



Article

JETLEE, Vol. 6(2), 246-258

© The Author(s) 2026

First published online September 23, 2026

<https://doi.org/10.47766/jetlee.v6i2.7692>

Implementing project-based learning with authentic materials in culinary vocational English: A case study on learning process and assessment

Rina Widiyanti

SMK Negeri 1 Sawoo, Ponorogo, Indonesia

Ana Maghfiroh

Universitas Muhammadiyah Ponorogo, Indonesia

Abstract

English learning in vocational education should support students' workplace communication and professional needs. However, classroom instruction is often disconnected from real-world vocational contexts. Therefore, contextual and meaningful learning approaches are needed, particularly in culinary vocational education. This study aimed to explore the implementation of Project-Based Learning (PjBL) using authentic materials in a culinary vocational English classroom and to examine the forms of project-based assessment used during the learning process. The study employed a qualitative case study design conducted in a tenth-grade culinary class at SMKN 1 Sawoo Ponorogo involving 35 students. Data were collected through classroom observations and semi-structured interviews and analysed using descriptive qualitative analysis. The findings showed that the implementation of Project-Based Learning using authentic materials created a more contextual and interactive learning environment for students. Through projects related to packaging labels, food presentation, and café operations, students were encouraged to connect English learning with workplace-oriented culinary contexts. The use of authentic materials also increased students' participation, communication, collaboration, and confidence during learning activities. In addition, project-based assessment through product assessment, portfolio assessment, and presentation activities supported students' learning development and communication skills. The study suggests that integrating Project-Based Learning and authentic materials may support more meaningful and workplace-oriented English learning in vocational education, particularly in culinary classrooms.

Keywords

Culinary, Vocational English, Project-Based Learning (PjBL), Authentic materials.

Introduction

English learning in vocational education requires instructional approaches that connect classroom activities with workplace communication and professional practice. For vocational students, English is not only learned as an academic subject, but also as a practical tool needed to support future careers and professional interaction. In culinary vocational education, students are expected to communicate in contexts related to hospitality, food services, customer interaction, and workplace collaboration.

Consequently, English instruction for culinary vocational students should not merely focus on general language competence, but also provide learning experiences that are relevant to authentic workplace situations (Guo et al., 2020). In addition to English for General Purposes (EGP), vocational students also require English for Specific Purposes (ESP) that is closely connected to their occupational field and future professional demands (Weijers et al., 2024).

Despite these needs, vocational students often experience difficulties in learning English because classroom instruction is frequently disconnected from real-life communication and professional practice. Many students have limited opportunities to use English meaningfully outside the classroom, which affects their confidence, vocabulary development, and speaking ability (Villarroel et al., 2024). In vocational classrooms, English learning may become less engaging when students perceive the materials as unrelated to their future careers and practical needs. As a result, teachers are challenged to design learning activities that are contextual, interactive, and relevant to students' vocational backgrounds. Instructional approaches that encourage active participation and authentic communication are therefore considered important in supporting vocational students' language development and workplace readiness (Krajcik et al., 2023).

One instructional approach that has received increasing attention in vocational English learning is Project-Based Learning (PjBL). PjBL is a student-centred learning approach that engages learners in collaborative projects and problem-solving activities connected to real-world situations (Loyens et al., 2023). Through project-based activities, students are encouraged to actively construct knowledge, develop communication skills, and apply language meaningfully within practical contexts. Previous studies have shown that PjBL can support the development of students' English proficiency, creativity, collaboration, and problem-solving abilities (Köpeczi-Bócz, 2024; Maghfiroh et al., 2024; Choustoulakis, Garas & Paraskeva, 2025; Weganofa, Herawati & Lutviana, 2024). In vocational education, PjBL is considered particularly relevant because it allows students to experience learning activities that simulate workplace practices and professional communication (Guo et al., 2020). By working on meaningful projects related to their vocational field, students may become more motivated and better prepared to use English in their future careers (Zhang & Ma, 2023).

In addition to project-based activities, the use of authentic materials is also important in vocational English learning because it helps students connect classroom learning with real-world communication. Authentic materials refer to learning resources derived from real-life contexts, such as menus, articles, recipes, advertisements, videos, and workplace documents used by native speakers or professionals in actual settings (Santos et al., 2023). In culinary education, authentic materials can provide students with exposure to language used in food preparation, restaurant services, and hospitality communication (Ladhifah & Arifin, 2025). Previous studies have reported that authentic materials may increase students' motivation, contextual understanding, and communicative competence because learners are exposed to realistic language use rather than simplified textbook examples (Mandarsari, 2023; Pinzón & Norely, 2020). Furthermore, authentic materials may encourage students to develop creativity, critical thinking, communication, and collaboration skills that are important in vocational education and workplace preparation (Sevara et al., 2023).

Although previous studies have highlighted the benefits of Project-Based Learning and authentic materials in English language teaching, limited attention has been given to how these approaches are implemented simultaneously in culinary vocational English classrooms. Most studies focus on general EFL contexts, while fewer studies specifically examine project-based learning practices that integrate authentic materials within vocational learning environments related to culinary education (Guo et al., 2020; Ladhifah & Arifin, 2025; Maghfiroh et al., 2024; Santos et al., 2023). In vocational education, particularly in culinary programs, English learning should not only develop students' general language competence but also prepare them to communicate in professional and workplace-related situations. Therefore, integrating Project-Based Learning with authentic materials may provide more contextual and meaningful learning experiences for vocational students.

Therefore, this study aims to explore: (1) the implementation of Project-Based Learning using authentic materials in culinary vocational English classrooms; (2) how Project-Based Learning is implemented for culinary vocational students and examines the forms of project-based assessment used during the learning process. By focusing on vocational English learning within culinary education, this study is expected to provide insights into how contextual and workplace-oriented learning activities can support students' English learning and professional preparation.

Method

Research Design

This study employed an instrumental qualitative case study design to explore the implementation of Project-Based Learning (PjBL) using authentic materials in a culinary vocational English classroom. An instrumental case study was considered appropriate because the classroom served as an information-rich case that enabled a deeper understanding of how Project-Based Learning integrated with authentic materials can support English learning in vocational education beyond the particular setting itself (Creswell & Creswell, 2017). The case examined in this study was a single-case design, in which the unit of analysis was the implementation of Project-Based Learning in one tenth-grade culinary English classroom at SMKN 1 Sawoo Ponorogo. The classroom consisted of 35 students.

Subject of the study

Participants were selected through purposive sampling. The tenth-grade culinary classroom was chosen because it had integrated Project-Based Learning with authentic materials as part of its regular English instruction, providing an appropriate setting to examine how this approach was implemented in a vocational context. The participants consisted of one English teacher and 35 students enrolled in the culinary vocational program. To gain a range of perspectives, six students were purposively selected for the interviews based on their level of participation during project activities and English proficiency, while the English teacher was interviewed as the key informant to provide insights into the planning, implementation, and assessment of the learning process.

Data Collection Method and Analysis

Data were collected through classroom observations and semi-structured interviews. The researcher acted as a non-participant observer throughout the learning process without taking part in classroom activities. Observations focused on how Project-Based Learning and authentic materials were implemented, students' participation and interaction, and the overall learning process. Field notes were used to document classroom events, teacher instructions, and students' responses. The researcher had no prior teaching or professional relationship with the school or the participants, thereby minimizing potential bias during the observation process.

In addition, semi-structured interviews were subsequently conducted with the English teacher and six selected students to gain deeper insights into their learning experiences and perceptions of Project-Based Learning using authentic materials. The student participants were purposively selected to capture diverse perspectives based on their participation during classroom activities. Each interview lasted approximately 20–30 minutes and was conducted in Indonesian to enable participants to express their experiences comfortably. All interviews were audio-recorded with participants' consent and transcribed verbatim before being translated into English for reporting purposes. The interview protocol focused on students' engagement, learning experiences, challenges encountered during project activities, and perceptions of project-based assessment.

The data were analysed using descriptive qualitative analysis. The observation notes and interview transcripts were read repeatedly and organized into several categories related to the implementation of Project-Based Learning, the use of authentic materials, student participation, and project-based assessment. The data were then interpreted descriptively to identify patterns and describe how Project-Based Learning was implemented within the culinary vocational English classroom.

To ensure the trustworthiness of the study, data triangulation was conducted by comparing findings obtained from classroom observations and interviews. This process helped the researchers obtain a more comprehensive understanding of the learning activities and participants' experiences during the implementation of Project-Based Learning using authentic materials.

Findings

The implementation of project-based learning using authentic materials

The implementation of Project-Based Learning (PjBL) in the culinary vocational classroom was conducted through several project activities related to culinary products, food presentation, and hospitality practices. Based on classroom observations, the teacher integrated authentic materials into English learning activities to help students connect classroom learning with workplace-related communication and real culinary contexts. The authentic materials used during the learning process included food packaging labels, menus, recipes, beverage products, food advertisements, and examples of restaurant promotional materials commonly found in culinary industries.

At the beginning of the lesson, the teacher introduced authentic examples of food packaging, menus, and product labels to students. The teacher explained English vocabulary and expressions commonly used in culinary and hospitality settings before students started working on their projects. During the observation, students appeared more interested when learning activities were connected to real products and situations familiar to their vocational field. Compared to conventional textbook-based learning, students participated more actively during classroom discussion and group activities.

One of the projects observed during the implementation of Project-Based Learning involved designing packaging labels for food and beverage products using English. Students worked collaboratively in groups to create product labels containing product names, ingredients, nutritional information, and short promotional descriptions. During the activity, students discussed vocabulary choices, spelling, and product presentation while comparing their work with authentic packaging examples provided by the teacher. Several students used dictionaries and mobile translation tools to identify appropriate English expressions related to culinary products.

Classroom observations showed that students were actively engaged during the project activity. Students interacted with their group members, shared ideas about label designs, and discussed how to make their products attractive to consumers. The classroom atmosphere became more interactive because students were directly involved in creating products related to their vocational practice. One student explained during the interview:

"I feel more interested because we learn English through projects related to cooking and food products, so it is easier to understand." (Student Interview 2)

Another project required students to present food products and explain them using English. In this activity, students displayed food products and described ingredients, preparation processes, taste, and serving techniques in front of the class. Based on classroom observations, several students initially appeared hesitant and lacked confidence when speaking English during presentations. Some students frequently paused while explaining their products and occasionally mixed Indonesian and English expressions.

However, the teacher continuously encouraged students to express their ideas without being overly concerned about grammatical accuracy. This classroom practice is in line with previous research indicating that Project-Based Learning creates a supportive learning environment in which students gradually build confidence through authentic tasks and collaborative activities (Almulla, 2020; Zhang & Ma, 2023). As the presentation activities progressed, students gradually became more confident in explaining their products and interacting with their classmates. Students also responded actively during question-and-answer sessions by asking questions related to food ingredients and product preparation. One student stated:

“Usually we only study from textbooks, but with menus and packaging labels we can learn vocabulary that is useful for culinary work.” (Student Interview 4)

The implementation of Project-Based Learning also involved a restaurant and café operation project. Students were assigned to design a simple café concept that included menu selection, food and beverage pairing, product promotion, and café layout design. During the activity, students used authentic menus and restaurant promotional materials as references for their projects. Classroom observations showed that students were able to connect English learning with workplace-related situations commonly found in culinary and hospitality industries. Through group discussions and collaborative project activities, students practiced communication, creativity, teamwork, and problem-solving skills while completing their projects. These classroom practices are consistent with previous studies showing that Project-Based Learning supports the development of collaborative, communicative, and problem-solving skills through authentic learning experiences (Guo et al., 2020; Zhang & Ma, 2023).

Overall, the findings showed that the implementation of Project-Based Learning using authentic materials created a more contextual and interactive learning environment for culinary vocational students. The use of authentic materials helped students understand how English can be applied in real culinary and hospitality contexts, while project-based activities encouraged students to participate more actively during the learning process.

Forms of project-based learning assessment

The findings showed that the teacher used several forms of assessment during the implementation of Project-Based Learning (PjBL) in the culinary vocational English classroom. Based on classroom observations and interviews, the assessment process focused not only on students' final products, but also on students' participation, creativity, communication skills, and project completion process during learning activities. The teacher assessed students continuously throughout the project activities by observing group discussions, classroom participation, presentations, and final project results.

One form of assessment used in the classroom was product assessment. In this assessment, students' final projects were evaluated based on the quality of the product, creativity, presentation, and completeness of information presented in English. For example, during the packaging label project, the teacher assessed students' ability to present product names, ingredients, nutritional information, and promotional descriptions appropriately in English. Based on classroom observations, students appeared highly motivated to improve their project designs because their products would be presented in front of the class. Such product-based assessment reflects authentic assessment practices commonly recommended in vocational education (Villarroel et al., 2024).

Another assessment form identified during the study was portfolio assessment. Students were asked to collect and organize their project work throughout the learning process, including product designs, menu plans, presentation drafts, recipes, and photos of their projects. The portfolio was used to document students' learning progress and project development during classroom activities. Based on observations, students frequently revised their work after receiving feedback from the teacher and classmates. This process encouraged students to improve both the content and presentation of their projects.

The teacher also implemented presentation assessment during classroom activities. In this assessment, students presented their projects orally in front of the class using English expressions related to culinary and hospitality contexts. During the observations, some students initially experienced difficulties speaking confidently in English. However, as the project activities progressed, students became more confident in explaining their products and responding to questions from classmates and the teacher. Based on interviews, students stated that presentation activities helped them improve communication skills and confidence in using English. One student explained:

“When presenting the project, I became more confident speaking English because we practiced directly in front of the class.” (Student Interview 1)

Another student stated:

“The assessment is not only about the final score, but also about teamwork and how we finish the project together.” (Student Interview 3)

The findings also showed that the teacher provided feedback continuously during project activities. During classroom observations, the teacher guided students while discussing project ideas, correcting vocabulary usage, and helping students improve pronunciation and presentation skills. This feedback process encouraged students to participate more actively and improve their project performance throughout the learning activities. This finding is consistent with previous studies highlighting the importance of continuous teacher guidance and feedback in supporting students' engagement and learning during Project-Based Learning (Almulla, 2020; Guo et al., 2020).

Overall, the findings indicated that project-based assessment in the culinary vocational classroom emphasized both the learning process and the final product. Through product assessment, portfolio assessment, and presentation assessment, students were encouraged to develop communication skills, creativity, collaboration, and confidence while completing projects related to culinary and hospitality contexts. The assessment process also helped students experience more contextual and meaningful English learning connected to their vocational field.

Discussion

The findings of this study indicate that the integration of Project-Based Learning (PjBL) and authentic materials provided a more contextualized and interactive learning experience for tenth-grade culinary vocational students. The implementation did not merely involve students in completing projects, but also connected English learning with culinary-related products, communication practices, and classroom performances. Four interrelated themes emerged from the findings: contextualizing English through authentic culinary materials, promoting learner engagement and confidence through collaborative project work, providing opportunities for vocational language practice through project tasks, and using project-based assessment and continuous feedback to support learning.

Contextualizing English through authentic culinary materials

One of the most prominent findings was the role of authentic materials in helping students connect English learning with situations relevant to their culinary specialization. The teacher introduced food packaging labels, menus, recipes, beverage products, advertisements, and restaurant promotional materials before students worked on their projects. These materials provided students with examples of English as it is used in culinary and hospitality-related contexts rather than presenting vocabulary and expressions only through conventional textbooks. Students' comments that they found menus and packaging labels useful for learning vocabulary related to culinary work further indicate that the relevance of the materials influenced how they perceived the learning activities.

This finding supports the argument that vocational English learning becomes more meaningful when instructional materials reflect learners' future professional contexts. [Alhusna and Suparmi \(2025\)](#), for example, reported that authentic resources such as reservation forms, brochures, service videos, and business emails could help vocational students become familiar with workplace communication. Similarly, [Natalia and Lastari \(2025\)](#) found that authentic materials in hospitality education could increase learner engagement while providing opportunities to develop communication skills through materials resembling those encountered in professional settings. Although their study focused on hospitality rather than culinary education, the findings are relevant because culinary students also encounter menus, promotional materials, product information, and customer-oriented communication as part of their vocational environment.

The present findings also correspond with research conducted specifically in culinary vocational education. [Ladhifah and Arifin \(2024\)](#) found that Project-Based Learning improved tenth-grade culinary students' comprehension of English recipe texts by connecting language learning with culinary-related project activities. Likewise, [Arumsari et al. \(2025\)](#) emphasized the importance of contextualized ESP materials for culinary vocational students and demonstrated how project-based activities can support active and collaborative learning. The present study extends these findings by showing that authentic culinary materials can be incorporated across several types of project activities, including packaging labels, product presentations, and café-related projects.

However, authenticity alone does not necessarily guarantee effective learning. Authentic materials may contain vocabulary and expressions that are more complex than those normally found in textbooks. [Natalia and Lastari \(2025\)](#), for instance, identified the complexity of authentic language as one of the challenges in implementing authentic materials in vocational education. In the present study, this potential difficulty was addressed through teacher explanation, vocabulary support, the use of dictionaries and translation tools, and continuous guidance during project activities. This suggests that the pedagogical value of authentic materials depends not only on their connection to real-world contexts but also on how teachers mediate their use in accordance with students' language proficiency.

Therefore, the contribution of authentic materials in this study was not simply their "real-world" character. Their value emerged because they were introduced as references and subsequently used by students to complete meaningful culinary-related projects. This combination allowed students to see a clearer relationship between English learned in the classroom and English potentially required in their vocational field.

Learner engagement, collaboration, and confidence through project work

A second important finding concerns students' engagement during PjBL activities. Classroom observations showed that students participated more actively when they worked with real culinary products and completed projects collaboratively. During the packaging-label activity, for example, students discussed vocabulary, spelling, product descriptions, and visual presentation with their group members. The café project similarly required students to negotiate menu choices, food and beverage combinations, promotional ideas, and café layouts. These activities created opportunities for students to use English while simultaneously working toward a concrete shared outcome.

This finding is consistent with [Mutiaraningrum et al. \(2024\)](#), who examined Indonesian vocational students' perceptions of PjBL and found generally positive attitudes toward project-based English learning. Their study also indicated a relationship between students' perceived benefits of English and their career aspirations, suggesting that vocational relevance can contribute to students' positive engagement with English learning. Similarly, [Amalia et al. \(2024\)](#) reported positive perspectives toward PjBL among vocational high school students, particularly because project activities provided opportunities for active involvement in the learning process.

The present findings provide a more classroom-based explanation of how such engagement may emerge. Rather than simply reporting positive attitudes toward PjBL, the observations showed specific forms of participation, including discussing vocabulary, sharing design ideas, solving project-related problems, revising work, and presenting products. In this respect, PjBL provided a social structure in which students had to interact with peers in order to complete the task. [Ismailia \(2024\)](#), for example, similarly demonstrated that vocational English projects could require students to use English for concrete production tasks, thereby creating opportunities for communication and collaboration.

Nevertheless, students' engagement was not uniform throughout the activities. During the initial product presentations, several students appeared hesitant, paused frequently, and sometimes mixed Indonesian and English. This finding is important because it indicates that PjBL does not immediately eliminate students' difficulties in speaking English. Instead, the project environment appeared to provide repeated opportunities for students to gradually become more comfortable using English. As the presentations progressed, students became more willing to explain their products and respond to questions from classmates and the teacher.

This gradual development of confidence is consistent with [Zhang and Ma \(2023\)](#), who highlighted the role of project-based learning in creating opportunities for students to develop confidence through collaborative and meaningful tasks. It also corresponds with [Muyassaroh and Prasetyowati \(2024\)](#), who found that project-based activities could provide vocational students with opportunities to practice speaking in more meaningful contexts. However, the present findings suggest that confidence development should be understood as a process rather than an immediate outcome of PjBL. Teacher encouragement appeared to be important because students were explicitly encouraged to communicate their ideas without becoming excessively concerned about grammatical accuracy.

Thus, the engagement observed in this study can be interpreted as the result of the interaction between three factors: the relevance of the project content, the collaborative structure of the tasks, and the supportive role of the teacher. The finding therefore extends previous research by illustrating that students' active participation was closely associated with projects that they could recognize as relevant to their culinary specialization.

Project-based tasks as opportunities for vocational language practice

The specific projects implemented in the classroom also demonstrate how PjBL can provide opportunities for students to practice English in vocationally meaningful situations. The packaging-label project required students to produce English text containing product names, ingredients, nutritional information, and promotional descriptions. The food-presentation project required students to explain ingredients, preparation processes, taste, and serving techniques. Meanwhile, the café project involved menu selection, food and beverage pairing, promotion, and café layout. Although these activities differed in their products, they shared a common characteristic: students had to use English to accomplish a concrete culinary-related task.

This finding is consistent with [Ladhifah and Arifin \(2024\)](#), whose study showed that PjBL could support culinary students' understanding of English recipe texts. The present study complements their findings by demonstrating that project-based culinary English can extend beyond recipe comprehension to other communicative purposes, including describing products, presenting information, and promoting food and beverage products. [Arumsari et al. \(2025\)](#) similarly demonstrated the potential of PjBL for developing contextualized ESP learning materials for culinary students. The findings can also be compared with [Ismailia \(2024\)](#), who implemented PjBL through promotional video production in vocational English. In both studies, students were required to produce a tangible output that had a communicative purpose. However, the present study differs in the range of project tasks and materials involved.

Rather than focusing on a single media product, students worked with several forms of culinary communication, including packaging labels, menus, recipes, food products, and restaurant promotional materials. This variation allowed students to encounter English for different purposes within the same vocational domain.

Similar patterns have been reported in tourism and hospitality education. [Syeba et al. \(2025\)](#) found that PjBL could provide vocational students with authentic learning experiences connected to tourism services and workplace requirements. Likewise, [Alhusna and Suparmi \(2025\)](#) emphasized the importance of exposing vocational learners to communication resources that resemble those encountered in their future workplaces. These findings support the interpretation that project-based vocational English is particularly valuable when the project outcome reflects a recognizable professional activity.

However, the present study should not be interpreted as demonstrating that students achieved full workplace competence. The evidence primarily shows that students were provided with opportunities to practice communication, collaboration, creativity, and problem-solving within classroom projects. These experiences may contribute to vocational preparation, but actual workplace competence would require further evidence from workplace settings, industry supervisors, or longitudinal assessment. This distinction is important because it prevents the findings from extending beyond what the classroom observations and interviews can substantiate.

Project-based assessment and continuous feedback for learning

The second major component of the findings concerns the assessment practices used during PjBL. The teacher did not rely exclusively on the final project product but used product assessment, portfolio assessment, presentation assessment, and continuous observation and feedback. This approach allowed assessment to capture different dimensions of students' performance throughout the project process. Product assessment focused on the quality, creativity, presentation, and completeness of information in students' final products. Portfolio assessment documented students' project development through designs, menu plans, presentation drafts, recipes, photographs, and revised work. Presentation assessment, meanwhile, focused on students' ability to communicate their project outcomes orally using English. These forms of assessment correspond with the principles of authentic assessment, which emphasize students' ability to demonstrate knowledge and skills through meaningful performance rather than relying solely on decontextualized tests.

This finding is consistent with [Villarroel et al. \(2024\)](#), who emphasized the value of authentic assessment for evaluating students' ability to apply knowledge and skills in meaningful situations. It also supports [Almulla's \(2020\)](#) argument that PjBL can integrate assessment into the learning process rather than treating assessment as an activity conducted only after instruction has finished. In the present study, assessment was embedded throughout project completion, allowing the teacher to observe students' participation, communication, collaboration, and product development.

The portfolio component is particularly important because students were required to document and revise their work. Rather than treating the first version of a project as the final outcome, students had opportunities to respond to teacher and peer feedback. This process reflects the developmental nature of project work and provides evidence of learning progression. The finding also reinforces the importance of formative feedback within PjBL. [Guo et al. \(2020\)](#) emphasized the role of feedback and instructional support in project-based learning, particularly because students may need guidance when managing complex tasks. The presentation assessment also had a relationship with students' developing confidence. Initially, some students experienced difficulty speaking English, but repeated opportunities to present their products and respond to questions appeared to make them more willing to communicate. This finding suggests that presentation assessment served a dual function: it provided evidence of learning while simultaneously creating another opportunity for language practice. Consequently, assessment was not separated from instruction but became part of the learning experience itself.

At the same time, project-based assessment requires teachers to evaluate several dimensions of performance. In the present study, the teacher considered product quality, creativity, communication, participation, collaboration, and project completion. Such assessment can provide a richer picture of students' learning than a single written test, but it also requires clear criteria and sustained teacher observation. Therefore, the implementation of project-based assessment should be supported by transparent rubrics and clearly communicated expectations so that students understand how both their process and final products will be evaluated.

Integrating project-based learning and authentic materials in culinary vocational English

Taken together, the findings demonstrate that the integration of PjBL and authentic materials created a learning process in which materials, projects, interaction, and assessment reinforced one another. Authentic materials provided students with concrete examples of culinary-related English; project activities transformed those materials into tasks requiring students to create and communicate; collaborative work encouraged interaction and problem-solving; and assessment and feedback supported students in improving their products and performances.

This integrated pattern is consistent with previous research on vocational PjBL and authentic learning, but it also extends that literature by bringing together two elements that are often discussed separately. Studies such as [Mutiaraningrum et al. \(2024\)](#), [Amalia et al. \(2024\)](#), and [Ismailia \(2024\)](#) emphasize the potential of PjBL for engagement and vocational English learning, whereas studies such as [Alhusna and Suparmi \(2025\)](#) and [Natalia and Lastari \(2025\)](#) emphasize the relevance of authentic materials in vocational and hospitality contexts. Culinary-specific research by [Ladhifah and Arifin \(2024\)](#) and [Arumsari et al. \(2025\)](#) further demonstrates the relevance of project-based and contextual learning for culinary students. The present study brings these perspectives together by showing how authentic culinary materials can function as resources within project-based English learning.

The findings also highlight the importance of teacher mediation. Authentic materials were introduced and explained by the teacher before students used them as references for their projects. Students were allowed to use dictionaries and mobile translation tools when they encountered unfamiliar expressions, while the teacher provided feedback on vocabulary, pronunciation, and presentation. Therefore, the effectiveness of the approach cannot be attributed to PjBL or authentic materials alone. Rather, it emerged from the alignment between authentic content, meaningful project tasks, collaborative classroom interaction, and continuous teacher support.

Overall, the findings suggest that Project-Based Learning integrated with authentic materials can provide a meaningful approach to culinary vocational English because it allows students to use English while engaging with tasks that reflect their vocational interests and learning experiences. The approach supported active participation, collaboration, communication practice, creativity, and increasing confidence during classroom activities, while project-based assessment allowed the teacher to evaluate both students' learning processes and final products. However, these findings should be interpreted as evidence of classroom learning processes and emerging skills rather than direct evidence of students' actual workplace competence. Future research could therefore examine whether the competencies developed through culinary PjBL transfer to authentic workplace settings or internship experiences.

Conclusion

This study explored the implementation of Project-Based Learning (PjBL) using authentic materials in a culinary vocational English classroom and examined the forms of project-based assessment used during the learning process. The findings showed that the integration of PjBL and authentic materials created a more contextual, interactive, and meaningful learning environment for culinary vocational students.

Through projects related to packaging labels, food presentation, and café operations, students were able to connect English learning with workplace-oriented situations relevant to their vocational field. The use of authentic materials also helped students understand the practical use of English in culinary and hospitality contexts while encouraging active participation, collaboration, creativity, and communication during classroom activities.

The study further revealed that project-based assessment supported students' learning development through product assessment, portfolio assessment, and presentation activities. These assessment forms encouraged students not only to complete projects collaboratively but also to improve confidence, communication skills, and problem-solving abilities. In vocational education contexts, the implementation of Project-Based Learning using authentic materials may therefore support students in developing both language competence and workplace-related skills needed for future professional environments. The findings of this study have several pedagogical implications for vocational English learning. English teachers in vocational schools may consider integrating Project-Based Learning and authentic materials into classroom activities to provide more relevant and workplace-oriented learning experiences. Learning activities connected to students' vocational fields may increase students' motivation, participation, and engagement because students can directly relate classroom learning to real professional situations. In addition, project-based assessment may provide more comprehensive evaluation opportunities by assessing not only students' final products but also collaboration, creativity, and communication during the learning process.

This study was limited to one culinary vocational classroom involving a relatively small number of participants. Therefore, future researchers are encouraged to conduct similar studies in different vocational contexts or educational settings to obtain broader insights regarding the implementation of Project-Based Learning using authentic materials. Future studies may also explore students' perceptions, speaking development, or long-term learning outcomes related to project-based vocational English learning.

References

- Alhusna, A., & Suparmi, S. (2025). Bridging vocational students' needs and industry demands: Designing authentic English learning materials for hotel services. *Journal of English Education and Teaching*, 9(4), 515–533. <https://doi.org/10.33369/jeeet.9.4.515-533>
- Almulla, M. A. (2020). The effectiveness of the project-based learning (PBL) approach as a way to engage students in learning. *SAGE Open*, 10(3). <https://doi.org/10.1177/2158244020938702>
- Amalia, S. I. Y., Degeng, P. D. D., & Razali, K. A. (2024). EFL students' perspectives toward project-based learning in vocational high schools. *JOLLT Journal of Languages and Language Teaching*, 12(1), 226–239. <https://doi.org/10.33394/jollt.v12i1.9740>
- Arumsari, M. E., Salsabila, N., Putri, K. C., Febriani, S. A., Purnawan, A., Sukarno, & Yulia, Y. (2026). Kitchen talk: Developing ESP materials for culinary vocational students. *International Journal of Multicultural and Multireligious Understanding*, 13(4). <https://doi.org/10.18415/ijmmu.v13i4.7419>
- Choustoulakis, E., Garas, C., & Paraskeva, F. (2025). Designing a project-based e-learning course for enhancing English language learning, participation, and peer collaboration among primary school pupils. In *INTED2025 Proceedings* (pp. 6877-6887). IATED. <https://doi.org/10.21125/inted.2025.1766>
- Creswell, J. W., & Creswell, J. D. (2017). *Research design: Qualitative, quantitative, and mixed methods approaches*. Sage publications.
- Guo, P., Saab, N., Post, L. S., & Admiraal, W. (2020). A review of project-based learning in higher education: Student outcomes and measures. *International Journal of Educational Research*, 102, 101586. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.ijer.2020.101586>

- Ismailia, T. (2024). Teaching English for vocational college students by using a project-based learning approach. *Journal of English in Academic and Professional Communication*, 10(1), 19–35. <https://doi.org/10.25047/jeapco.v10i1.4546>
- Köpeczi-Bócz, T. (2024). The impact of a combination of flipped classroom and project-based learning on the learning motivation of university students. *Education Sciences*, 14(3). <https://doi.org/10.3390/educsci14030240>
- Krajcik, J., Schneider, B., Miller, E. A., Chen, I. C., Bradford, L., Baker, Q., Bartz, K., Miller, C., Li, T., Codere, S., & Peek-Brown, D. (2023). Assessing the effect of project-based learning on science learning in elementary schools. *American Educational Research Journal*, 60(1), 70–102. <https://doi.org/10.3102/00028312221129247>
- Ladhifah, L., & Arifin, M. (2025). Enhancing culinary students' comprehension of English recipe texts through project-based learning. *Reforma: Jurnal Pendidikan dan Pembelajaran*, 15(1), 113–123. <https://doi.org/10.30736/reforma.v15i1.1218>
- Loyens, S. M. M., van Meerten, J. E., Schaap, L., & Wijnia, L. (2023). Situating higher-order, critical, and critical-analytic thinking in problem- and project-based learning environments: A systematic review. *Educational Psychology Review*, 35(2). <https://doi.org/10.1007/s10648-023-09757-x>
- Maghfiroh, A., Anggi, E., Unaiziah, N., Mustikawati, D. A., & Susilowati, T. (2024). Students' English learning strategies assisted with e-resources in blended learning. *JOLLT Journal of Languages and Language Teaching*, 12(1), 535. <https://doi.org/10.33394/jollt.v12i1.9530>
- Mandarsari, P. (2023). Online authentic materials in teaching English for EFL students. *International Journal of Research on English Teaching and Applied Linguistics*, 4(1), 65–78. <https://doi.org/10.30863/ijretal.v4i1.5013>
- Mutiaraningrum, I., Fitriati, S. W., Yuliasri, I., & Saleh, M. (2024). Indonesian vocational college students' attitudes towards project-based learning in English courses. *International Journal of Evaluation and Research in Education*, 13(5). <https://doi.org/10.11591/ijere.v13i5.28406>
- Muyassaroh, M. N., & Prasetyowati, E. (2024). The implementation of project-based learning in teaching speaking to students of vocational school. *IREELL: Indonesian Review of English Education, Linguistics, and Literature*, 2(1), 103–111. <https://doi.org/10.30762/ireell.v2i1.3395>
- Natalia, S. A. M. K. D., & Lastari, N. K. H. (2025). Exploring the use of authentic materials for developing communicative competence: A qualitative study in vocational education. *Prosiding Seminar Nasional Riset Bahasa dan Pengajaran Bahasa*, 7(1). <https://doi.org/10.31940/senarilip.v7i1.83-92>
- Pinzón, B., & Norely, A. (2020). Authentic materials and tasks as mediators to develop EFL students' intercultural competence. *HOW Journal*, 27(1), 29–46. <https://doi.org/10.19183/how.27.1.515>
- Santos, C., Rybska, E., Klichowski, M., Jankowiak, B., Jaskulska, S., Domingues, N., Carvalho, D., Rocha, T., Paredes, H., Martins, P., & Rocha, J. (2023). Science education through project-based learning: A case study. *Procedia Computer Science*, 219, 1713–1720. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.procs.2023.01.465>
- Sevara, A., Branch, R. J., & Uznu, O. (2023). The system of educating the student in vocational education. *International Scientific and Current Research Conferences*, 1(1), 123–126. <https://www.orientalpublication.com/index.php/iscrc/article/view/1134>
- Syeba, S., Debora, D., Susanti, S., Aminarti, D., & Victoria, A. M. (2026). Applying project-based learning to improve vocational English skills. *Jurnal Ilmiah Kanderang Tingang*, 17(1), 1–13. <https://doi.org/10.37304/jikt.v17i01.437>
- Villarroel, V., Melipillán, R., Santana, J., & Aguirre, D. (2024). How authentic are assessments in vocational education? An analysis from Chilean teachers, students, and examinations. *Frontiers in Education*, 9, 1308688. <https://doi.org/10.3389/feduc.2024.1308688>

- Weganofa, R., Herawati, S., & Lutviana, R. (2024). Integrating Design Thinking (DT) and Project-Based Learning (PjBL) with Writing Literacy for Advancing Creative, Collaborative, and Critical Writing Skills among EFL Learners. *Language Teaching Research Quarterly*, 45, 157-175. <https://doi.org/10.32038/ltrq.2024.45.09>
- Weijers, R. J., de Koning, B. B., Klatter, E., & Paas, F. (2024). How do teachers in vocational and higher education nudge their students? A qualitative study. *European Journal of Higher Education*, 1–19. <https://doi.org/10.1080/21568235.2024.2319087>
- Zhang, L., & Ma, Y. (2023). A study of the impact of project-based learning on student learning effects: A meta-analysis study. *Frontiers in Psychology*, 14, 1202728. <https://doi.org/10.3389/fpsyg.2023.1202728>

Corresponding author: Ana Maghfiroh
Universitas Muhammadiyah Ponorogo, Indonesia
Email: ana_maghfiroh@umpo.ac.id
This article is licensed under CC BY-SA 4.0



Author Biographies

Rina Widiyanti is a student in Universitas Muhammadiyah Ponorogo and also an English teacher at SMK Negeri 1 Sawoo, Indonesia. Her research focuses on teacher professional development regarding English instruction integrated with vocational subject matter in vocational high schools, tailored to student needs within the context of ESP (English for Specific Purposes) and the development of English teaching modules integrated with vocational curricula. Her work contributes to student-centred English education that inclusively integrates English instruction with vocational subjects in vocational high schools.

Ana Maghfiroh is an Associate Professor of English Education at Universitas Muhammadiyah Ponorogo, Indonesia. Her research focuses on teacher professional development, professional learning community, online and blended learning in EFL, digital pedagogy, and sustainable education in Southeast Asia. Her work contributes to interdisciplinary perspectives on online education, teacher professionalism, digital readiness, and inclusive practices in diverse educational contexts.