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# Video-based project as a manifestation of *Merdeka* curriculum in Speaking for the General Communication subject: Perspectives and challenges

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## ABSTRACT

This study aims to explore students' perceptions and challenges of implementing the video-based project as part of the Merdeka curriculum for the Speaking for General Communication subject. The first-semester students of the English Education Department IAIN Lhokseumawe become the subject of this study. Moreover, the data were gained through the distribution of questionnaires and in-depth interviews, which were then analysed descriptively. The research results indicate that most students responded positively to the use of video-based projects in speaking lessons. Students feel more confident, motivated, and capable of improving their speaking skills, as well as other supporting skills such as pronunciation, editing, and scriptwriting. In addition, this project also encourages independence, creativity, and provides a more contextual and meaningful learning experience. However, this study also identified several challenges faced by students, including technical constraints, inadequate equipment, difficulties with scriptwriting, and psychological pressure due to teachers' expectations. Therefore, technical support, adequate guidance, and adjustments to learning strategies are needed to implement video-based projects more optimally. Overall, video-based projects have proven to be a relevant and constructive learning method that aligns with the spirit of the *Merdeka* Curriculum.



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## 1. Introduction

In line with rapid technological advancements, the ability to communicate effectively in English has become increasingly essential, not only in academic settings but also in the workplace and daily interactions. However, EFL (English as a Foreign Language) students often face significant

challenges in developing their speaking skills, particularly due to a lack of confidence and limited exposure to contextualized practice. These obstacles highlight the need for educators to design learning activities that integrate real-life communication tasks to better prepare students for post-college demands. Furthermore, speaking classes are often large and diverse in terms of student needs and learning preferences, making it difficult for instructors to provide personalized feedback and sufficient speaking practice within classroom time constraints. In response to these challenges, the *Merdeka* Curriculum promotes innovative and student-centered approaches, such as video-based projects, to foster meaningful and engaging speaking experiences.

In 2022, the Indonesian government officially launched the *Merdeka* Curriculum to provide students with learning autonomy and contextualized learning experiences. Unlike previous curricula, this curriculum emphasizes three essential aspects. First, project-based learning which is meant to help students improve their abilities and develop new skills to solve complex problems. Second, core competencies ensure that students understand the basic concept of the subject matter. The third aspect focuses on building character by engaging in activities promoting independence, creativity, and student collaboration. These three parts are designed to address educational issues and enhance learning at all school levels. As supported by Satriani et al., (2022) the students are expected not only to possess traditional skills but also to be equipped with 4C Skills, namely Critical Thinking, Communication, Collaboration, and Creativity, in 21<sup>st</sup>-century learning.

In addition, the *Merdeka* Curriculum also emphasizes student-centred learning, with flexibility in the learning process and outcomes. This curriculum promotes flexibility by allowing educators and students to determine learning methods that suit their individual needs, interests, and potential. According to Al-Pansori (2025), this curriculum also focuses on character development, acquiring fundamental knowledge, and skill improvement to prepare pupils for the demands of the modern world. Therefore, it enables educators to create more adaptable teaching methods and materials and to incorporate digital media effectively during teaching and learning. The incorporation of technology into education has transformed traditional teaching methods and created new opportunities to improve learning outcomes. Then, (Suciptaningsih et al., 2023) portray that using various technology-based media in learning strengthens students' learning experiences. With the rapid advancement of digital tools, educators are increasingly seeking new ways to engage students through innovative pedagogical practices in language teaching and improve academic outcomes. Among these approaches, video-based projects have emerged as an effective teaching tool.

Several relevant studies have examined the influence of video-based projects in language learning. A study showed that creating video tutorials as part of project-based learning increases students' speaking skills and boosts their enthusiasm for projects. Additionally, Puspa, (2016) the students expressed that the video project was a beneficial learning experience for developing their 21st-century skills. The competencies encompassed self-directed learning, knowledge generation, collaboration, and digital literacy. These skills are considered essential for professional development. According to the study Permatasari, (2024), it illustrated that an interactive video project emphasizes the significant potential of integrating technology into teaching methods to enhance learners' confidence in communicating in English, particularly when integrated with peer feedback and collaborative learning.

Furthermore, Ismailia & Binarkaheni (2022) stated that through the video project, students' soft skills are maintained. It allows them to produce better pronunciation, grammatical structures, and vocabulary for non-English department students. The utilization of YouTube as a project in the classroom significantly enhanced the grammatical proficiency of the students. Among those studies, this study focuses on students' perspectives and challenges in producing video in the speaking class (Muico, 2023).

The application of video as an educational tool has been thoroughly examined within the realm of higher education. One form of implementing Project-Based Learning (PjBL) requires critical thinking, creativity, self-directed learning, problem-solving, and collaboration skills (Dewi, 2016). According to Thomas et al., (2000), project-based learning (PjBL) is a potential method to increase student engagement and motivation. Agustina & Haq (2024) find that project-based learning immerses students in situations that require the authentic use of language for effective communication with one another. Within the framework of the Merdeka Curriculum, the project-based approach holds significant relevance as it empowers students to autonomously investigate their interests and abilities (Kemdikbudristek, 2022). Moreover, in the context of language learning, (Sari & Iswahyuni, 2019) indicated that the incorporation of video can significantly bolster students' confidence in their speaking abilities and assist them in alleviating anxiety during performance. However, challenges in the use of video media have also been reported, including limitations in technological devices, a lack of technical skills, and an increased workload. Therefore, it is essential for educators to provide support and technical training so that students can optimize the use of video as a learning tool.

Furthermore, video-based projects have become one of the most promising media to support the speaking course in the *Merdeka* curriculum. This approach accommodates various learning styles and increases students' engagement to learn through direct experiences. It can also strengthen students' abilities to think critically, communicate, and express ideas creatively. Generally, video-based project supports implementing contextual, communicative, and project-based learning that is highly relevant in the digital era. Through this project, students are involved in the media production process, combining various skills, such as scriptwriting, speaking, recording technology, and editing content. This process sharpens linguistic skills and strengthens self-confidence, creativity, and reflective abilities (Kearney & Schuck, 2006). Using the video-based project, students learn technical skills such as video editing, multimedia program usage, and project management. These talents are extremely valuable in today's work environment, focusing more on creativity and technological abilities. Therefore, the teachers are encouraged to develop teaching modules that focus on linguistic aspects and instill character values and 21st-century skills, such as critical thinking, collaboration, and digital literacy (Utaminingsih et al., 2023).

Video-based project in language learning supports language development by engaging students in tasks that necessitate the meaningful application of language. In speaking classes, this frequently manifests as debates, presentations, interviews, digital conversation (Monologue and dialogue), and digital storytelling. According to Kearney and Schuck (2006), video projects like vlogs or short videos help improve one's pronunciation, originality, and fluency in speaking. Students can practice their communication skills in a realistic setting and engage in self-reflection through editing and reviewing their work. Moreover, the video-based project can be beneficial in language learning. Since it offers students a dynamic platform for practicing and demonstrating their language skills. Students can

make videos demonstrating specific grammatical structures, including practical examples and contextual usage. It becomes an alternative assignment to substitute for a written assignment. It not only increases students' understanding of the material, but also increases their creativity in using digital technology. However, speaking skills often pose a challenge for learners in English language learning due to limited practice time, shyness, and low exposure to real language use.

To address this challenge, the video-based projects have become an innovative alternative that allows students to design, record, and reflect on the authentic use of English. It is indisputable that students are increasingly exposed to technology nowadays. Making videos has no longer been difficult to express their creativity in facing the industrial 5.0 era. However, some students experience that implementing this project also presents various challenges that educators and higher education students need to understand and address. Therefore, this study aims to explore how video-based projects manifest the principles of the Merdeka Curriculum in the Speaking for General Communication course and to examine the students' perspectives and the obstacles they encounter during its implementation.

## **2. Method**

This study employed a qualitative descriptive approach to comprehensively understand students' perspectives and challenges in creating video-based projects. The qualitative approach was chosen as it enables researchers to investigate individuals' experiences, perceptions, and attitudes comprehensively. Moreover, the data were gathered through the distribution of Likert scale questionnaires involving 31 English Department students from the first semester of IAIN Lhokseumawe. The use of the Likert scale enabled the researcher to identify prevalent concerns encountered by the students. This research uses closed-ended questionnaire items to measure students' perceptions and experiences related to video-based projects.

In addition to questionnaires, semi-structured interviews were performed with the 6 students as representatives of the research subject. The Interviews offered profound insight and supported the qualitative findings by enabling participants to elaborate on their comments, articulate specific challenges, and share personal experiences.

The data were analysed through 3 main stages: data reduction, data display, and conclusion drawing. The process of data reduction involved selecting, concentrating, simplifying, and modifying raw data from questionnaires and interview transcripts to facilitate purposeful analysis. Then, diagrams and descriptive narratives were organized and presented to enhance interpretation. Finally, conclusions were drawn based on previously identified data, which aligns with this study's objective.

## **3. Results and Discussion**

This section presents the research findings derived from the data collection and analysis processes. The data were obtained through questionnaires and interviews conducted with first-semester students of the English Department at IAIN Lhokseumawe. These findings were analyzed to address the research objectives and support the study's conclusions. The results from both the questionnaires and interviews are presented as follows.

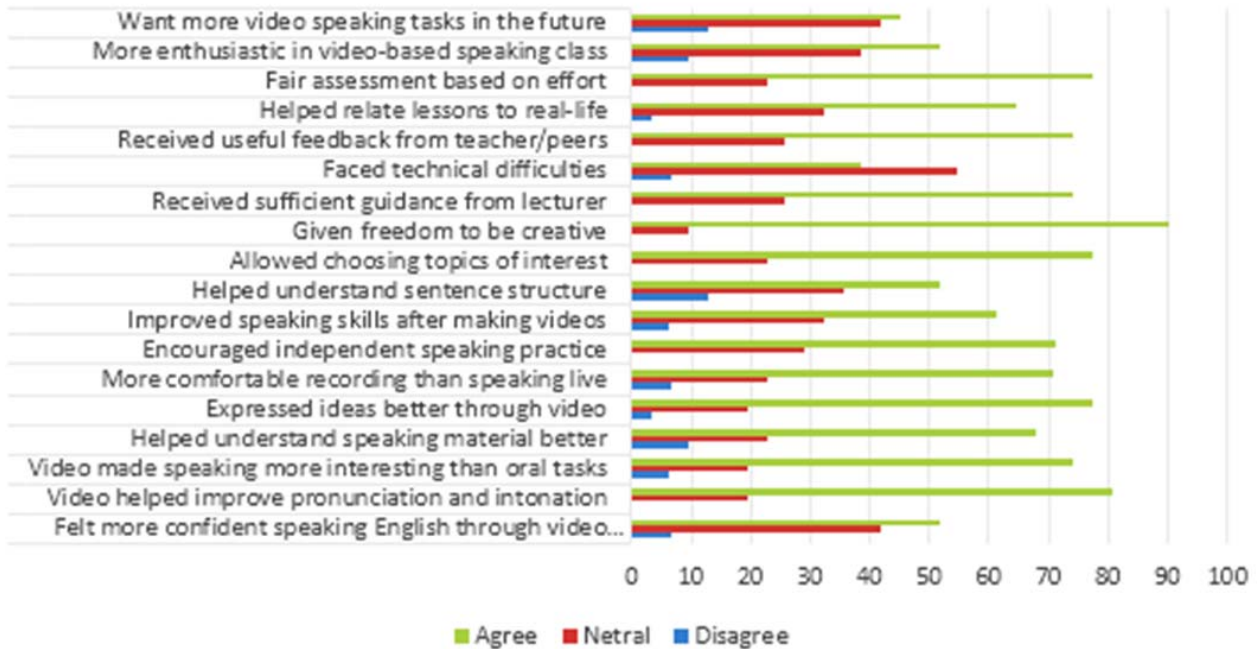


Figure 1. Questionnaire results on students' views of video projects in the speaking class

Figure 1 illustrates that most students responded positively to the use of video-based projects in their speaking class. Specifically, the findings indicate that the project-based learning approach helps motivate students, boost their confidence in speaking, and significantly enhance their speaking skills. Through this approach, students experience more engaging and meaningful learning. These results align with previous studies that highlight the role of digital media in creating interactive and authentic learning environments.

In addition, seven key themes emerged from the data to further illustrate students' perspectives on the use of video-based projects for developing speaking skills. These themes are discussed in detail below.

### 3.1 The students' confidence and comfort

The diagram illustrates that the majority of the respondents (51.6%) agreed that their speaking confidence level increased since video-based projects were implemented in the class. Smith and Brown in Permatasari (2024) indicated that students' academic performance and confidence significantly improve through video-based learning activities. Moreover, utilising videos offers numerous innovative ways to present knowledge and obtain a deeper understanding of a course (Nandiana et al., 2018). Thus, students' self-confidence was formed. Then, a study of Carmichael et al., (2018) found that video offers substantial advantages for both teachers and students, as it enhances course performance in numerous contexts and has a positive impact on students' motivation, confidence and attitude.

On the other hand, a significant number (41.9%) remained neutral and a few showed disagreement. This indicates that although the video project is potential to build confidence, its impact has not been comprehensive. A few students still feel awkward or are not yet accustomed to the video format as a medium for speaking practice. So, there is an opportunity for further researchers to make their impact more significant and equitable. Meanwhile, in terms of comfort, the diagram, it illustrates that about 70.9% of respondents are more comfortable with the video-based projects. It indicates that videos have become an inclusive alternative for students who are shy or have anxiety about speaking in public. This is supported by studies conducted by Duong & Pham, (2022); Wang & Lam, (2022) which found that students' speaking skills can be enhanced through technology in language acquisition. This includes platforms like social media and online learning communities, which offer a more relaxed and adaptable setting for communication.

### **3.2 Improved language skills and another skill**

Most respondents stated that the video project had a positive impact on their language skills. The diagram indicates that 80.7% of respondents perceived an improvement, particularly in terms of pronunciation and intonation. This suggests that the video project is very effective in improving pronunciation, intonation, fluency, and comprehension in speaking, which become important components of English speaking skills (Bustari et al., 2017). The absence of those who voted against indicates that all respondents felt significant benefits from the video project on their speaking skills. Video as a medium for self-reflection is very effective for improving phonological aspects in language learning.

As many as 61,35% of respondents acknowledged that the speaking skills they possess have improved. In making video, students got variety skills, such as the skill in constructing scenario, editing and combining some multimedia both visual and audio. This confirms the effectiveness of video projects as a method for developing speaking skills, particularly in repetitive and reflective practice. Besides, most respondents show their agreement with video-based projects as a strong tool to stimulate independent learning. This aligns perfectly with the principles of independent learning in the Merdeka Curriculum.

Furthermore, more than 74.2% of respondents agreed or strongly agreed that the video-based project helped them understand speaking material/topics better. Moreover, 22.6% of respondents represents neutral and the rest turns to disagreement. It shows the significant effectiveness of the video-based project as a deep and meaningful learning method. Learning through video allows for hands-on practice, real-world context, and active engagement, which greatly aids in understanding the material. Finally, it is shown about 61.3% of respondents reported an improvement in understanding sentence structure. It means that making videos not only focuses on verbal performance but also builds grammatical skills. The data proves the positive experiences of students in having various skill and additional knowledge during making the videos.

### **3.3. Attraction and motivation to learn**

Based on the diagram, it shows that 74.2% of respondents agree with their interest in using video projects compared to traditional oral assignment methods. This indicates that this multimedia

(video) project-based method contributes to enhance students' learning motivation and engagement in speaking lessons. It supports a more participatory and contextual project-based learning approach. Next, the majority of respondents (51.7%) showed their enthusiasm towards the video-based project implemented in the speaking class, and 45,2%. of respondents supported the continuation of the video-based project.

On the other hand, 41.9% of respondents kept neutral and 12.9% showed their disagreement. This indicates that video-based projects are potential for development. However, it needs evaluation to improve the comfort or effectiveness of video usage and also it is necessary to ensure that this method aligns with the diverse learning styles of students. This is in line with the results of research by (Wahyuni & Dewi, 2024) which shows that the use of video podcasts can increase the learning motivation of students with different learning styles. Video-based learning not only enriches the learning experience but also makes students feel more personally involved in the process.

### **3.4 Freedom of expression and creativity**

Most respondents (over 80%) believe that incorporating videos as a medium for learning English enhances the expression of ideas. Digital media, such as video-based projects, can enhance rhetorical, argumentative, and creative skills. By all means, students are allowed to create self-directed learning based on their interests. Additionally, more than 75% of students experience a sense of freedom of expression, which aligns with the spirit of the *Merdeka* Curriculum. The diagram also illustrates the approval rate of teaching and learning flexibility to foster students' creativity in processing and producing videos. The diagram also shows the flexibility in having meaningful learning. In this case, the majority of students, at 54.8% and 22.6% feel that selecting a free topic supports student agency in the learning process.

This freedom plays a crucial role in fostering students' sense of ownership and responsibility for the learning process they are undergoing. When students feel they have control over their learning, their intrinsic motivation tends to increase. This finding is also in accordance with the results of a study conducted by Tyas and Fitriani (2023). They also found that the task-based video tutorial project not only encouraged improved speaking skills but was also able to significantly trigger student creativity. This confirms that a project-based approach like this can be an effective strategy in developing speaking competence in English classes.

### **3.5 Relevance of material to real life**

The diagram shows that approximately 64.5% of respondents believe that videos aid students in gaining contextual learning. This supports the principles of the *Merdeka* Curriculum, which emphasizes connections to the real world and personal experiences. In a recent study, Galendez ( et al., 2024) found that video-based learning methods can not only improve students' understanding of real-world contexts but also enhance their understanding of the relevance of the material being studied.

### 3.6 Assessment aspects and lecturer support

It shows strong positive indicator which most of respondents feel that the assessment done by the teacher is fair. This shows that the evaluation aspect is already in line with the principles of the Independent Curriculum: authentic and based on individual effort. Most respondents also agreed that they receive adequate guidance and instruction from the teacher. This shows that teachers' mentoring is going well and supports project-based learning experiences. Then, the diagram characterizes the vigorous agreement of students to have valuable feedback after producing the videos. This shows that the success or failure of implementing a video-based project is greatly influenced by the active role of the lecturer as a facilitator and mentor (Ya'ar, 2025). Contractive Feedback is considered to be beneficial by the majority of respondents with the percentage of 64.5% and 9.7%. This indicates that video allows for reflection and improvement processes, while also enhancing social interaction in the learning process.

### 3.7 Challenges and obstacles

Generally, the diagram indicates that the high neutral percentage (54.8%) of respondents did not explicitly state that they experienced difficulties. It suggests that they had doubts or uncertainty about whether their difficulties were significant. Meanwhile, 38.7% of respondents encountered technical difficulties in making a video. Therefore, it is really important to have technical assistance and training in the use of video equipment (editing, lighting, cameras) to reduce technical gaps.

To gain deeper insights into students' experiences and challenges with video-based projects in the *Speaking for General Communication* course, semi-structured interviews were conducted with six first-semester students. Thematic analysis revealed five key areas of concern: psychological challenges, technical difficulties, content creation, time management, and assessment pressure.

#### 1) Psychological challenges: anxiety and confidence

Video creation as part of the speaking task in English language learning presents complex challenges for students. Several students expressed anxiety and self-doubt while recording their speaking videos.

**Student 1:** *My biggest challenge to accomplish the task is to manage my anxiety and self confidence when talking in front of camera.*

**Student 2:** *The challenge is the place. I need a supportive and comfortable place to take the video.*

**Student 3:** *The biggest challenge I faced while creating the video for the speaking assignment was managing my nervousness. Speaking in front of a camera can be intimidating, and I found it difficult to express my thoughts clearly while trying to maintain a confident demeanor.*

**Student 4:** *The biggest challenge towards this project is my biggest expectation towards myself. I expected that my videos would be different from others.*

**Student 5:** *The device became my biggest challenge to create a video. I don't have enough devices to support the accomplishment of editing the video.*

**Student 6:** *My biggest challenge was creating a script. Sometimes, I lose my idea to arrange the good scripts.*

The results of interviews with six students show that each individual faces different obstacles, ranging from psychological aspects, technical issues, to resource limitations. Two students (Student 1 and Student 3) expressed that managing anxiety and lack of confidence when speaking in front of the camera is their biggest challenge. Other students (Student 2 and Student 5) mentioned external constraints related to the environment and equipment. This challenge highlights the importance of creating a supportive learning environment and providing access to technology. Lecturers and educational institutions need to consider providing alternative assignments or technical support for students with limited resources.

Moreover, student 4 stated that their main challenge comes from high personal expectations regarding the quality of the videos. He wants his video to be different from the others. This indicates a high level of intrinsic motivation, but it can also lead to excessive personal pressure. Lecturers need to provide positive reinforcement for the process, not just the final result, so that excessively high personal standards do not burden students. Then, Student 6 mentioned that the difficulty in writing scripts or manuscripts became their biggest challenge, especially when they ran out of ideas. This difficulty indicates the need for guidance during the pre-production stage, such as brainstorming ideas, creating a script outline, or wisely utilizing AI as supporting technologies.

## 2) Technical and environmental constraints?

Technical barriers emerged as a recurring theme. Students faced challenges not only with equipment but also with the editing process and environment.

**Student 1:** *I can create my video without any technical difficulties.*

**Student 2:** *Yes, I felt difficulties in the editing process. I was not skillful enough to use the video editor application.*

**Student 3:** *Yes, I encountered some technical difficulties, particularly with editing. I struggled with using editing software effectively, which made the process more time-consuming than I anticipated. Additionally, I had some issues with recording difficulty, as I had to redo several takes due to background noise.*

**Student 4:** *I got terrible in the editing process. Then, the network connection was insufficient to support the tasks.*

**Student 5:** *Yes, I have no enough device to support my project*

**Student 6:** *Yes, I only have a basic skill of being editor. It's little bit difficult to attach some multimedia at the same time. Then, when I used premium AI application, I have to pay it.*

Based on the results of this interview, it can be concluded that the majority of students encounter various technical difficulties, most of which are related to mastering video editing and the limitations of technological resources. This indicates that digital literacy is not evenly distributed among students, especially in the use of video editing applications.

In addition, the availability of devices and infrastructure, such as adequate laptops and stable internet connections, is also a determining factor in the success of digital-based tasks.

### 3) Scriptwriting and content development

The students' engagement with scriptwriting revealed a spectrum of experiences, indicating both the pedagogical potential and the difficulties associated with this task.

**Student 1:** *Yeah, I really had difficulties in designing a content and script based on proper grammatical structures. So, it takes a lot of time to make it.*

**Student 2:** *I didn't think that making a script was difficult. Nowadays, AI really helps us to make a good script. I used ChatGPT to create scripts.*

**Student 3:** *I did have some difficulties. I structured the script or content for the video. It was challenging to organize my ideas coherently and ensure that I covered all the necessary points within the time limit. I spent a lot of time revising my script to make it better.*

**Student 4:** *I think it's just so so. I used to create scripts through AI.*

**Student 5:** *I can create a scripts even it doesn't looks good.*

**Student 6:** *I felt that I have lost my idea when creating scripts or content. I tried to discuss it with my friends first.*

Based on the results of interviews with the six students, variations were found in their experiences while creating video scripts. Three of six students admitted to having difficulty in creating scripts. Student 1 stated that he faced significant difficulties in designing content and scripts, particularly in using the correct grammatical structure. This causes the scriptwriting process to take a considerable amount of time. Student 3 also faced similar challenges, particularly in organizing ideas in a structured manner and ensuring that all important points could be conveyed within the available time constraints. He admitted that he had to revise the script several times to achieve the desired result. Student 6 showed obstacles in terms of creativity, mentioning that they felt lost for ideas while composing content, so they had to discuss it first with their friends to gain inspiration.

On the other hand, some students claim they do not have much difficulty. Student 2 stated that currently, with the help of technology like ChatGPT, the process of scriptwriting has become easier. He utilizes artificial intelligence (AI) to create a good script. A similar sentiment was expressed by Student 4, who felt that the scriptwriting process was not too difficult because they were used to using AI assistance. Meanwhile, Student 5 stated that he was able to create the script, although he admitted that the quality of the result was not very good.

These results show that the main challenges faced by students in scriptwriting include limitations in language structure, difficulties in organizing ideas coherently, and a lack of inspiration while writing. However, a new phenomenon has also emerged, namely the tendency of students to utilize AI technology as a writing aid. Two out of six students explicitly mentioned using AI (such as ChatGPT) to help them draft their manuscripts. This suggests that technology is increasingly playing a significant role in the creation of academic and creative content.

#### 4) Time allocation to finish the project

When the students were asked about the time provided for completing the project, responses varied. Four out of six students (Students 1, 4, 5, and 6) agreed that the given time was adequate.

**Student 1:** *Yes, the teacher gave enough time to do the project.*

**Student 2:** *It's better for teacher to extend the time.*

**Student 3:** *I felt the time given to complete the project was somewhat limited. I suggest the teacher give us extra time.*

**Student 4:** *We got enough time to do it.*

**Student 5:** *The time given is enough. A week is enough to do short videos.*

**Student 6:** *I think, the teacher gives us enough time to complete the task.*

In the project-based learning process, providing adequate time becomes one of the important factors that influence students' work outcomes. Based on interviews with six students, a variety of responses were obtained regarding the adequacy of the time given by the lecturer for completing the video project assignment. Most respondents, specifically four of the six students (Students 1, 4, 5, and 6), stated that the time allocated by the lecturer was sufficient. Student 1 and Student 4 directly stated that the allocated time was sufficient to complete the project. Student 5 added that one week is a realistic timeframe to complete the short video, while Student 6 also stated that the available time aligns with the workload. These findings indicate that the majority of students feel capable of managing their time and completing projects within the specified deadlines. This may indicate that the time planning by the lecturers is in line with the capacity and work rhythm of most students.

However, some students feel time is limited. Two students (Student 2 and Student 3) expressed different views. Student 2 suggested that the deadline must be extended. Student 3 expressed that the given time feels somewhat limited. Several factors, such as the level of technical ability, other task loads, or the degree of perfectionism of each individual likely influence this difference of opinion. Student 3, for example, might need more time to refine the video details to meet their own expectations or the standards set by the lecturer.

#### 5) Pressure from assessment and teacher expectations

All six students admitted feeling some form of pressure related to grading and teacher expectations.

**Student 1:** *Yes, I felt nervous when I think my project will be evaluated.*

**Student 2:** *Yes, this feeling arises because I wanted to give the best performance and fulfill my teacher's standards.*

**Student 3:** *Yes, I felt pressure from my teacher's expectation. I want to meet her standards and deliver good performance.*

**Student 4:** *Yup! Because I make a good project, I hope my teacher gives me a good score*

**Student 5:** *Of course. As one of the active students, I believe that the teacher expected more about my video. So, I have to do my best.*

**Student 6:** *Yeah, I hope the teacher gave me a good score. So, I felt nervous to do the project. For examples; I have to take video several times.*

Project-based learning often becomes a formative yet challenging experience for students. One important aspect to investigate is the psychological pressure felt by students during the task completion process, particularly due to the assessment and expectations from lecturers. Based on the results of interviews with six students, several common patterns emerge regarding their perceptions of the pressure.

All respondents admitted to feeling pressure or nervousness while working on the project due to the lecturer's evaluation. This feeling of pressure manifests in various forms, such as nervousness about the evaluation results. Student 1 explicitly stated that they feel nervous because their project will be evaluated. Then, the other students express their pressure due to the lecturer's standards and hope to achieve good grades, which ultimately creates additional pressure. Student 6 even provided a concrete example, which was having to record the video multiple times to achieve the best results.

Furthermore, the sources of pressure come from two directions: internally, which is the drive to achieve the best results, the desire to earn high grades, and the sense of responsibility towards one's self-image as an active student. Externally, the standards and expectations of the lecturer as an evaluator, as well as the project evaluation structure that is the focus of students' attention. These findings suggest that lecturers' evaluations and academic expectations have a significant impact on students' psychological well-being. On one hand, this pressure can serve as motivation to achieve optimal results.

The research results that have been described above show that video-based projects can provide opportunities and chances for students to learn independently, collaboratively and reflectively. This aligns with the constructivist theory, which emphasizes the active involvement of students in the learning process. Additionally, this video-based project has been shown to improve their language skills. Navigating a technologically advanced world where English serves as the primary language of communication can be challenging without proficiency in English (Yoestara & Ismail, 2022). Furthermore, although the research results indicate that video-based projects can enhance student learning outcomes, self-confidence, and motivation, various challenges remain, particularly in the use or application of digital media in the learning process. Training and guidance should still be provided to ensure the learning process runs as expected.

#### **4. Conclusions**

Based on the research results through questionnaires and interviews with first-semester students of the English Department at IAIN Lhokseumawe, it is shown that the implementation of video-based projects in speaking for general communication lessons has a significant positive impact on the learning process and outcomes of the students. The results of this study indicate that the implementation of

video-based projects significantly contributes to the improvement of students' speaking competence, both in linguistic and affective aspects. Students showed improvement in terms of pronunciation, fluency, comprehension, and confidence in speaking English. Furthermore, the results also showed that video-based projects contribute to the development of other skills, such as creativity, technical abilities (editing, scriptwriting), and understanding of sentence structure and real-life contexts. These findings align with the principles of the Merdeka Curriculum, which emphasizes meaningful learning experiences and fosters independent learning. However, the implementation of this method also reveals several challenges, including limited technological facilities, a lack of digital literacy, and emotional pressure associated with the production and assessment processes. These findings suggest the need for structural and pedagogical support to optimize the implementation of video-based projects in higher education, particularly in foreign language learning. Thus, video-based projects can be positioned as one of the potential innovative strategies to enhance the quality of English language learning.

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