

## Communication Skills Promotion In Senior High School English Classroom Through Online Project Based Learning

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### ABSTRACT

This study investigated the implementation of online project based learning (PBL) in promotion students' communication skills. It is aimed to describe students' communication skills with others as one of the Four C's skills in 21<sup>st</sup> of Century Skills. The subject are six students of private Senior High School in Surabaya. The data described in this study are in the form of students' communication skills in the process of doing the project which were taken from WhatsApp group communication. The results indicated that PBL mostly well received by students. This provides valuable communication opportunities between students in the group especially in communication skills. Students considered they had benefits from the opportunities to take greater control of their learning, though they also found some problems in collaboration with others. The article provides recommendations that would help teachers to implement online PBL in their online classroom.

**Keywords: Communication Skills, Online Project Based Learning**

## 1. Introduction

The 21<sup>st</sup> century learning demands the education prepare a qualified and a competent graduates who are skillful at the development of technology. In other words, 21<sup>st</sup> century learners should master learning and innovation skills or 21<sup>st</sup> century skills which involves critical thinking, collaboration, communication, and creativity (4C's) P21 (1). To match the demand of 21<sup>st</sup> century learning, education should be integrated with modern technology (2) and appropriate learning approach. PBL is one of innovative learning approaches that provides many approaches for success in the twenty-first century (3-5).

The research conducted by Kavlu (6) revealed that PBL provides innovative English language acquisition and equip learners with 21<sup>st</sup> century skills involves communicative competence, critical thinking, lifelong learning, team-working and problem-solving skills. However, this present study focuses on communication skill. Communication can be defined as exchange of ideas between people either spoken or written (7). Communication has significant role in teaching and learning process. When communication run well, the process of teaching and learning will be successful. In addition, communication skill is selected as the focus of the study because the project approach directed students to work together. This encouraged students to work with their group embers. So that they require to communicate with the teacher and peers while implementing the assigned project. Communication is important skill among other 21<sup>st</sup> century skills in the current age. It is believed that strong communication skill is as essential for making an organizational progress (8).

Some researchers have conducted studies on PBL. A study conducted by (9) indicated that the implementation of online PBL increase students' vocabulary and speaking skill. They added that PBL offered joyful atmosphere thus learners experienced less anxiety in learning. Kovalyova, Soboleva (10) revealed that PBL is an ideal teaching method as it improves engineering students' oral and written communication skills. While, Saenab, Yunus (11) uncovered that PBL enhances students' communication abilities in Science Education Program. In ELT context, Kurniawati, Susanto (12) have found that the implementation of PBL promotes students' communication skills especially in communicating ideas with others.

Those previous researches have indicated the valuable contribution about PBL and students communication skill. First, previous study has already applied online PBL and the focus was on students' productive skills. While, three other previous studies were offline. The focus of the second previous study was on students' oral production. The third previous study concerns on the communication skills which involves three aspects, such as: oral, written and interpersonal communication. The last previous study focused on the communication among students during the process of project. This study observes the implementation of PBL during online learning. This deals with the policy of Indonesian Government to hold online teaching and learning process as the spread out of pandemic Covid-19. Thus, this present study focuses on students' communication skills in online PBL which covers the communication skills occur when they are working together.

## 2. Literature Review

### 2.1 Project Based Learning

2013 Curriculum has been applied as the national Curriculum in Indonesia. In the revised version 2016 of 2013 Curriculum, it is suggested to apply PBL as one of the innovative approaches in teaching and learning English (13). There are some definitions about PBL. Some experts have defined PBL as an experiential learning (14). This learning approach emphasizes on providing students an authentic learning situation or real life experience. In addition, this learning instruction occurs when activities are integrated skills, contextualize language, and provide authentic objective for the students (15). Knutson (16) explained that experiential learning work up on the notion that language learning occurs when students are involved in doing on a task or project. She added that the project involves some stages, such as: exposure, participation, internalization, and dissemination (16).

Experiential learning addresses specific methods, one of which is PBL. This learning type is classified as a student center while teacher is a facilitator in teaching and learning process (17). Students should actively participate in classroom because they have to do activities by themselves. In doing a project, the students work together in pair work or group work (15). In senior high school, teacher commonly provide an opportunity for the students to do their project in groups. In the group, students discuss and work collaboratively. They can address questions to the teacher and discusses within the peer about the project. By doing so, students are learning to find out possible solutions of a project through possible skills such as asking questions, debating ideas, and designing plans.

PBL is a teaching approach that engages students by providing challenge or project as a means of gaining new knowledge or skills (18). This is a student-centered approach as it requires them to be an active learner and gives them a chance to explore knowledge and skills through the given project. It engages students to work cooperatively with others. In PBL, students need to communicate their ideas, discuss the problem, solve the problem occurred the process of making the project (19).

The examples of project works such as: hands-on project, field trip and on site-visits, research projects, extra class dinner group, creating a video advertising product (14). In this present study, PBL is in the form of a project work of e-poster. The researcher asked the students to create e-poster as the final project.

## 2.2 Communication Skills

Communication is one of the essential competencies of 21<sup>st</sup> century learning namely critical thinking, creative, and collaboration (1). The four C's can be raised into teaching of the core subjects which involves English, reading or language arts, world languages, arts, mathematics, economics, science, geography, history, government and civics (20). In this study, the subject is English. This focuses on students' communication skills. The researcher observed the implementation of online PBL and students' communication skill when they communicate with others in the process of e-poster making.

The word communication is derived from the word 'commune' means 'to share or to make common' (21). From this definition, communication facilitates people to share information and understand its meaning. In education context, communication between teacher and students or students and students is very essential. Teaching and learning process will be successful when communication in the classroom among the teacher and the students or the students with other run on well (22). This in line with the work of Lee (23) that one of the essential objectives of foreign language teaching is to create a communicative atmosphere in which learners are able to express ideas in the target language. This can be affirmed that communication has significant role in teaching and learning process. Therefore, the teacher and the students have to maintain the communication in the teaching and learning process in order to make it can be fully successful.

The implementation of Project Based Learning facilitates students to communicate with others. Here, students need to share ideas, discuss the problem, find the solution, and completing the project. Since PBL provides students to be the center of learning by performing a project work. PBL provides opportunities for learners to engage in active learning as well as the opportunity to learn new soft skills such as collaboration, communication, and negotiation (6). Moreover, project based learning is an ideal instructional strategy in improving students communication skills (10). In addition, PBL provides students' an opportunity to explore creativity and expresses students' communicative skills (24).

This study investigated students' communication skills promotion through the implementation of online project based learning in the process of learning writing for senior high school students especially eleventh grade students. The following are indicators adapted from Greenstein (25). There are five indicators which were used to investigate the promotion of students' communication skills especially communicating ideas by applying Project Based Learning, as follow:

Table 1. Indicators of Communication Skills

Communication Skills	Indicators
1. Convinced others	a. Students are able to express opinion clearly (well organized/sequenced)
	b. Students use persuasive communication
	c. Students use accurate sources to state ideas
2. Uses multiple channel to communicate	a. Students use verbal and visual communication
3. Receive information	b. Students demonstrate acceptable communication skills such as paying attention to the topic delivered and listening reflectively

Source: Adapted from (25)

### 3. Research Method

The design of this study is a descriptive qualitative. This is used to describe students' communication skills promotion through the implementation of online project based learning in the process of English writing. The data are in the form of words and sentences. Those were obtained from one of the private senior high school in Surabaya. There are five classes of eleventh grade students. Each class consists of thirty students. However, this study took one class as the subject of the study namely XIPS1. The researcher selected a group that consists of five female students and one male student. The researcher investigated students' communication skills during the process of doing the project. In other words, this study focused on students' communicating ideas in the group.

This study used synchronous electronic interaction which are applied in teaching and learning context namely, Whatsapp Group (WAG) and Google Classroom (GCR). WAG facilitates the type of text and voiced based communication. This was used as a means of students-students share ideas and receive responses immediately in real-life chats. In this study, students' conversations were recorded in the screen recorder and Voice Note recorder. While, GCR was used by the teacher delivered teaching materials, communicate instructions, and provide feedback. In this study, the researcher did not participate in the group communication, but she observed the students' communication via WAG screen recorder and Voice Note recorder during the implementation of project based learning. After that, data were condensed by the researcher by using (25) which provide indicators for categorizing the data and analyzing these. Then, the data were categorized and coded. The next, researcher presented the data in the form of table. After that, she analyzed the data and drew a conclusion.

### 4. Findings

As has been explained in the previous section, PBL had been applied in this study was in the form project work of e-poster. The students were asked to create e-poster about one of writing paragraphs; process and narrative. They might choose one of the following theme: process paragraph topic: "how to get what you want through complaining", while narrative paragraph topic: "the role of social media in your life". The result of the study show that some students selected process paragraph while some others preferred narrative. In this study, the group chose narrative as their theme of e poster.

To investigate students' communication skills, the researcher observed their verbal communication when they are doing the project. In other words, the data were in the form of students' conversation. Those are the as the evidence of students' communication skills when they were conducting online project based learning. Furthermore, the data were analyzed by using the indicators proposed by (25) (*See table 1*).

The result indicates that the students' communication skills promotion' can be achieved through the implementation of PBL. This can be seen in the *Table 2*. The subjects of this study consisted of five students. In *Table 2*, each of the subjects was pseudonym. The description can be explained is as follows: S1 is student number 1, S2 is student number 2, S3 is student number 3, S4 is student number 4, S5 is student number 5, and S6 is student number 6. The results can be seen in the following table:

**Table 2.** Result of Students Ability to Communicate Ideas

No.	Indicators	Evidences
1	Students are able to express opinion clearly	S1: <i>Gimana kalau "Peran sosial media di era pandemi covid 19"</i> (What if "the role of social media in Pandemic Covid-19 era?) S4: <i>Boleh</i> (Ok) S3: <i>Boleh Juga</i> (that's Ok)
2	Students use persuasive communication	S4: <i>Hai, Judulnya macem mana? "How to use socmed in a good way" Gitu? Reeek, Gimanaaaaa?</i> (Hi. How about the title? "How to use social media in a good way" isn't it? Guys, what do you think?) S6: <i>How sosmed killed me</i> S4: <i>Ya masa gitu</i> (are you sure?) S6: <i>Kalo pake 3rd person, the Bullied</i> (If uses 3rd person, the Bullied)
3	Students use accurate sources to state ideas	S2: <i>Emang jadi milih yang apa?</i> (What is the chosen work) S4: <i>Narativ bukannya?</i> (Narrative, isn't it?) S6: <i>Yeup, Biasanya bikin poster pake apa</i> (Yupp. What type of platform commonly used for e-poster making) S2: <i>Kalau hp bisa pixellab ato, PicsArt, kalo lp pake Photoshop bisa (Pixellab or PicsArt can be used in cellular phone, while PicsArt can be used in notebook)</i> S4: <i>Pake canva juga bisa</i> (Canva can also be used) S2': <i>Enak canva aja kalo gitu, udah ada templatnya</i> (Canva is better, it provided with template) S4: <i>Iya, Pake canva aja</i> (ok, Canva)
4	Students use verbal and visual communication	a. S6: <i>Biar azek kek kalimat trigger aja loo</i> (it would be more interesting if we use 'trigger' sentence) S2: <i>Contohnya?</i> (Example?) S5: <i>Yang ketiga ta ini lan?</i> (Do you mean the third one?) S2: <i>Kan kata A kalimat trigger, itu gmn?</i> 🤔 (What is trigger sentence) S6: <i>Kek gimana yaa, kayak ajakan tapi agak meksa</i> (What is look like? It is like insist someone to do something)  b. S1: <i>Oalah iya Aku bingung harus bantu Yang bagian mana.. Udah di translate semua</i> 🤔 (ouch...I am confused, which part can I take apart?everything has already translated..(emoticon)  S2: <i>Cek grammar aja</i>  S1: <i>Udah clear semua gitu</i> <i>Iya bener yang dimasukkan intinya saja</i>

5	<p>Students demonstrate acceptable communication skills such as paying attention to the topic delivered and listening reflectively</p>	<p>a. S2: <i>Jadi di posternya mau dicantumin apa aja? Dampak negatif sm positifnya gitu ta?</i> (So, what should be attached to the poster? positive and negative impact, what do you think?)                  S4: <i>Iyaa, Sama kasih pengertiannya dulu</i> (yes, that's right, the definition should be put in the first part)                  S2: <i>Oke, trs apa lagi? Temen2 ada usulan?</i> (Ok friends, what's next? Do you have any ideas?)                  S3: <i>Manfaatnya juga mungkin?</i> (What about the benefits?)                  S4: <i>Cara menggunakan sosmed dengan baik gitu gimana?</i> (the best way to use socmed, what do you think?)                  S2: <i>Kalo manfaat apa ngga sm kaya dampak positif?</i> (Is the benefit the same as the positive impact?)                  S4: <i>Iya sama</i> (Yes, that's right)                  S3: <i>Iya juga si</i> (yes, it is the same)</p> <p>b. S4: <i>Aku cuma usul ini ya, aku lebih setuju sama ini, soalnya lebih jelas dan lengkap gitu</i> (May I have an opinion? I prefer the previous one, I think it is more complete)                  S3: <i>Wah iya gaapa pake yg itu aja</i> (Ouch...that' ok, used this one)                  S2: <i>Trs yg kedua peran media sosial in our life, ada yg punya saran?</i> (The second is the role of social media in our life, is there any</p>
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		comment) S1: <i>Udah bagus ini dek</i> (I think it is good) S2: <i>Hehehe kalo kata2nya mau diubah gpp rek</i> ( <i>Laughing</i> . If you want to change the sentences, it is ok)
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The results indicated that students reach all the five indicators of communication skills adapted from Greenstein (25). The results of the present study are in line with the previous study conducted by (12) that students' communication skills promotion can be reached through the implementation of PBL. The examples of students' conversation above (*See Table 2*) are evidences that PBL is one of instructional teaching and learning method that can applied in students' communication skills promotion. However, the difference between this study and the previous are on the following part: this study applied online PBL then the data sources were obtained from the WAG screen recorder and Voice Note recorder. While the previous study was offline PBL and the researcher observed the students' activity and recorded those. In addition, the indicators of communication skills in this study adapted from Greenstein (25) that consist of five indicators. The previous study applied the indicators adapted from P21 (20) that consist of five indicators.

## 5. Discussion

One of PBL project works is poster making. The PBL in this study is e-poster making. Some experts' defined project based learning as experiential learning, they are (14) and (15). This idea was support by Knutson (16) that experiential learning occurs when students engage in doing a project or task. In this study, the process of e-poster making involves students' expose their communication skills such as share ideas, discuss the topic, and solve the problem. In e-poster making process, it is possible for students connect earlier experiences with the new one. This process indicates project based learning is experiential learning (14) and (15).

As has been explained above that the data of this study were students' communication via WAG screen recorder and Voice Note recorder during the implementation of project based learning. The teacher delivered the material, explained the project, and provided the rules and decided the deadline as well through GCR. Students were asked to work in group and finished the project. Then, students create five groups. After that, each group should create WAG. In WAG students communicate everything related to the project.

The researcher selected one group as the subject of study to make her investigation in depth. This group discussed their concept of e-poster. The group decided to choose narrative paragraph. All the conversation were identified and analyzed based on the five indicators adapted from Greenstein (25). From students' communication, the researcher found evidences related to students' communication skills promotion through the implementation of PBL. They discuss the topic, shared ideas, use persuasive communication, pay attention and listening reflectively on others' opinion. This can be verified from the result above that the students can reach all five indicators. First indicator namely students are able to express opinion clearly can be seen in the following example:

*Example 1:*

S1: *Gimana kalau "Peran sosial media di era pandemi covid 19"* (What if "the role of social media in Pandemic Covid-19 era?")

S4: *Boleh* (Ok)

S3: *Boleh Juga* (that' s Ok)

*Example 1* indicates S1 stated his idea clearly. He offered the theme of e-poster namely 'What if the theme of e-poster was the role of social media in pandemic covid-19 era'. This opinion was accepted by other members. S4 and S3 replied that S1's idea about the title was Ok. This shows that S1 has able to state his opinion clearly so that other member group understand. I addition, the other member group can positively respond his idea. In other words, this example revealed that the first indicator can be reached.

The second indicator is students use persuasive communication. Active group discussion occurred when each of group member are trying to use convincing statement in sharing ideas. The *example 2* was found as the evidence of the second indicator. The evidence can be seen in the following example:

## Example 2:

S4: *Hai, Judulnya macem mana? "How to use socmed in a good way" Gitu? Reeek, Gimanaaaaa?* (Hi, Guys. How about the title? "How to use socmed in a good way" isn't it? Guys, what do you think?)

S6: *How sosmed killed me* (How social media killed me?)

S4: *Ya masa gitu* (are you sure?)

S6: *Kalo pake 3rd person, the Bullied* (If uses 3rd person, the bullied)

In this conversation, S4 stated her opinion about the title of their project. She stated: 'How about the title? "How to use social media in a good way" isn't it? Guys, what do you think?' In responding this, S6 also mentioned her idea about the title by saying 'How social media killed me?' S4 was doubtfully on S6's idea. S4 said: are you sure? S6 replied: 'If uses 3rd person, the bullied' S6. From S6 explanation, it can be seen that she was trying to convince S4 about her opinion. This conversation reflects that students in the group used persuasive communication in order to convince other. Then the second indicators was achieved by the group.

Third indicator is students use accurate sources to state ideas. One evidence was found by the researcher related to the third indicator. Here is the evidence:

## Example 3:

S6: *Yeup, Biasanya bikin poster pake apa (Yupp. What type of application commonly used for e-poster making?)*

S2: *Kalau hp bisa pixellab ato, PicsArt, kalo lp pake Photoshop bisa (Pixellab or PicsArt can be used in cellular phone, while PicsArt can be used in notebook)*

S4: *Pake canva juga bisa (Canva can also be used)*

S2: *Enak canva aja kalo gitu, udah ada templatnya (Canva is better, it provided with template)*

S4: *Iya, Pake canva aja (ok, Canva)*

In this example S6 asked her friends the common application for e-poster making. S2 answered that *Pixellab or PicsArt* can be used in cellular phone, while *PicsArt* can be used in notebook. S4 added the similar thing that *Canva* can also be used. From this conversation, it can be seen that the students used accurate sources by showing their understanding about some application commonly used for e-poster making. Briefly, this can be concluded that students especially S2 and S4 had reached the third indicator.

The forth indicator is students use verbal and visual communication. Two examples were found as the evidences. The followings are the evidences:

## Example 4

S6: *Biar azek kek kalimat trigger aja loo* (It would be more interesting if we use 'trigger' sentence)

S2: *Contohnya?* (Example?)

S5: *Yang ketiga ta ini lan?* (Do you mean the third one?)

S2: *Kan kata X kalimat trigger, itu gmn?* 🤔

(X said a trigger sentence. What is trigger sentence? Emoticon )

S6: *Kek gimana yaa, kayak ajakan tapi agak meksa* (What is look like? It is like insist someone to do something)

## Example 5:

S1: *Oalah iya Aku bingung harus bantu Yang bagian mana..Udah di translate semua* 🤔 (ouch...I am confused, which part can I take apart? Everything has already translated. Emoticon)

S2: *Cek grammar aja* 🤔 (You can check the grammar. Emoticon)

S1: *Udah clear semua gitu* 🤔 *Iya bener yang dimasukkan intinya saja* (S1: everything is clear. Emoticon. That's right we should state the core of information)

Those two examples provide evidences that students use verbal and visual communication. This can be seen in example 4, S2 used both type of communication verbal and visual. She said: X said a trigger sentence. 'X said a trigger



sentence. What is trigger sentence? *Emoticon*'. In this statement S2 asked her friend about trigger sentence. She added visual *emoticon* to make sure that she really does not understand about it. Other examples can be seen in *example 5*. S1 stated his feeling by saying: 'ouch...I am confused, which part can I take apart? Everything has already (*emoticon*)'. He used *emoticon* to show his feeling because he did not give a great contribution on the group work. S2 replied that he can still help the group by checking the result of group work. S2 added visual *emoticon* to make sure that it is not a problem if S1 wanted to support the group. S1 once again used both verbal and visual communication in replied S2. He said that 'Everything is clear' (*emoticon*). In short, students especially S1 and S2 in these conversations had shown that they used both type communication namely verbal and visual communication. This also indicates that the forth indicator had achieved by the students.

The fifth indicator as the last indicator is students demonstrate acceptable communication skills such as paying attention to the topic delivered and listening reflectively. Two evidences were found. These can be seen in the following examples:

*Example 6:*

S2: *Jadi di posternya mau dicantumin apa aja? Dampak negatif sm positif nya gitu ta? (Then, what should be stated in the poster? positive and negative impact, what do you think?)*

S4: *Iyaa, Sama kasih pengertiannya dulu (Yes, that's right, the definition should be put in the first part)*

S2: *Oke, trs apa lagi? Temen2 ada usulan? (Ok friends, what's next? Do you have any ideas?)*

S3: *Manfaatnya juga mungkin? (What about the benefits?)*

S4: *Cara menggunakan sosmed dengan baik gitu gimana? (The best way to use social media, what do you think?)*

S2: *Kalo manfaat apa ngga sm kaya dampak positif? (Is the benefit the same as the positive impact?)*

S4: *Iya sama (Yes, that's right)*

S3: *Iya juga si (yes, it is the same)*

*Example 7:*

S4: *Aku cuma usul ini ya, aku lebih setuju sama ini, soalnya lebih jelas dan lengkap gitu (May I have an opinion? I prefer the previous one, I think it is more complete)*

S3: *Wah iya gaapa pake yg itu aja (Ouch...that' ok)*

S2: *Trs yg kedua peran media sosial in our life, ada yg punya saran? (The second is the role of social media in our life, is there any comment)*

S1: *Udah bagus ini dek (I think it is good)*

S2: *Hehehe kalo kata2nya mau diubah gpp rek (Laughing. If you want to change the sentences, it is ok)*

The above examples are the evidences that students demonstrate acceptable communication skills such as paying attention to the topic delivered and listening reflectively. In *Example 6* S2 asked the group about the things that should be stated in the e-poster. S4 answered that it should be added definition. S4's statement indicates that she was listening to and paying attention to S2. In the next part of the example, S2 asked about her friends' opinion. S3 answered it should be added the benefits. S4 replied the best way to use social media. S3 and S4 had showed acceptable communication skills by responding S2 questions. In the last part of *example 6* S4 asked: 'what do you think?' S2 replied: Is the benefit the same as the positive impact? S4 and S3 responded that those are the same. All of the answers by S2, S4, and S3 suggest that they paid attention and listened to S6. Another example of the application of accepted communication skills performed by the students can be found in *Example 7*. S4 stated her opinion that she preferred the previous idea. She considered it was more completed than another. S3 showed her agreement. In this case, S3 has paid attention and listened to S4 by responding her. In the last part of the conversation S2 asked her friends 'the role of social media in our life' and S1 directly answered it was good. The communication among the group members are evidences of the five indicators.

From the discussion above, it can be seen that students fulfilled all the indicators of communication skills adapted from Greenstein (25). The students were able to convince others by communicating their ideas clearly, use persuasive communication, and use accurate source to state their ideas. Besides, students also used multiple channel to communicate by using verbal and visual communication. Another thing is students were able to demonstrate acceptable communication skills such as paying attention to the topic delivered and listening reflectively. In short, students' communication skills promotion can be achieved through the implementation of online Project Based

Learning.

## **6. Conclusion**

The online Project Based Learning is substantially applicable in students' communication skills promotion. The next researchers in this topic area can use the finding of this study as a reference to conduct a research about Project Based Learning and 21<sup>st</sup> century skills. The next researcher can observe another aspect of communication for example interpersonal communication skill. In addition, the next researcher can develop the finding of this study by observing other skills of Four C's namely: collaboration, creativity and critical thinking in teaching and learning process.

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