



CHI'E Vol. 12 (2) (2024)

Chi'e: Jurnal Pendidikan Bahasa Jepang

Terindeks Sinta 3

<https://journal.unnes.ac.id/journals/chie/index>



Project-Based Learning (PjBL) Mini Drama to Enhance Motivation and Japanese Communication Skills of Tourism Students

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Info Artikel

Abstract

Article History:
Received August 2024
Approved October 2024
Published October 2024

Keywords:
Project Based Learning;
Student's motivation;
Communication skills; Mini
Drama

This study examines how project-based learning (PjBL), specifically through mini-drama, can enhance Japanese oral communication skills and cultural understanding among students in the tourism program at Garut University. The mini drama focused on contrasting habits of Japanese and Indonesian tourists within hospitality contexts and was performed during the program's annual event. The 25-minute drama comprised three segments, each with distinct storylines and conflicts. Utilizing a qualitative descriptive approach, this study explores the implementation of PjBL through mini-drama projects in Basic Japanese and Advanced Tourism Japanese courses. Students' speaking skills were evaluated with a project assessment rubric, covering stages from initial project work to final performance. Data were collected through observations, field results, and student feedback on the Mini-Drama PjBL. Analysis revealed that PjBL significantly improved students' fluency, accuracy, and confidence in tourism-related Japanese, particularly in using respectful language (keigo) and formal language (teineigo). Students responded positively to PjBL, noting increased motivation, confidence, cultural understanding, and collaborative skills across student levels. This study suggests implications for curriculum development and Japanese language pedagogy in tourism programs and contributes to research on PjBL's effectiveness in Japanese language education.

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E-ISSN 2685-6662
P-ISSN 2252-6250

INTRODUCTION

Japanese language is one of the important assets in the tourism industry in Indonesia, especially Japanese in the fields of hospitality, tourist destinations, and travel. Based on data from the Jakarta Central Bureau of Statistics in 2015-2019, tourist visits from Japan ranked third in number and increased every year with an average number of 200,000 people (BPS Jakarta, 2019). This fact proves that Japanese language skills are a valuable resource for tourism industry players. Mastery of communication in Japanese not only facilitates interactions between Japanese tourists and tourism staff and local residents, but also improves the quality of service of workers in the tourism industry (Kanah, 2021; Kusumarini et al., 2021; Putri & Wijaya, 2023).

Indonesia needs to be agile in responding to the shifting global tourism trends towards unique experiences such as solo travel, virtual tourism, and staycations. Moreover, health, hygiene, safety, and service quality have become top priorities for tourists. Tourism industry management must be cautious in opening new destinations to maintain Indonesia's tourism reputation (Adiatma, Rukma, Ramdila, 2023). An example of this is the application of the Japanese language in hospitality services in Indonesian hotels. Hotel staff who interact directly with guests are required to be able to communicate effectively using the polite variety of *keigo* (respectful language variety). (Meidariani & Meilantari, 2018; Kusumarini et al., 2021). When hotel staff are not appropriate in the use of language varieties and the use of body language or gestures such as the use of *ojigi* (bowing), this can cause misunderstanding and discomfort for Japanese guests (Kusumarini & Zuraida, 2022). Thus, language and culture are two sides that cannot be separated, understanding both is very important in the realm of tourism so that students have the knowledge that can optimize services to Japanese tourists (Herniwati, Judiasri, Aneros, 2018; Kusumarini et al., 2021; Putri & Wijaya, 2023).

The need for Japanese language skills in the tourism environment has established Japanese as one of the compulsory elective

courses offered in tourism study programs in Indonesia (Kanah, 2021; Kusumarini et al., 2021; Putri & Wijaya, 2023). This is done to equip students with adequate communication skills. However, based on previous research (Kusumarini et al., 2021; Kanah et al., 2023), it was found that Japanese language learning in tourism study programs still faces several challenges. One of the problems that arise is the lack of student interest in the course. This is caused by several factors, such as monotonous learning methods and lack of material linkage to the world of work in the tourism industry (Kusumarini et al., 2021; Kanah et al., 2023).

To overcome these problems, innovation is needed in Japanese language learning methods in tourism study programs. One method that can be applied is *Project Based Learning* (PjBL). Project Based Learning (PjBL) is a student-centered learning model by actively collaborating, problem solving, critical and creative thinking. PjBL provides real learning experiences by working on relevant projects, designing and implementing their own projects, working together in groups, solving problems, and thinking critically and creatively (Yujobo, Gama, Makima, 2016; Mikouchi et al., 2018; Najooan et al., 2023). The PjBL method emphasizes active and collaborative learning so that students are involved in projects that are relevant to the real world (Mikouchi et al., 2018).

According to Janti (2021), the application of PjBL in Japanese language learning in tourism asked students to create a *digital storytelling* project. In this project, students can create a short video that tells their experiences when interacting with Japanese tourists or create a tourism promotion video in Japanese. Through this project, students can practice their ability to speak, write, and communicate effectively in Japanese, and improve their understanding of Japanese culture (Kanah et al., 2023). PjBL in Japanese language teaching can be carried out in the form of *gallery walks* that can increase interest in learning, creativity, cooperation, and foster courage (Kanah et al., 2021). In addition, the application of PjBL in the form of *role-play* is carried out every class meeting that discusses

varieties of respectful Japanese in the context of hospitality (Kusumarini et al., 2021; Janti, 2021; Putri & Wijaya, 2023).

Various implementations of PjBL in language learning can take the form of drama performance that focuses on creating and performing with a drama performance approach (Bessadet, 2022; Vaishnavi & Ajit, 2023). Positions students in PjBL mini drama to play an active role in the whole process, from planning, script writing, rehearsal, to performance. PjBL mini drama can be an effective method in language learning, as it gives students the opportunity to improve speech, improve overall language skills, develop creativity and imagination, improve collaboration skills, and increase learning motivation (Holman, 2022; Bessadet, 2022; Vaishnavi & Ajit, 2023; Nguyen, 2023).

The implementation of PjBL discussed in this study is in the form of a short drama or mini drama for undergraduate tourism study program students at Garut University. PjBL Mini drama applied as a final evaluation project or final practical exam. The theme of the mini drama was hotel conversations because based on considerations regarding the many offers of internship and workforce programs in Japan for Indonesians, one of which is in the field of hotels and restaurants (Tombalisa, Fathurachmi & Wirawan, 2022). This study examines the effectiveness of the application of PjBL methods in improving Japanese communication skills, learning motivation, collaboration skills, and self-confidence of tourism study program students through mini drama. In addition, it analyzes students' perceptions of the application of this method. Thus, this study is expected to fill the gap in project-based learning methods and make a new contribution to the development of Japanese language learning methods, especially in the field of tourism.

METHOD

This research uses a qualitative approach, carried out by processing descriptive data sources. The type of data used is primary data with data sources of questionnaire results, interviews, and documentation of the implementation of PjBL mini drama. obtained from students who choose Japanese language courses. Data collection needs analysis obtained through interviews and the distribution of digital questionnaires. The questionnaire instrument with a Likert scale was filled in by students after the implementation of PjBL mini drama was completed (Creswell & Garrett, 2008).

Furthermore, data collection techniques using data in the form of notes, transcripts, journal articles, books, newspapers, and so on related to research problems (Creswell & Garrett, 2008; Kanah et al., 2023). The students involved in the mini-drama project were students of the tourism study program at Garut University in semesters 2, 4, 6, and 8 who took Basic Japanese and Advanced Tourism Japanese courses. Of the total 25 students who took both courses, only 12 students were selected to be involved in the drama performance project, because the other 13 students had been involved in other projects. Students were divided into groups and assigned to develop a mini drama *script* and stage requirements. The mini drama or short drama was chosen based on a short duration of about 25 minutes. This provision was given by the committee of the annual event held by the tourism study program. During the PjBL process, students collaborate with group members and between batches, conduct online data searches, and consult with lecturers. The questions asked in the questionnaire and interview are shown in Table 1.

Table 1. Likert scale questionnaire questions

Question Topic	Question
Questions related to PjBL Mini Drama Implementation	Q1.I feel that PjBL mini drama makes learning Japanese more interesting. Q2.I am more motivated to learn Japanese through PjBL mini drama than conventional method. Q3.PjBL mini drama helped me understand Japanese vocabulary and grammar better. Q4.I feel more confident using Japanese after participating in PjBL mini drama. Q5.PjBL mini drama provides an opportunity to practice speaking Japanese naturally.
Questions related to Benefits of PjBL Mini Drama	Q6.PjBL mini drama improved my ability to understand Japanese conversation. Q7.Through PjBL mini drama, I learned about Japanese culture in more depth. Q8.PjBL mini drama improved my ability to work together in a team. Q9.PjBL mini drama helped me develop my creativity in using Japanese.
Questions related to constraints and suggestions for PjBL Mini Drama	Q10.I find it difficult to manage my time for the mini drama project. Q11.I feel less confident in acting in Japanese. Q12.I still need guidance from the lecturer in doing the mini drama project. Q13.My obstacles in carrying out mini drama can be resolved thanks to the help and support from lecturers, seniors, and juniors.

In addition to using the questionnaire technique, in-depth interviews were conducted with 12 students. In part, an interview is an interaction using questions and answers with or without using a *guide*, between the interviewer and the informant while meeting face to face to obtain data in accordance with the research objectives. The questions asked were shown in Table 2.

Table 2. Questions in Interviews with Students

No	Interview Questions
1	What is the name of the project you will be working on?
2	How long will it take to complete this project?
3	How do I prepare for this project to run smoothly?
4	With the chosen mini drama theme, what difficulties did you experience in

	the process of working on the mini drama final project?
5	What computer tools or applications are required?
6	What are the references that can be used as references for this project?
7	What are your impressions and suggestions about PjBL Mini Drama to improve the quality of future PjBL?

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

PjBL Mini Drama Implementation Results

PjBL mini drama is a final practical exam project in basic Japanese and advanced Japanese for Tourism. The plan for PjBL mini drama was discussed at the 5th meeting with students taking Advanced Japanese for Tourism, communication, and basic Japanese courses. Although the name of the course is Advanced

Japanese for Tourism, the material taught is equivalent to Japanese JF Standard Level A2 (JLPT N4). Lecturers and students formulated together the stages and timeline of the final exam output plan in the form of a mini drama project. The first step is to divide the group of students then students and lecturers together determine the theme, setting, and topic that will be presented in the mini drama. Students are divided into three groups and given different mini-drama themes. The themes of the mini-dramas that will be performed are *Nihon Go de Chekku In no Kaiwa*, *Indonesia de Suido o nomanai de kudasai*, and *Toire peepaa*. With a working time of about 3 months, students divide their respective tasks and exchange ideas in working on the script as a narrator, the role of hotel staff, and Japanese tourists.

Before starting to write the script, students are first equipped with knowledge about the differences between Japanese and Indonesian customs and gestures. Then, students will choose interesting customs and start translating them

into Japanese that they have learned. After that, the script will be discussed again with the lecturer. After the script writing is completed, students are given knowledge about preparation before starting drama practice and before starting the performance. For example, understanding the importance of vocalizing.

After the division of tasks, students decided on the title of the mini drama, *Hoteru no Furontodesuku no Kaiwa*, meaning hotel front desk conversation.

The mini drama with a hospitality theme is divided into 3 story segments with different conflicts. At the beginning and end of each segment, the narrator will explain the purpose in the context of Japanese language and culture using Indonesian. This is done so that the audience who hardly knows Japanese can understand the intent and purpose of the mini drama performance. Table 3 are 1 mini drama scripts sample made by students carefully as a guideline for drama performance.

Table 3. Sample of Mini Drama Script

Theme:		
Cast	にほんご Japanese (<i>Nihon go</i>)	インドネシアご Indonesia (<i>Indonesia Go</i>)
Tourist	すみません、薬屋はどこですか。お腹が痛くなります。 (<i>sumimasen, kusuri ya wa doko desuka? onaka ga itakunarimasukara</i>)	(Excuse me, where is the pharmacy? This is giving me a stomachache)
Hotel's Staff	はい、あります。コンビニの近くにあります。ここから5分であるいていきます。 お客様は辛い食べ物を名仕上がりましたか。 (<i>hai, arimasu. konbini no chikaku ni arimasu. koko kara 5 fun de aruite ikimasu. okyakusama wa karai tabemono o meishiagarimashitaka?</i>)	(Yes, there is. It is located near the minimarket. It is only a five-minute walk from here. Do customers eat spicy food?)
Tourist	いいえ、辛い食べ物はたべませんでしたけど、水を飲んだだけです。 聞きたいんですが。	(No, I don't eat spicy food, but I only drink water. I want to ask

	インドネシアで水道は飲みますか。 <i>(Iie , karai tabemono wa tabemasendeshita kedo , mizu o nonda dakedesu.</i> <i>Anoo, kikitaindesuga. indoneshia de suidou wa nomemasuka?)</i>	Is tap water in Indonesia drinkable?)
Hotel's Staff	大変申し訳ないですが、インドネシアで水道は飲みません。危ないですから。 <i>(taihen mōshiwakenaidesuga , indoneshia de suidō wa nomemasen . abunai desukara)</i>	(Sorry, you can't drink from the tap in Indonesia. Because it's dangerous.)
Tourist	そうなんですか。日本と違いますね。日本では水道が飲みます。 <i>(Sounan Desu Ka. nihon to chigaimasune. Nihon de wa suidou ga nomemasu)</i>	(Oh I see. It's different from Japan, huh? In Japan, we can drink tap water.)
Hotel's Staff	お客様は病院まで連れていらっしゃいますか。私も行きます。 <i>(Jya, okyakusama wa byouin made tsurete irasshaimasenka? watashi mo ikimasu)</i>	(Would you mind if I take you to the hospital? I will also accompany you there.)
Tourist	いいですか。すみません。おねがいします。 <i>(Iidesuka. sumimasen. Onegaishimasu)</i>	(It's okay? Sorry, Please)
Hotel's Staff	少々お待ちください。 運転者さんはロビーで止まります。 はい、お客様車の中でどうぞ。 <i>(shoushou omachi kudasai . untensha san wa robī de tomarimasu.</i> <i>hai, okkyakusama. kuruma no naka de dōzo)</i>	(Please wait a moment. The driver will stop at the lobby. Yes, please get in the passenger car.)
Tourist	ありがとうございました <i>(arigatōgozaimashita)</i>	(Thank you so much)

The first segment is titled *Nihon Go de Chekku In no Kaiwa*, meaning hotel check-in conversation in Japanese. This section shows how to check in a hotel using Japanese, played by 1 Indonesian receptionist who can speak Japanese and 2 Japanese tourists who will check in. After the end of segment 1, two narrators

explain to the audience about the important scenes in the mini drama. Invite the audience together to state simple sentences in Japanese and teach the gestures.

After the division of tasks, students determined the title of the mini drama, *Hoteru no Furontodesuku no Kaiwa*, meaning hotel front desk

conversation. Figure 1 below are example of Presentation Slide Featured in Mini Drama.

Figure 1. Example of Presentation Slide Featured in Mini Drama



The second segment tells the story of a Japanese tourist who asked the hotel staff for help because of a stomachache caused by drinking tap water. This segment explains the difference between Japanese and Indonesian habits when drinking water because in Japan tap water is very clean with its purity and minerals. Unlike in Indonesia where tap water must be cooked first. Then the third segment, featuring two Japanese tourists who asked and asked for help to hotel staff about the condition of the toilet in the room. This segment tells about the differences between Japanese and Indonesian habits in the toilet. Japanese people who are accustomed to throwing used toilet paper into the toilet in Indonesia is a problem.

The mini drama was performed at the 12th meeting of Japanese class, coinciding with the annual Travel Mart event held by the tourism study program, Garut university. Figure 2 below are the documentation of mini drama performances.

Figure 2. Mini Drama Performance at Travel Mart Event of UNIGA Tourism Study Program



The first group performance was filled by the role of tourists from two second semester students and 1 receptionist from 1 8th semester student. The mini-drama performance from group 1 was in accordance with the script they made, with a little improvisation in their roles. In this segment, the difference in Japanese language communication skills between 2nd semester students and 8th semester students was seen. The 8th semester students who played the role of receptionists showed more confidence in speaking Japanese with the right gestures, the right volume, more natural Japanese pronunciation, and the use of difficult language varieties (*keigo*) compared to students who played the role of tourists. This is natural because 8th semester students have done an internship in the service sector for 6 months, so their confidence is higher.

The second segment of the mini drama was played by two students from semester 4 d as tourists and two students from semester 6 as receptionists. In this performance, there was no difference in communication skills in Japanese for tourism. This is because they have the same level of Japanese language skills.

Finally, the third segment involves students in semester 2, semester 4, semester 6, and semester 8 (one student each). In this segment, variations in Japanese tourism communication skills are seen among them. Students in semesters 4, 6, and 8 are superior in their language variety and body language skills that are in accordance with the SOP for services in the international hospitality sector and in Japan.

Overall, the results of observations on the performance of the mini-drama project show that

students who have passed the basic Japanese language course are able to play roles more naturally and develop drama scripts in performances (not textual).

Perception of Tourism Students on PjBL Mini drama

This section shows the results of the questionnaire regarding the implementation, benefits, and obstacles in implementing PjBL Mini drama. The answers to the 13 questions are displayed through a diagram showing the results of the 12 students who participated in the mini drama project.

Figure 3 below shows that the mini drama was successfully implemented. Students argued that after implementing the mini drama with their peers, their motivation to learn in the tourism study program increased. In addition, they feel more confident and less afraid to perform in public, as mini dramas provide an opportunity to practice and a place to prove that they can do it based on their creativity and imagination (Vaishnavi & Ajit, 2023; Nguyen, 2023).

Figure 3. Answers to questions about the implementation of mini dramas

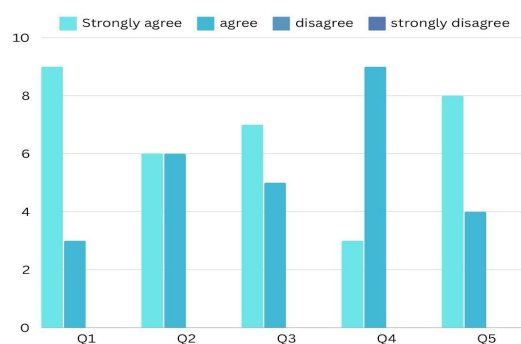
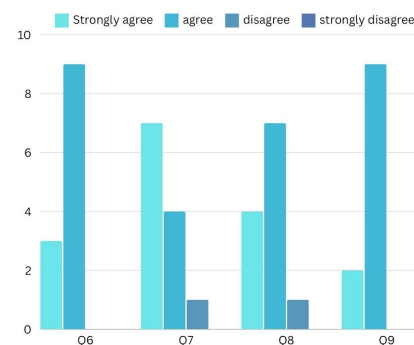


Figure 4 below shows that they can directly practice proper pronunciation, intonation, and facial expressions according to the roles specified in the drama (Holman, 2022; Humaira et al., 2022; Nguyen, 2023). In addition, mini dramas are not only useful for improving language skills, but also include cultural understanding that is relevant to the needs of the hospitality industry (Meidariani & Meilantari, 2018; Kapoh, 2019; Putri & Wijaya, 2023).

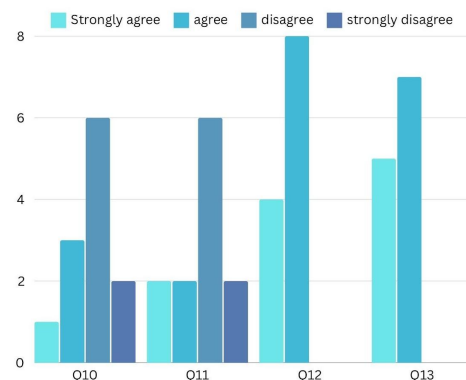
Understanding of Japanese culture, such as politeness values, greetings to guests, how to dress can be understood not only by students who take tourism courses but by other students who watch this mini drama performance.

Figure 4. Answers to the question about the benefits of the mini drama



Students who participated in this mini drama have a diversity of Japanese language abilities and have different obstacles. Figure 5 shows that the obstacle experienced during the process is the difficulty of finding the right time to practice together. This is because each batch has a density of activities on campus and off campus.

Figure 5. Responses to the question about the constraints of mini drama



In line with the results of in-depth interviews with 12 students who participated in the mini drama, it shows that there are broadly similar hypotheses from the results of questionnaires and interviews. It's just that in the interview results, the answers of each student are more detailed than the results of the questionnaire.

The results of the interview on how to prepare a mini-drama project showed that

deciding on a project timeline and preparing the project simultaneously can make the work easier. Working on a project involving students from various classes makes them feel like they can have a conducive discussion and maintain good relations between seniors and juniors. The results of this interview are in line with the findings of Mikouchi et al (2018) Najoan, Gama, and Makikama (2023) which explain that the PjBL method can improve collaboration skills well so that it improves the ability to build relationships between seniors and juniors in making schedules, determining job descriptions, writing scripts, to doing dirty rehearsals together 5 times.

In addition to asking about preparation, the difficulties experienced by students in working on the mini-drama project also became an interview point. Most students answered that the difficulties experienced were in terms of managing practice time due to the different activities of each class on campus. In addition to difficulties related to the schedule, they also had difficulty expressing facial expressions with typical Japanese gestures and pronouncing various keigo languages.

Based on the interview results, most students carried out mini-drama projects by taking references from lesson modules and materials provided by lecturers, blog articles and journal video blogs that discuss the variety of Japanese language and culture.

The impression obtained from the interview results showed that students were greatly helped in increasing their self-confidence through the PjBL learning method. For students, PjBL mini drama is an interesting project because it makes them eliminate anxiety and become less hesitant to speak Japanese in public. PjBL mini drama is considered very beneficial for learning because they can freely have the experience of determining their own time, spelling of scripts, the process of collecting ideas with juniors, seniors and classmates.

In addition to impressions, suggestions from students were also obtained from the results of interviews. Students gave suggestions that the next mini-drama should have a long duration of around 1 hour. Then in the future they want the

mini drama to be shown in special events with a more dramatic storyline by raising the theme of natural tourist attractions, museums, cafes and restaurants.

Based on the interview results, it can be seen that Students majoring in Japanese language and students majoring in tourism who study Japanese certainly have different learning abilities and motivations. Students of other majors, in this case tourism, often feel bored and less motivated by traditional learning methods. When there is no creativity in the teaching process, there may be obstacles to the development of their Japanese language skills. PjBL in the form of mini dramas can be a solution to focus on student engagement in the whole performance process, according to the findings of Bessadet (2022) dan Vaishnavi & Ajit (2023).

With a fairly long preparation, students use digital technology such as electronic dictionaries, AI, and videos found on the internet to facilitate student visualization of Japanese language and culture. The use of digital technology was involved in almost the entire process, from finding references for planning, script writing, rehearsal, to performance. This shows that utilizing digital technology can make the project easier (Vaishnavi & Ajit, 2023; Nguyen, 2023).

In working on the mini drama, students still need a lot of help from lecturers but, this mini drama provides a real learning experience by working on, designing, and implementing projects in collaboration in groups. Thus, the obstacles faced can be solved together by combining critical and creative thinking (Yujobo, Gama, Makima, 2016; Mikouchi et al., 2018; Najoan et al., 2023).

Thus, mini drama is able to improve students' abilities academically and self-development. Based on the data presented in the results section, mini drama can help reduce public speaking anxiety so that self-confidence gradually emerges. This is in accordance with the results of previous studies that show success in portraying characters and delivering dialog well can increase students' confidence in the target language (Bessadet, 2022; Holman, 2022;

Humaira et al., 2022; Nguyen, 2023; Vaishnavi & Ajit, 2023).

Combining language knowledge into an art form in the form of a mini drama performance shows interdisciplinary knowledge as a contemporary learning model approach. By choosing the Project Based Learning (PjBL) approach as a real learning experience and emphasizing the importance of social interaction, it also emphasizes feedback from students to fellow students, from students to lecturers, and from lecturers to students (Yujobo, Gama, Makima, 2016; Kanah et al., 2023; Najosan et al., 2023).

Based on the results of the questionnaire and interviews that have been presented above, feedback on the mini drama showed positive perceptions from both students and lecturers. But it does not mean that PjBL mini drama is the only perfect project for improving foreign language skills, especially Japanese. Feedback in the form of suggestions given by students is that they hope the mini drama will be continued with a long duration of about 1 hour. So that it can be shown in a special event with a more dramatic storyline. Then the suggestion for researchers to continue the research is expected to develop PjBL in drama that raises themes in other tourism fields such as natural attractions, museums, cafes and restaurants.

CONCLUSION

PjBL mini drama as a practice evaluation project makes learning Japanese more fun and interactive. The learning process does not only focus on speaking skills, but also involves other language skills such as reading, writing and listening. The drama performance can introduce students to different cultural contexts according to the storyline and the characters they play. Not only students' academic skills are improved, but also their personal development such as self-confidence, creative thinking, ability to collaborate, and careful problem solving.

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