medium
4.2 - 5.0	High

3. Results

This section primarily focuses on describing the findings concerning college students' interpersonal communication skills and the barriers they face. Each component of the variable under study is measured using the chart data series

tool in Microsoft Excel. A summary of college students' interpersonal communication abilities is provided in Table 3.

Table 3. College students' interpersonal communication skills

No	Item	Mean	Category
1	I enjoy sharing my opinions as well as knowledge with my friends.	4.3	High
2	I can produce messages in specific English through the language codes that I understand.	3.3	Medium
3	I am able to interpret the English codes produced by my speech partner.	3.27	Low
4	I can communicate effectively in English when interacting with others.	3.4	Medium
5	I can comprehend the message from my speech partner with clarity.	3.3	Medium
6	I can respond promptly to the contents of my interlocutor's message.	3.2	Medium
7	I can simplify the contents of my speech if there is stagnation in the interpretation of meaning given by my speech partners.	2.7	Medium
8	I can adapt with the assistance of interactional media.	3.33	Medium
9	I can comprehend the content of my interlocutor's conversation based on the context.	2.87	Low
10	I speak following the allotted time, my turn to speak, and the topic and scope of the conversation.	3.3	Medium
11	I understand the social and cultural background of my interlocutor if there is stagnation in the meaning interpretation.	2.87	Low
Average		3.26	Medium

Source: Researchers' data

The interpersonal communication profiles of 315 respondents from six universities in three provinces (Bali, West Nusa Tenggara, and East Nusa Tenggara) in Indonesia are represented in Items 1 to 11 in Table 3 above. Based on the findings in Table 3, it can be assumed that the college students' interpersonal communication skills, as demonstrated by 315 students attending six different universities in three provinces (Bali, West Nusa Tenggara, and East Nusa Tenggara), fall into the 'medium' category (3.26).

This study also revealed several factors hindering the respondents' interpersonal communication skills in speaking courses, such as doubts about the credibility of the speaker, lack of understanding of the speaker's social and cultural background, difficulty in understanding the speaker's verblancy, inability to adapt to the media used by the speaker, differences in language accent with the speaker, and differences in the perception of the contents of the communication message. While many obstacles still prevent college students from performing adequately in speaking classes, this study focuses on the six issues presented. Researchers used the Guttman scale, which allowed participants to select only between 'yes' and 'no' for each of the six factors (Creswell, 2014). To keep things simple, a 'yes/positive' answer counts for one point, while a 'no/negative'

answer counts for zero. Diagram 1 also indicates, on average, which percentage of queries are related to each of the six limiting factors.

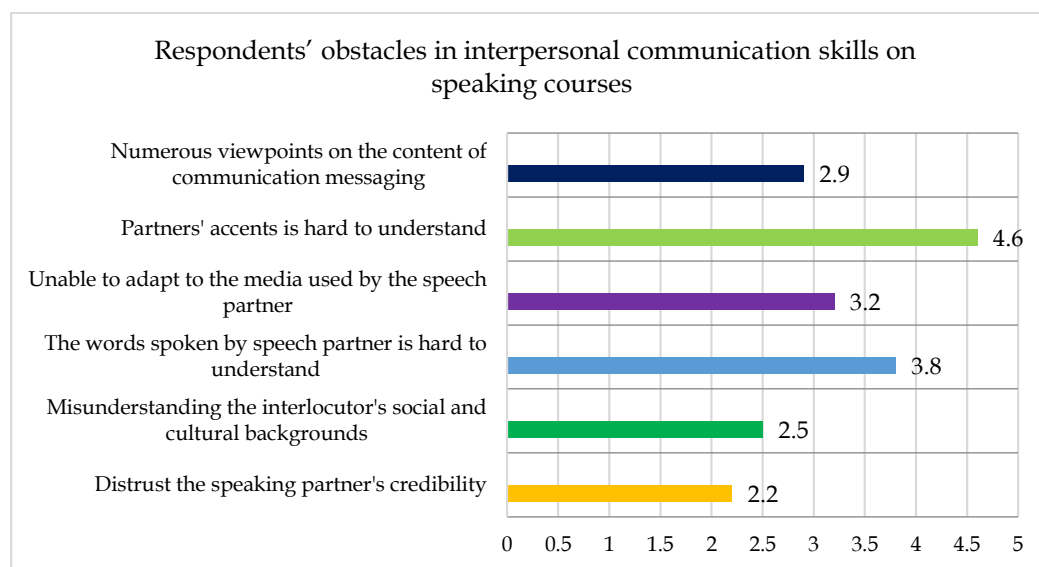


Diagram 1. Obstacles to interpersonal communication skills in speaking courses

Moreover, PjBL principles could be integrated into preparing college students' interpersonal communication skills in speaking courses. The survey results indicated that 315 respondents had a medium level of communication skills (with a mean of 3.26), which should have been higher given that they came from the English education language programme. Contrary to our expectations, the most common obstacle (mean = 4.6) in achieving these interpersonal communication skills was the respondents' inability to comprehend the dialect or pronunciation of the interlocutor when interacting. When the speaker comprehends the pronunciation of the speech partner, there will be clarity in the meaning of what is being said. Educators, particularly lecturers, are not remaining inactive regarding the results of this survey. The lecturers have unquestionably taken the right steps to raise interpersonal communication skills to an ideal level and overcome the greatest obstacles to this skill. Project-based learning serves as an adaptive and preventative strategy. This method is known as a student-centred learning model. Educators are encouraged to understand the components of PjBL, including its nature, principles, characteristics, syntax, stages for its application, advantages and disadvantages, and assessment.

4. Discussion

The findings of this study highlight the interpersonal communication skills and challenges faced by college students in speaking courses across six universities in three provinces (Bali, West Nusa Tenggara, and East Nusa Tenggara) in Indonesia. Detailed explanations of the findings related to interpersonal communication skills in speaking courses are provided below.

Interpersonal Communication Skills

Interpersonal communication skills are required for establishing relationships with other humans. This interpersonal communication embodies the

communication concept, which requires both presenters and partners for success. Communication will only be present if these two parties are present. In the intended communication activity, speakers and speech partners must be aware of the meaning of their utterances. Due to their role in bridging interactions between speakers in various situations, interpersonal communication skills are essential for resolving such issues (Fawri & Syukur, 2022; Mahmudah & Fatimah, 2021). According to these researchers, emphasizing interpersonal communication in the interaction process necessitates that speakers and speech partners possess verbal and non-verbal communication competencies, each of which requires adequate cognitive linguistics. This cognitive linguistic focus aligns with the fundamental concept of interpersonal communication, which is the process by which a speaker conveys their diverse intentions to their speech partners.

Therefore, interpersonal communication refers to the comprehension and application of sending and receiving verbal and nonverbal messages (Kwiatkowski, 2019; Purnomo et al., 2021). Speakers and speech partners cannot exclude affective dimensions in interpersonal communication. The speaker can employ affective elements to better understand the speech partner and facilitate effective communication (Bosede, 2023; Ma & Lin, 2022). Another perspective on the fundamental idea of interpersonal communication skills is provided by Moodley et al. (2021), who claim that interpersonal communication skills are a person's verbal and nonverbal abilities to communicate effectively in a group setting. Furthermore, Moodley et al. (2021) emphasise that effective interpersonal communication requires speakers to be sensitive to the feelings and thoughts of their speech partners. To meet this requirement, communicators must demonstrate their understanding of nonverbal and verbal signals, such as touch and physical proximity, and show knowledge of how to interact according to context. This includes giving consideration to the person who has invited them to speak, monitoring volume, employing communication strategies, and being sensitive to the direction of the speech partner's body language. Interpersonal communication skills are required for both direct and indirect communication. Indirect interpersonal communication involves media, such as letters, the telephone, and the internet (online). Direct (face-to-face) communication requires speakers to adhere to communication ethics and be mindful of language use, making indirect interpersonal communication via online media the most popular option nowadays, such as among students taking speaking classes. However, in the context of this research, the type of direct interpersonal communication studied is due to the demands of achieving competency in speaking courses programmed by college students from six universities previously stated.

Many issues originate from how individuals communicate with one another, either directly or indirectly. Therefore, it is anticipated that speakers will comprehend the indicators in the process of interpersonal interaction. The comprehension of these indicators serves as a guide for speakers as they carry out their responsibilities as competent interpersonal communicators. The researchers adopt interpersonal communication skill indicators derived from

several studies conducted by Abdurrahman (2018), Prasanna et al. (2023), and Tadesse (2021), as shown in Table 4.

Table 4. Interpersonal communication indicators and descriptor

Interpersonal Communication Indicators	Descriptor
Communicative Desire	The speaker wishes to share emotional and informative thoughts with others.
Encoding Ability	The ability of the message sender (encoder) to produce specific messages using language codes/symbols/signs.
Decoding Ability	The ability of the message recipient (decoder) to interpret the language codes/symbols/signs provided by the message sender.
Message Sending Ability	The speaker can clearly convey messages to the listener.
Message Receiving Ability	Listeners can understand the contents of the message from the sender.
Responsiveness	Listeners can understand and respond to the message content provided by the speaker.
Message Simplification Ability	The ability of both speakers and listeners to simplify message contents if meaning becomes unclear during interaction.
Adaptability to Communication Media	The ability of both speakers and listeners to adapt to the media used during interaction.
Contextual Understanding	Both speakers and listeners understand the context of the interactions taking place.
Communication Ethics	Both the speaker and listener are aware of time allotment, speaking turns, and the scope and focus of the discussion.
Intercultural Sensitivity	Both speakers and listeners understand each other's social and cultural backgrounds.

The numerous indicators of interpersonal communication skills listed in Table 4 serve as a basis for language practices. According to the findings of this study (Table 3), the highest mean is 4.3, indicating that 315 respondents want to share their feelings or information with their peers or that the respondents want to share information on their minds with others. This result aligns with the fundamental concept of interpersonal communication skills (Bosede, 2023; Moodley et al., 2021). The two researchers confirmed that interpersonal communication never happens with just a single speaker. Interpersonal communication can be carried out in a group interaction, or at least two participants must be involved. The lowest average (2.7) is found in the ability to simplify messages. Three hundred and fifteen respondents could not simplify the conversation's message if the interaction stagnated or the other participant needed to comprehend the message. Since the respondents are from the language department, this mean (2.7) is deeply reflective for them. However, the

average ability to simplify communication messages must be enhanced. This low average suggests that respondents must improve their ability to paraphrase message content. Despite daily human interactions, rephrasing is essential in speaking courses (Mahmud et al., 2021; Nicula et al., 2021). Paraphrasing requires a speaker to simplify the language level without eliminating the substance of the message. In this context, microlinguistic skills (availability of sufficient vocabulary, grammar, pronunciation, and semantics) are essential.

Speakers (senders and receivers) are encouraged to demonstrate the guiding principles of interpersonal communication skills to enhance the execution of all the indicators listed in Table 4 (Hasanah et al., 2021; Pečiuliauskienė, 2018). These principles include (1) Natural human communication: Humans are social beings who naturally need language as a communication medium. The communication patterns that are carried out are sometimes influenced by the sociocultural background of the speakers. This background impacts how to convey intentions both through verbal and non-verbal language. Humans need communication, and most of their time (70%) is used in communication (Irawan, 2017). Based on this data, humans, as social beings, cannot evade the need for communication. (2) Interpersonal communication: Interpersonal communication is an integral component of human existence at all times. This communication is irreversible and cannot be deleted or rectified. As a result of this trait, speakers are expected to be able to convey appropriate and acceptable messages. The message delivered by the speaker should not cause the speech partner to misunderstand, offend, or become offended. Therefore, ethics is an imperative requirement in interpersonal communication. The ethics of communication can foster mutual respect and a balance of empathy among speakers. (3) Responsibility in interpersonal communication: In the process of communication, humans create meaning, which is based on how someone interprets communication. In interpersonal communication, someone will always interpret what others say. Depending on the context and circumstance in which a person receives a communication message, the recipient's interpretation of what is said in the message continually transforms. (4) The influence of meta-communication: Meta-communication is an individual's interpretation of the information they receive from their speech partner. Information can be conveyed in interpersonal communication both verbally and non-verbally. Non-verbal aspects are essential, as they can convey a deeper meaning than what is said verbally and enhance the meaning of verbal communication. Interpersonal communication creates sustainable interaction, whereas meta-communication enhances the importance of interpersonal communication. Interpersonal communication is one method for fostering and strengthening partnerships.

Indeed, communication is the primary tool for constructing the foreseeable future of one's interpersonal relationships. Communication occurs in all aspects of human life. Speakers frequently need to assess or consider their level of efficacy in the communication process while communicating. Interpersonal communication is effective when the sender's message is received and interpreted as intended, followed by voluntary action by the recipient. This can improve interpersonal relationships, provided there are no obstacles to

achieving these aims. Thus, communication is effective if it meets three major requirements: first, the message is received and comprehended by the recipient in the manner intended; second, communication is accompanied by voluntary activities; and third, it strengthens relationships with others.

Moreover, five beneficial mindsets should be addressed when engaging in interpersonal communication (Breen & Giacalone, 2019; Mohammed & Adea, 2022): (1) Openness, which involves accepting input from others and being willing to convey important information to them. This means a person must be willing to open up when others seek the information he possesses. Transparency involves the willingness to be honest, not to lie, and not to hide accurate information. In interpersonal communication, openness is one of the positive attitudes because, with openness, interpersonal communication takes place in a fair, transparent, two-way manner and can be accepted by all speakers. (2) Empathy, which is a person's ability to understand what other people feel. In interpersonal communication, empathy is understood as an attempt by the speaker to feel what the speech partner is feeling and understand the opinions, attitudes, and behaviour displayed by the speech partner. (3) A positive perspective fosters effective interpersonal interactions, which occur when there is a helpful mindset, also known as supportiveness.

Students' Challenges with Interpersonal Communication Skills

Speakers face various challenges when implementing interpersonal communication skills, including variations in pronunciation, variations in perceptions of message content interpretation, the inability to adapt with the help of communication media, the sociocultural background of the hearer, and many more. However, according to the findings (Diagram 1), the greatest challenge (mean = 4.6) among 315 respondents is that the partner's accent needs to be explained. This average is slightly different from the challenges respondents face when the words spoken by their speech partners are hard to understand (average = 3.8). This result encouraged the English department's college students to focus on improving their pronunciation.

This increase in pronunciation accuracy could be mitigated by involving students directly in English-speaking communities from various countries through speaking skills course assignments, such as conducting direct interviews with English speakers. This method aligns with the basic principles of PjBL, which emphasise the use of projects and prioritise student-centredness. By implementing this method, students can reduce the level of misunderstanding along with improving their pronunciation. The participants in this study had direct interactions with those proficient in English from diverse nations. This particular situation was especially important to the research, as it occurred in internationally recognised tourist destinations, such as Bali, Lombok, and Labuan Bajo in Indonesia. Pronunciation is crucial in interpreting the content of the speech partner's message. The act or way of pronouncing words or an utterance of speech is referred to as pronunciation. In other words, it is a way of expressing a word, particularly in an acceptable or well-understood manner (Gilakjani, 2016; Syafitri, 2017). Each college student should work on their

pronunciation to become more self-aware of areas where they need improvement. These areas include intonation (falling, rising, and fall-rise intonation) of each word, stress (word, phrase, clause, and sentence stress), rhythm, connected speech and accent, accuracy, and weak sounds and linking words (Saito, 2015) so that there is no ambiguity regarding the meaning of communications in interpersonal communication activity. Speakers are also encouraged to understand the concept of English communication competence to support maximum interpersonal communication performance (Campos, 2021; Martynova et al., 2023). English communication competence supports interpersonal communicators in displaying various indicators of interpersonal communication skills (Table 4).

Communicative competence is a term in linguistics that describes a speaker's command of the language and ability to use it correctly and effectively in social settings. Fundamentally, communicative competence conflicts with structuralism, which places more emphasis on language systems than on actual communication. Structuralism emphasises grammatical knowledge as the foundation of fluency in any language. While the latter focuses on contextualised language use, the former emphasises communicative competence. Developing communicative competence aims to help students acquire language abilities useful in real-world situations by providing them with authentic, relevant, and communicative language-learning experiences (Ivashkevych & Prymachok, 2020; Nameni, 2019).

College students must possess both grammatical understanding (linguistic proficiency) and language in use (performance) as interpersonal speakers. This explanation aligns with Chomsky's (Sun, 2014) claims about competence and performance. According to Chomsky, a speaker's linguistic competence (knowledge of grammar) substantially affects the speaker's performance competence (language use). The confirmation by linguists that several components represent a speaker's communicative ability legitimises Chomsky's thesis. For example, Canale and Swain (1980) outlined four aspects that make up communicative competence: grammatical competence, which includes lexical items and rules of morphology, syntax, sentence-grammar semantics, and phonology; discourse competence, which includes the ability to connect sentences in conversations and create a meaningful whole out of a series of utterances; and sociolinguistic competence, which emphasises knowledge of sociocultural rules of language. Strategic competence refers to verbal and nonverbal communication strategies that can be called into action to compensate for breakdowns in communication due to performance variables or insufficient competence. In contrast, social context competence refers to an awareness of the social setting in which language is used, including the roles of the participants, the information shared, and the purpose of the interaction.

Micro and Macro Components of English Speaking Skills

As a human being who speaks standard English, it is imperative that one fulfils the requirements associated with both micro and macro components. These elements are intertwined and determine the level of one's English communication competence. Establishing a suitable balance between these components within communicative competence requires an adaptive mindset on the part of the speaker to prevent any potential semantic confusion when engaging in public conversation.

Micro and macro components of linguistic performance are used to evaluate a speaker's communication competence (Canale & Swain, 1980; Fromkin, 2003). The linguistic competence to which Fromkin (2003) and Canale and Swain (1980) refer encompasses the extent to which the vocabulary, morphology, syntax, semantics, phonetics, and phonology of the speaker's native language are effectively utilised in a given encounter. Macro components, however, concern a speaker's performance competence – namely, how their linguistic knowledge interacts with their non-linguistic expertise in areas such as pragmatics and sociolinguistics.

To produce an utterance, the micro and macro components of the language subsystem must interact (Ghasemi, 2020; Waluyo, 2019). Notably, these include (1) the sound system, which covers how vowels and consonants are pronounced as well as intonation, rhythm, stress, and pause; (2) the set of rules for constructing sentences in writing, comprising (a) morphology (the construction of words using plural and inflectional forms such as possession, tense, and derivation), (b) syntax (the ordering of words into phrases and clauses), and (c) morphophonemics (the modification of speech sounds due to grammatical influences); (3) the lexical system, which includes word class (noun, verb, adjective, and adverb) and the function of that word in the clause structure; and (4) the cultural system, encompassing all points mentioned in (3) and (4), which serves as an understanding that language is determined by culture and thus needs to be accepted in that culture in order to be used.

The two components of English-speaking skills listed above indicate to English speakers that understanding both components is essential for attaining communication and interpersonal communication abilities. Both micro and macro components are crucial for achieving optimal performance in communicative competence and interpersonal communication skills. These two elements serve as the primary foundation for a speaker when producing speech within a participatory context. However, the accurate and effective presentation of both micro and macro components within a conversation necessitates the provision of suitable methodologies and favourable conditions for acquiring English language skills. Project-based learning can fill this gap.

Interpersonal Communication Skills in Speaking Courses in Indonesia

The Indonesian qualification framework has been officially established by the Ministry of Research, Technology, and Higher Education of the Republic of Indonesia to centralise and manage the higher education qualification requirements in Indonesia. This framework categorises speaking courses into

three types: informal, formal, and speaking for academic purposes (Kemenristekdikti, 2012). Furthermore, it mandates that students attain pre-intermediate-level English proficiency for informal interactions as a result of taking informal speaking courses. Students are also encouraged to use English in formal interaction settings as an outcome of formal speaking courses. For academic speaking courses, students must achieve high fluency, accuracy, and acceptability levels in their spoken English. This research focuses solely on speaking for academic purposes.

Speaking ability is crucial in English as a second or foreign language. One of the primary goals of English instruction is to enable students to use English for communicative purposes, such as formal speaking. The importance of speaking ability has increased significantly for recent graduates, enabling them to function effectively in the workplace, cope better with interpersonal challenges in their daily lives, and develop rewarding communication and collaborative skills with people from different cultures (Santhanasamy & Yunus, 2021; Sherine et al., 2020). As a result, there is a strong emphasis on all students developing their English language skills to a high level. Students must proficiently employ verbal and non-linguistic skills to communicate effectively. Speaking in a formal setting is viewed as a task requiring the integration of various linguistic components. Learners of a second or foreign language often struggle to combine these components into coherent speech (Lazaraton, 2001).

Additionally, speaking is generally done face-to-face and interactively, allowing speakers to utilise paralinguistic (or non-language) elements. These include changing their tone of voice, adding emphasis, whispering, shouting, and varying their speech rate to convey meaning. Physical appearances can also convey various meanings. Thus, a person who speaks English must be fluent in all linguistic components. Speaking can be challenging and requires diverse abilities and knowledge (Thornbury, 2005). Thornbury further affirmed that speaking proficiency enables one to articulate thoughts, ideas, and opinions towards an interlocutor. The primary purpose of language is interaction. The speaker must understand all components to convey a thought, idea, opinion, or notion. One of the requirements for being a good communicator is the ability to assess the impact of one's words on an audience, whether general or specific. According to this principle, good communication requires both verbal and non-linguistic skills for achievement.

In line with this understanding, various scholars (Burns, 2019; Kallinikou & Nicolaidou, 2019; Rahman, 2022) have claimed that the ability to articulate one's thoughts to another person is termed speaking. For the message to be received and processed by the listener, the speaker must have a strong comprehension of the mechanics of speech. Effective communication in English depends on correct grammatical usage and the speaker's awareness of a wide range of lexicons, phrases, and sentences. The thought should be expressed in a complete sentence, and the interaction must clarify the relationship between the statement's main idea and its supporting components. The speaker is encouraged to use both verbal and non-verbal communication to support the comprehension of the

interlocutor's utterance, ensuring that the transmitted utterance aligns with the interlocutor's cognitive level. Interdependence, attention to detail, and confidence are elements described as necessary for a speaker to engage effectively in speaking activities (Lazaraton, 2001).

Furthermore, both the micro and macro aspects of communication are essential (Rahmawati & Ertin, 2014). Speakers are highly recommended to control these aspects for effective interpersonal communication. Moreover, other studies (Brown, 2004; Knopf, 2018) underline that the competence of speaking skills is measured by five dimensions: pronunciation, fluency, grammar, vocabulary, and comprehension. College students should understand every aspect of speaking, as it is directly related to the elements of communicative competence. This understanding will ultimately facilitate the development of their interpersonal communication skills in speaking courses.

Project-Based Learning in Preparing Students' Interpersonal Communication Skills on Speaking Courses

The survey results undoubtedly stimulate educators' academic curiosity in providing pedagogical approaches that align with the available data. To obtain the expected survey results, it is necessary to implement practical measures within the framework of PjBL. Project-based learning begins with a problem background on which to work; it involves an actual project or activity that will expose students to a variety of contextual obstacles. These obstacles require them to conduct investigations and problem-solving in order to complete the project in a way that meets learning objectives (Deveci & Ayish, 2018; Saenab et al., 2018). This concept can be adapted depending on the context of the subjects being taught.

Furthermore, educators are encouraged to understand the characteristics of PjBL, its syntax, and implementation steps. Researchers have used various references as the basis for this concept. However, in the current study, the researchers modified the characteristics, syntax, and stages for its application in speaking courses. The characteristics of PjBL (Margaret et al., 2012; Musa et al., 2012; Zulyusri et al., 2023) include learners making decisions about a framework; problems or challenges being posed to students; students designing processes to identify solutions to these problems or challenges; learners collaboratively taking responsibility for accessing and managing information to solve problems; ongoing (continuous) evaluation; learners periodically reflecting on completed activities; and the final product of learning activities being assessed.

The aforementioned characteristics encourage educators to implement PjBL in various settings in which they teach. If this occurs, educators are advised to understand the syntax of PjBL, such as preparing questions or project assignments. This step enables students to observe the issues arising from observable phenomena more closely. An experiment can be used to design a project plan as an actual step towards addressing existing questions and developing a plan of action for the concrete stages of a project. Scheduling is essential to ensure the project is completed within the available time and

according to expectations; learners then review ongoing projects to track progress, activities, and outcomes.

This syntax will be successful if the six stages of its application are followed precisely and adequately, such as determining fundamental questions. Learning begins with fundamental questions, i.e. questions that provide students with tasks for performing an activity. Students' assignment topics relate to the real world and initiate an in-depth investigation. Educators and students collaborate on the planning of design projects. The rules of the activity, the selection of activities that can assist in answering essential questions by integrating various possible topics, and knowledge of the tools and resources available for completing the project are all components of planning. Educators and students collaborate to arrange schedules for activities in finalising projects. This includes allocating time for finishing projects, setting up project completion deadlines, guiding students to plan new approaches, directing students when they take paths unconnected to the project, and urging students to provide rationales for their decision-making. Educators are responsible for monitoring the progress of students and the project, as well as overseeing the activities of students as they fulfil the project. Monitoring is conducted by facilitating student participation in each process. Thus, educators serve as guides for student activities. A rubric that accounts for all significant activities is developed to simplify the monitoring procedure. Test results, which aid educators in measuring standard achievement, play a role in evaluating each student's progress, provide feedback on the level of student comprehension, and assist educators in designing the next learning strategy. Finally, experiences are examined. After learning, educators and students reflect on the activities and outcomes of the completed projects. The reflection process is conducted both individually and in groups.

Every method of instruction has both advantages and disadvantages. However, based on the characteristics, syntax, and execution steps, the researchers highlighted the advantages of PjBL as a means of increasing students' learning motivation, encouraging their ability to perform essential tasks, improving problem-solving skills, collaboration skills, and practising interpersonal communication skills. It also helps in managing learning resources, time management, creating contextual learning activities in line with the real world and the development of students, and fostering an enjoyable learning atmosphere. In addition to the disadvantages of requiring a great deal of time to solve complex problems and incurring higher costs due to the purchase of learning media, teachers need to become accustomed to PjBL, particularly in the use of ICT in learning.

Not only are educators required to comprehend the components outlined above if they want to implement PjBL, but they also need to be familiar with PjBL assessment. Assessment is not limited to the final evaluation alone. Additionally, we must ensure that students can evaluate their own work so that the projects on which they are working produce better outcomes. This can be implemented using the following strategies: (1) encouraging and directing students to perform self-evaluations of their performance in carrying out their responsibilities; (2)

encouraging and promoting students to involve external parties in developing work standards related to their tasks; and (3) encouraging and enabling students to evaluate their own performance. Excellence based on the characteristics, practical application steps, and the form of evaluation described above led researchers to conclude that integrating various components in PjBL is essential for obtaining interpersonal communication skills in speaking courses in Indonesia.

The preceding data and explanation illuminate the limitations of this study. First, the research focuses solely on surveys of interpersonal communication competencies and their challenges. Second, based on the findings of this survey, researchers recommend PjBL only to educators, particularly lecturers of speaking courses in Indonesia, due to the method's advantages. Third, the respondents in this study were homogeneous, as they all came from the English Language Education departments of six distinct universities. Due to these limitations, it is recommended that future researchers investigate the beneficial effects of PjBL across various subjects and diverse disciplines so that the excellence of PjBL is presumed to have multiple impacts and to be cross-disciplinary.

5. Conclusion and Recommendation

Three main points can be made based on the results of this research: (1) The interpersonal communication profiles of 315 respondents from six universities in three provinces (Bali, West Nusa Tenggara, and East Nusa Tenggara) in Indonesia fall into the medium category (3.26); (2) The highest challenge (mean = 4.6) faced by 315 respondents in achieving interpersonal communication skills in the speaking course is that the partner's accent is hard to understand; and (3) There is a comprehensive understanding of the PjBL component as a means of providing college students with interpersonal communication skills. This understanding includes the nature of PjBL, its principles, characteristics, syntax, stages for its application, advantages, disadvantages, and assessment.

This conclusion confirms that for English language learners, a comprehensive understanding of interpersonal communication skills – including indicators, types, and principles – is one of the variables that should be possessed to avoid stagnation in their daily interactions or to meet the requirements of the orientation of speaking course achievements. Due to the fundamental advantage for college students, enhancing these interpersonal communication skills with communicative competence is necessary. Both micro and macro components of communication skills are mandatory for English learners and speakers. These two elements must interact for a more compassionate, dynamic, interactive, practical, and purposeful educational interaction space to be realised.

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