



## Exploring Students' Perceptions Toward Drama Project in Enhancing Their Speaking Ability in English Education Study Program

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Article Info	Abstract
<b>Article History</b> Received: 2025-03-11 Revised: 2025-04-27 Published: 2025-05-01  <b>Keywords:</b> <i>Perception; Drama Project; Speaking Ability.</i>	<p>The aims of this research were to explore students' perceptions toward drama project and identified the specific aspects of speaking that have improved through their participation in drama project. This research was conducted at Sriwijaya University, which involved 10 students of English Education study program who had taken the "Literature in ELT" and involved in drama project as a part of the coursework. This research employed qualitative research methods and the data of this research were collected through semi-structured interview. The findings revealed that most of the students perceived drama project as an effective approach and acknowledged its role in improving their speaking abilities. They expressed significant improvements in pronunciation, intonation, fluency due to frequent practices. The collaborative aspects of drama also contributed to help them enhance their confidence. However, several challenges were also faced by the students, including nervousness, memorizing long dialogues, technical problem, and limited speaking lines for certain participants. In addressing those challenges, they do more practice and sought feedback from their peers and lecturers. This study suggests that educators provide sufficient practice time, ensure equal speaking opportunities for all participants, and provide continuous help and feedback to optimize the benefits of drama-based learning activities. This study offers valuable insights and suggestions for students, educators, and future researchers.</p>
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<b>Sejarah Artikel</b> Diterima: 2025-03-11 Direvisi: 2025-04-27 Dipublikasi: 2025-05-01  <b>Kata kunci:</b> <i>Persepsi, Proyek Drama, Kemampuan Berbicara.</i>	<p>Tujuan dari penelitian ini adalah untuk mengeksplorasi persepsi siswa terhadap proyek drama dan mengidentifikasi aspek-aspek tertentu dari berbicara yang telah meningkat melalui partisipasi mereka dalam proyek drama. Penelitian ini dilakukan di Universitas Sriwijaya, yang melibatkan 10 mahasiswa program studi Pendidikan Bahasa Inggris yang telah mengambil mata kuliah "Literature in ELT" dan terlibat dalam proyek drama sebagai bagian dari mata kuliah tersebut. Penelitian ini menggunakan metode penelitian kualitatif dan data penelitian ini dikumpulkan melalui wawancara semi-terstruktur. Hasil penelitian menunjukkan bahwa sebagian besar siswa menunjukkan persepsi positif mengenai proyek drama dan mengakui perannya dalam meningkatkan kemampuan berbicara mereka. Mereka menyatakan adanya peningkatan yang signifikan dalam pengucapan, intonasi, kefasihan karena seringnya berlatih. Aspek kolaboratif dari drama juga berkontribusi dalam membantu mereka meningkatkan kepercayaan diri. Namun, beberapa tantangan juga dihadapi oleh para siswa, termasuk rasa gugup, menghafal dialog yang panjang, masalah teknis, dan terbatasnya dialog untuk beberapa peserta. Untuk mengatasi tantangan-tantangan tersebut, mereka melakukan lebih banyak latihan dan mencari umpan balik dari rekan-rekan dan dosen mereka. Studi ini menyarankan agar para pendidik menyediakan waktu latihan yang cukup, memastikan kesempatan berbicara yang sama untuk semua peserta, dan memberikan bantuan dan umpan balik secara terus menerus untuk mengoptimalkan manfaat dari kegiatan pembelajaran berbasis drama. Penelitian ini menawarkan wawasan dan saran yang berharga bagi siswa, pendidik, dan peneliti di masa depan.</p>

### I. INTRODUCTION

The widespread use of English has created previously unthinkable chances for education and communication. As Lingua Franca, English facilitates people from different language and culture backgrounds in communication between speakers of various languages and cultures

(Taguchi & Yamaguchi, 2020). Thus, understanding 4 basic English skills: listening, reading, writing, and speaking is important. These skills are essential in creating communication, especially for the students in language learning process. Among of these skills, speaking is considered as one of the most crucial yet difficult

skill to acquire. Speaking skill is recognized as a crucial tool for students to effectively communicate and convey meaning (Ork et al., 2024). In English learning context, students are required to improve their speaking skills, as speaking is often used as a measure for assessing their English language proficiency. However, there are many students who have speaking issues. Students with low speaking proficiency typically struggle with vocabulary, grammar, and pronunciation, which are all language proficiency aspects (Riadil, 2020). Other issues that students' often face in speaking are related to psychological issues such as, stress, anxiety, and lack of confidence when speaking in English. Students sometimes fear of making mistakes, being nervous, and being judged by their peers. Therefore, it is essential to explore teaching methods that can boost students' confidence in speaking. In this context, drama project is one of the effective language teaching approach in making innovative learning that provide students with a proper context and experience. Based on the study of Rojabi and Mustofa (2021) Drama technique used in EFL teaching can enhance students' confidence, creativity, and motivation to learn. It combines cognition, language, and feeling in a variety of dynamic and creative ways (Purnomo, 2023).

In addition, drama can also be a motivator to stimulate students' creativity and develop their deeper comprehension of language structure, cultural context, and boost their confidence to communicate in a real purpose. Through practice speaking in a real-life context, drama activities help students improve their fluency, confidence, and general communicative competence. Previous studies on the use of drama projects in English language learning have generally concentrated on other English language proficiency skills rather than speaking. For instance, a study by Law (2021) emphasizes how drama techniques significantly affect students' performance in English reading comprehension achievement. Slovacek et al., (2024) investigate how using drama-based methods can improve vocabulary development in students by making learning more exciting and interesting. Rahmayanti et al., (2024) also examine how well students can write drama scripts using folk tales as a medium, offering insights into their performance as a whole and emphasizing the value of integrating cultural narratives into language instruction. It is clear from these studies that drama projects have been showed to

improve a number of English language proficiency skills, including writing, vocabulary development, and reading comprehension. Nevertheless, while some studies emphasize the broad advantages of innovative methods, such as drama projects, for language acquisition, they generally do not thoroughly investigate the ways in which these methods affect particular aspects of speaking ability. Furthermore, there is no research that directly investigate about the impact of drama project in improving students' speaking ability at Sriwijaya University, which leave a gap in the literature. Therefore, the objectives of this study are:

1. To find out students' perceptions of the effectiveness of drama projects in enhancing their speaking abilities.
2. To identify which specific aspects of speaking ability are most improved by drama projects.

## **II. METHOD**

This research applied a qualitative descriptive design. According to Creswell (2017) qualitative research is an approach that focuses in understanding how individuals or groups interpret social or human problems. The qualitative descriptive approach allowed the researcher to gain an extensive understanding of how students perceive the drama project as a tool for enhancing their speaking abilities. By using this method, the researcher may capture information about the experiences of the students, such as their opinions on the advantages, challenges, and abilities they acquired.

Drama is a dynamic and engaging language learning method that allows students to practice speaking in interactive way. Students may confidently express themselves while enhancing their various aspects of speaking. The aims of this research were to explore students' perceptions toward drama project and identified the specific aspects of speaking that have improved through their participation in drama project. This research was conducted at Sriwijaya University, which involved 10 students of English Education study program who had taken the "Literature in ELT" and involved in drama project as a part of the coursework. This research employed qualitative research methods and the data of this research were collected through semi-structured interview. The findings revealed that most of the students perceived drama project as an effective approach and acknowledged its role in improving their

speaking abilities. They expressed significant improvements in pronunciation, intonation, fluency due to frequent practices. The collaborative aspects of drama also contributed to help them enhance their confidence. However, several challenges were also faced by the students, including nervousness, memorizing long dialogues, technical problem, and limited speaking lines for certain participants. In addressing those challenges, they do more practice and sought feedback from their peers and lecturers. This study suggests that educators provide sufficient practice time, ensure equal speaking opportunities for all participants, and provide continuous help and feedback to optimize the benefits of drama-based learning activities. This study offers valuable insights and suggestions for students, educators, and future researchers.

### III. RESULT AND DISCUSSION

#### A. Result

##### 1. Students' Experiences of Drama Project for Speaking Ability Enhancement

Most of the students reported the project as an enjoyable and enriching experience since it allowed them to take on different roles, collaborate with classmates, and learn in a more dynamic way. They expressed that participating in drama not only provided an engaging experience, but also helped students develop cooperation and collaboration skills by requiring them to cooperate with others in order to prepare their performance.

*"So, actually, it was fun for me because I got such an exciting and interesting role in that project, I also involved in team group, I also find myself working together with them and working with the script and also working with our characters."* (SAS)

*"Drama project was an enriching experience for me, and playing the role of a judge allowed me to deeply engage with the story. The process from the script reading gave me an opportunity to collaborate with my classmate, like practice speaking and explore creative expression too."* (AS)

At the same time, some students reported that drama was fun and challenging. They felt nervous, exhausted, and overwhelmed. However, this experience influenced their mindset on speaking in front of a large audience and

gave some positive impacts in developing their confidence also their ability to work with others.

*"I feel this drama project really good and interesting and unlocks my new mindset about standing in front of many people."* (MBAS)

*"I'm feeling nervous at first, because since I'm not the one who selected at first, and it's very overwhelming for me. But the more I delve into the character, I'm getting excited, because that was the moment that unforgettable for me."* (BTNI)

*"It was quite fun because we can do a practical experience about how to do the drama correctly. But also, it was a bit challenging because it was the first time that I have to be participating in a drama with English."* (SPM)

##### 2. Students' Opinions about The Effectiveness of Drama Project in Enhancing Their Speaking Ability

Most of the students found the drama project to be a helpful tool for enhancing their speaking abilities. They expressed how drama had a significant role on their speaking abilities by improving vocabulary, pronunciation, fluency, and their speaking confidence. Some students also added through drama project they could build their confidence through constant practice and improvisation during the performance.

*"It helps us to be engaged in speaking activity through role playing. It also feels like a real situation than any other kind of role play, the situation feels more serious because it's real time and cannot be taken the second time. And we speak in front of many people."* (AAS)

*"I think my speaking skills is growing really well. I got a new vocabulary, I can fluently learn how to speak new words or common words, become good in the pronunciation."* (MBAS)

*"The project was very effective in developing my speaking abilities, it required me to use formal and persuasive language suited to my role. I had to focus on clarity, tone, and delivery to ensure my lines could be authority and impactful."* (AS)

*"Drama is so effective to enhance our verbal or non-verbal expression, of embodying different characters, it can help me to*

*improve fluency, articulation, confidence, and everything.” (BTNI)*

### **3. Students’ Preferences of the Effectiveness of Drama Project Compared to Other Activities**

Most of the students reported drama project was helpful and more effective compared to other speaking activities since in drama project, they were not only required to use various aspects of speaking, but also involving creativity and collaboration which helped the students more comfortable to use English. Moreover, they expressed the way they can break the language barrier and emotional enhancement.

*“Drama activity is quite effective in practicing those speaking skills. because we have to speak in front of many people with a clear intonation, with a clear pronunciation, and then have to speak clearly.” (AE)*

*“I would say that it's the most effective speaking activity other than in classroom speaking activities, when we were in the drama project, we could actually break that language barrier, and we could also gain the context of the text first, or memorizing most of the dialogues and passages.” (SAS).*

*“I love acting so much, I take it personally effective because I enjoy it every, every minute, every, every moment of it. It helps me a lot to develop my speaking abilities compared to other speaking activities because it was very fun.” (BTNI)*

*“When doing the drama project, it feels more fun and more interest. Because I like doing something like together, when we're speaking together and preparing something together compared to normal speaking activities like in classes” (MBAS)*

### **4. Students’ Challenges and the Solutions During the Drama Project**

The most common challenges that mentioned by the students were nervousness and lack of confidence. They also struggled with their voice projection since speaking in front of many people required them to modify their tone, volume, and facial expressions. In addition, memorizing long lines and expressing them naturally also found as challenges during the project. To overcome all of those challenges, they generally reported that

through collaborative and supportive environment during the drama project, they could solve the problems they faced by seeking help, asking feedback from their peers and lecturers, and motivated each other.

*“We all felt anxious. Before the day, the producer gave us motivation, she said, even if we did some mistakes, it's okay to ignore it. Time cannot be stopped, let it be, just move on. So, we eventually feel less anxious after that.” (AAS)*

*“I think it's about confidence. we need to practice more so that, we are confident enough to do this drama. Because, when we were doing this drama, many people watching us, we need to build the confidence started from the practicing.” (SNA)*

*“I am very lack of confidence and I cannot speak loudly, but we are being forced to speak loudly. How I encounter the challenges is from the practice and also some suggestion from the lecture and also from the teammates about how can I speak loudly without making my voice shaking.” (SPM)*

*“My sentence got changed and changed again because it doesn't fit with the previous sentences. I asking my friends with more better grammar skills and speaking skills to help me to make this sentence proper at my scene” (MBAS)*

### **5. Specific Aspects of Speaking Skill that Improved through Drama**

Students found pronunciation and intonation are the most significantly enhanced skill. Additionally, some participants expressed their fluency and vocabulary were improved by reading, comprehending, and practicing dialogue frequently.

*“I think my pronunciation also got improved because my friends and my lecturer comment on my performance during the practice day before the performance day. So, I get to know how exactly should I pronounce such words and such expressions.” (AAS)*

*“I think at pronunciation and intonation. Since we need to make sure our intonation is right on the path.” (MBAS)*

*“My intonation and pronunciation improved the most at the time. This also improved my fluency as delivering lines*

repeatedly, and it helped me speak more smoothly" (AS)

"I would say the fluency, definitely. Speaking a long form, a long dialogue, that's the improvement." (AR)

Moreover, some students also found that performing in front of many people and participating in extended practice sessions helped them gain confidence in speaking English.

"Yes, I do. after several practices, when we do the drama project, I feel like, oh, I can do that. So, I gain my confidence after doing the project." (SPM)

"Of course, it influences my confidence, although it's not feasibly enough to show up when I'm speaking directly or indirectly. But I feel it slightly improves my confidence in speaking better." (RP)

"Since I ended up being the selected one for this role, it motivates me so much to be the better version of myself by expressing my feelings and speaking it to many people, but yet it's, it has helped me a lot to speak in front of many people." (BTNI)

## 6. Students' Opinions of Working in Group on Their Speaking Ability Developmet

The students generally agreed that working in group for the drama project had a major impact on their ability to communicate and practice to speak. Through the teamwork aspects of drama project, they could build supportive and collaborative learning environment among them which also contributed to the improvement of their speaking abilities.

"Beneficial, because it provided a supportive environment and collaborating with others allowed us to exchange ideas, correct mistakes and practice together. But also helped me learn how to communicate effectively." (AS)

"When we are making the dialogue for the drama, we need to work in group and then some of, some of us feel like, oh, it's not fit for the character. So, I think we can communicate well with other friends to discuss about the dialogue and also the characters." (SNA)

"So, our teamwork is big and have many more people. my motivation to speak English in group work, it influences really well. we need to gather and discuss the idea and to

fully proceed to the purpose of the drama project itself. it really doing well and it is affecting the ability to communicate and practice my speaking ability." (MBAS)

"I would say, yeah. It definitely makes me communicate with every other person in a group. Like they're responsible for the script, responsible for the set. I speak up with them about the stuff in the drama." (AR)

These implied thaworking with group initially forced students to develop stronger communication strategies, conveyed their ideas more clearly, and participated in important discussions. All of them helped to the students' overall speaking development as well.

## B. Discussion

This research aimed to explore how the students perceived drama project in enhancing their speaking ability and identify some specific aspects of speaking that enhanced through drama project. Based on the results of the interview, it was shown that majority of the students had positive perceptions and experiences about drama project who served as a tool for improving their speaking abilities. Most of them indicated that taking part in drama project helped them practice speaking in an interactive way and improve various aspects of their communication abilities. These findings are similar with the previous study from Nezami (2018) which revealed positive attitudes of the students after taking part in drama project. Drama practice broadens students' perceptions by exposing them to new experiences Mardiani and Hanifah (2023). The students found the drama project as valuable activity that effectively enhanced their speaking ability in various aspect and helped them to build good communication skill. Furthermore, the interactive aspect of drama project encouraged collaborative learning and feedback, creating a supportive learning environment. This is supported by Alasmari and Alshae'el (2020) which stated that collaborative learning from drama project support the students to engage and foster their language acquisition. However, despite all of those benefits, students also reported that encountering a number of challenges while focusing on the drama. The main challenges they faced were nervousness and lack of confidence when performing in front of

audience. This aligned with research by Amarullah and Rachmawaty (2020) which said that while drama can enhance students' confidence, it can also cause anxiety, particularly for those who are new to public speaking. Despite these challenges, the majority of participants agreed by overcoming them helped them strengthen their language skills. They indicated that repeated practices and feedback from peers and instructors assisted them in managing their nervousness, improving their pronunciation and fluency, and developing better teamwork abilities.

In addition, the students reported significant increases in numerous important categories, including pronunciation, fluency, intonation, and vocabulary. Moreover, they also expressed that their confidence got improved as well. These findings aligned with the previous study by Nguyen (2023) which revealed some improvements of the students' speaking ability in various aspects of speaking. Specifically, most of the students found that their pronunciation and intonation improved as a result of consistent practice and peer feedback. This was supported by Nanda and Susanto (2021) which revealed that students' pronunciation and intonation improved through drama project. Some of them also mentioned that drama project also influenced their confidence and motivation to speak. This happened through repeated practice, collaboration with their peers, and supportive learning activities made them felt comfortable and motivated them to speak English confidently. This in line with Kumar et al., (2022) which stated that a comfortable communication setting is important to boost students' confidence in speaking. Vocabulary expansion also became another key aspect that highlighted by the participants. This was supported by Alshraideh and Alahmdi (2020) who revealed that Drama might help with vocabulary acquisition by embedding words in memorable and interactive situations.

#### IV. CONCLUSION AND SUGGESTION

##### A. Conclusion

Based on the findings and discussion, Overall, the students have positive perceptions and experiences toward drama project, as it offered students an exciting and interactive approach to practice speaking. The students perceived drama project as an effective method for improving several

aspects of speaking, including pronunciation, fluency, intonation, and confidence. Most of them acknowledged drama project as one of the most effective speaking activities rather than the others. However, several challenges such as nervousness, lack of confidence, struggled to memorize long dialogues were highlighted by the students. They tried to deal with those challenges by doing practice more, seeking feedback from their partners and lecturer, and motivating each other. These challenges offered the students valuable opportunities to improve their communication skills through the collaboration activities. Overall, the findings supported the research objectives by demonstrating that drama projects can significantly promote the development of speaking abilities.

##### B. Suggestion

This study offers several suggestions for students, educators, and future research. For students, it is essentials for them to take an active participation in maximizing the benefits of drama project by practicing and seeking feedback from their partners and lecturers to develop their speaking abilities. They should embrace every opportunity to boost their confidence, fluency, and other aspects of speaking skill by actively participating in practices and performances. For educators, it is important for them to make an interactive and supportive learning environment in which all of the students, regardless their language proficiency, gain benefits from drama project. For future research, this study suggests them to explore more regarding the effectiveness of drama project activities for students with different language proficiency levels, ensuring that all of the students receive significant improvements in their speaking ability.

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