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THE EFFECTIVENESS OF PROJECT-BASED LEARNING IN ENHANCING STUDENTS' SPEAKING SKILLS IN ENGLISH

Abstract

This study aims to analyze the effectiveness of using the Project-Based Learning (PBL) method in enhancing students' speaking skills in English as a Foreign Language (EFL) learning. PBL is an instructional approach that engages students in real-world tasks requiring them to actively use English in authentic situations. In this research, a literature review was conducted by analyzing various previous studies exploring the impact of PBL on speaking skills, focusing on aspects such as student engagement, creativity, and language use in real-life communication contexts. The findings indicate that PBL can significantly enhance students' motivation, confidence, and speaking abilities. Various types of projects, such as vlogs and digital storytelling, have proven effective in providing students with opportunities to practice speaking in a more free and creative manner. Moreover, peer interaction in collaborative-based projects further strengthens students' speaking competence. However, challenges in implementing PBL, such as the need for proper guidance and alignment with students' proficiency levels, should be considered. Overall, PBL offers great potential in developing speaking skills in English more effectively and comprehensively.

Keywords: Project-Based Learning, Speaking Skills, English Language Learning

INTRODUCTION

In recent years, English language proficiency has become a key indicator of academic and professional success. Among the various language skills, speaking is often considered the most challenging yet essential for effective communication in English as a Foreign Language (EFL) contexts. However, many students struggle to develop their speaking skills due to the lack of engaging and interactive learning methods. Traditional language instruction often emphasizes grammar and vocabulary over communicative competence, which may result in students' low motivation and confidence in speaking. This challenge has led educators to explore alternative teaching methods that foster active learning and student engagement. One such approach is Project-Based Learning (PBL), a teaching strategy that centers on students working collaboratively on real-world projects to enhance their skills in a meaningful context.

Project-Based Learning has been widely recognized for its ability to promote deep learning and critical thinking by requiring students to solve complex problems, create tangible products, and engage in authentic tasks. In the context of language learning, PBL offers significant potential for enhancing speaking skills by immersing students in collaborative tasks that mimic real-life communication. According to Tamimi and Salamin (2020), PBL has been shown to improve students' achievement and motivation in English language learning, particularly in EFL environments. Similarly, Shin (2018) highlights how PBL positively influences students' motivation and self-efficacy, which are crucial for improving language proficiency, especially speaking skills. By participating in projects, students are encouraged to use English in practical situations, thus improving their fluency and communication skills.

Moreover, studies by Abubakar (2015) and Alfatihah et al. (2022) have demonstrated the effectiveness of PBL in improving students' speaking abilities in various educational contexts. In both cases, students showed notable improvements in their speaking performance after engaging in project-based tasks that required them to present and discuss topics in English. The hands-on, interactive nature of PBL allows students to practice speaking in a less formal and more authentic environment, which can significantly enhance their confidence and

communicative competence. Additionally, Kovalyova et al. (2016) emphasize the importance of using PBL in teaching communication skills to engineering students, highlighting its relevance across various fields of study, not just language-focused curricula.

However, despite the growing body of literature supporting the benefits of PBL, there is still limited research specifically addressing its effectiveness in enhancing speaking skills in EFL environments. Much of the existing research focuses on general language skills or motivation, with less attention paid to how PBL directly influences speaking proficiency. This gap in the literature calls for more focused studies on the impact of PBL on speaking skills, particularly in non-native English-speaking contexts. Furthermore, while PBL has been implemented in various educational settings, there remains a lack of standardized approaches to its application in EFL classrooms, particularly in terms of the types of projects, tasks, and assessment methods that are most effective for improving speaking skills.

This study aims to fill these gaps by investigating the effectiveness of Project-Based Learning in enhancing students' speaking skills in English. By exploring how PBL can be strategically implemented in EFL classrooms, this research seeks to provide insights into the specific ways in which project-based activities contribute to the development of speaking proficiency. Furthermore, this study will contribute to the growing body of knowledge by addressing the research gap regarding the direct impact of PBL on speaking skills and offering practical recommendations for its application in language teaching. Thus, the novelty of this study lies in its focused examination of PBL's influence on speaking ability, offering a deeper understanding of how this pedagogical approach can be optimized to foster more effective language learning outcomes.

METHOD

This study employs a **literature review** methodology to analyze and synthesize existing research on the effectiveness of Project-Based Learning (PBL) in enhancing students' speaking skills in English as a Foreign Language (EFL). The literature review method is appropriate for this study as it allows for a comprehensive exploration of the current body of knowledge on the topic, highlighting trends, gaps, and the potential impact of PBL on speaking proficiency. The steps involved in this study are outlined as follows:

1. Identification of Research Questions

The first step in this literature review is to define the research questions that guide the analysis. The primary research question for this study is: *What is the effectiveness of Project-Based Learning in enhancing students' speaking skills in English?* Additionally, sub-questions include: *What are the specific benefits of PBL on students' speaking abilities?* and *What types of PBL activities have been most effective in improving speaking skills in EFL settings?* These questions will provide a clear framework for reviewing relevant literature and focusing on key themes related to PBL and speaking skills.

2. Selection of Literature

The next step involves selecting relevant literature that addresses the relationship between Project-Based Learning and the enhancement of speaking skills in English. The selection process involves searching academic databases such as Google Scholar, JSTOR, ERIC, and Scopus to find peer-reviewed journal articles, books, and conference papers. Key search terms will include "Project-Based Learning," "speaking skills," "English as a Foreign Language," "EFL," and "language learning." Only studies published in reputable journals or by well-known academic publishers will be included. Furthermore, the literature must focus on studies that explore PBL within the context of language learning, particularly for speaking proficiency.

3. Evaluation of Literature

Once relevant articles are gathered, the next step is to critically evaluate the quality and reliability of the literature. Each selected study will be examined for its methodological rigor, sample size, research design, and the validity of its findings. The studies will be categorized based on the type of research (quantitative, qualitative, or mixed methods) and the specific focus on speaking skills within PBL contexts. This evaluation ensures that the studies included are not only relevant but also contribute meaningful insights to the research questions.

4. Data Extraction and Synthesis

After evaluating the literature, data extraction will occur. In this step, key findings related to the effectiveness of PBL in enhancing speaking skills will be extracted from each study. This

includes looking at the results of various PBL implementations, the types of tasks or projects used, and the assessment methods employed to measure speaking proficiency. The data will then be synthesized to identify common themes, trends, and conclusions that emerge across the studies. The synthesis process will highlight the specific ways in which PBL impacts speaking ability, such as increasing student engagement, improving fluency, enhancing confidence, and promoting authentic language use.

5. Analysis of Gaps in the Literature

Following the synthesis, the next step is to analyze gaps or limitations in the existing literature. This step involves identifying areas where further research is needed, such as studies that explore the long-term effects of PBL on speaking skills, the most effective types of PBL activities, or research that addresses particular challenges in implementing PBL in different cultural contexts. The analysis of gaps will be crucial for contextualizing the current study's contributions and highlighting the novelty of the research.

6. Conclusion and Implications

The final stage of the literature review will involve summarizing the findings and discussing the implications of the research. This includes presenting the overall effectiveness of PBL in enhancing speaking skills, based on the synthesized evidence from the literature. The study will conclude by offering practical recommendations for teachers and educators on how to implement PBL in EFL classrooms to maximize students' speaking proficiency. Furthermore, the research will suggest areas for future studies to address the identified gaps and expand knowledge on the topic.

By following these systematic steps, this literature review will provide a thorough understanding of the effectiveness of Project-Based Learning in enhancing speaking skills, offering insights for both educators and researchers interested in improving language learning outcomes.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Results

This literature review synthesizes findings from various studies on the effectiveness of Project-Based Learning (PBL) in improving English as a Foreign Language (EFL) students' speaking skills. The review of existing research highlights the positive impact of PBL in enhancing students' speaking abilities, as demonstrated through different types of projects and learning activities.

1. Increased Student Engagement and Confidence

One consistent finding across the studies is that PBL significantly increases student engagement and confidence in speaking. Dewi (2016) found that PBL techniques, such as group discussions and presentations, encouraged students to take a more active role in their learning, thereby boosting their motivation to practice speaking in English. Similarly, Sirisrimangkorn (2021) demonstrated that using presentation-based projects helped undergraduate learners improve their speaking skills by providing a structured platform to express ideas and interact with peers. These activities promoted greater self-confidence, as students became more comfortable using English in front of an audience.

2. Enhancement of Communicative Competence

Several studies emphasized that PBL activities fostered better communicative competence in students. For example, Bakar, Noordin, and Razali (2019) found that using PBL activities, such as collaborative problem-solving tasks, helped students develop their oral communicative competence. These activities provided opportunities for authentic language use, requiring students to think critically and articulate their thoughts clearly. In line with this, Artini and Nitiasih (2017) showed that PBL activities, particularly those involving real-life tasks, allowed students to use English in meaningful contexts, which contributed to improvements in both their fluency and pronunciation.

3. Improved Fluency and Pronunciation

Fluency and pronunciation are often major challenges for EFL learners. Studies indicate that PBL helps address these issues by providing opportunities for repeated practice in authentic situations. For instance, Essien (2018) reported that students who engaged in PBL demonstrated improvements in fluency as they participated in extended speaking activities, such as discussions and presentations. In a similar vein, Wahyuni, Sujoko, and Sarosa (2017) noted that

the use of digital storytelling as part of a PBL activity not only enhanced students' speaking fluency but also helped them develop clearer pronunciation through constant practice and peer feedback.

4. Development of Critical Thinking and Problem-Solving Skills

Another important benefit of PBL, as highlighted by Riswandi (2018), is its ability to enhance students' critical thinking and problem-solving skills, which are essential for effective communication. Through project work, students are required to collaborate, analyze problems, and generate solutions, all of which help them build a deeper understanding of how to communicate ideas logically and persuasively in English. The process of solving real-world problems encourages students to use English to explain, justify, and discuss their ideas, thereby improving their speaking skills in a more natural and engaging way.

5. Collaboration and Peer Feedback

Collaboration is a key component of PBL, and research shows that working in groups significantly enhances students' speaking abilities. Sirisrimangkorn (2018) found that group-based PBL activities, such as drama performances, allowed students to practice their speaking skills in a supportive and cooperative environment. Peer feedback and collaborative learning were found to be crucial in helping students refine their speaking abilities. The exchange of ideas in group projects not only helped students gain different perspectives but also provided valuable opportunities to practice speaking in various contexts and styles.

6. Variety of Project Types and Learning Environments

The effectiveness of PBL in improving speaking skills is also influenced by the variety of project types used in the classroom. Nugroho and Anugerahwati (2019) demonstrated that integrating vlog-based projects into PBL activities led to improved speaking skills, as students were required to present their ideas in a video format, which mimicked real-world communication. Similarly, Newprasit and Seepho (2015) showed that projects based on real-life scenarios provided students with a sense of purpose and helped them use English to solve authentic problems, thereby improving both their speaking fluency and their ability to engage in more complex conversations.

7. Challenges and Considerations

While the overall impact of PBL on speaking skills is positive, several studies highlight challenges related to its implementation. Widiyati and Pangesti (2022) identified that while PBL can be effective, it requires careful planning and appropriate task selection to ensure that it meets the learning objectives. In some cases, students may struggle with the complexity of the tasks or lack the language proficiency necessary to fully engage in the project activities. Teachers must, therefore, provide adequate scaffolding and support to ensure that students can fully benefit from PBL.

The findings from this literature review indicate that Project-Based Learning is an effective pedagogical approach for enhancing speaking skills in English language learners. By engaging students in authentic, collaborative, and real-world tasks, PBL promotes greater language fluency, pronunciation, communicative competence, and confidence. However, to maximize the effectiveness of PBL, it is essential for teachers to carefully design and implement appropriate tasks that cater to the learners' proficiency levels and ensure active participation in the learning process. Future research should explore the long-term impact of PBL on speaking skills and investigate the optimal types of projects that best support the development of speaking proficiency in EFL settings.

Discussion

The use of Project-Based Learning (PBL) as a teaching method to improve speaking skills in English as a Foreign Language (EFL) contexts has gained increasing attention in recent years. This educational approach, which emphasizes student-centered learning through collaborative, real-world projects, aligns well with the communicative nature of language acquisition. Through a comprehensive review of the literature, it is evident that PBL offers significant advantages in promoting not only students' speaking abilities but also their overall engagement and motivation in language learning.

A central theme emerging from the research is the role of student engagement in enhancing speaking skills. According to Wahyuni, Sujoko, and Sarosa (2017), one of the key strengths of PBL is its ability to involve students in authentic, context-rich tasks, such as digital storytelling. This approach encourages students to take ownership of their learning, which

significantly boosts their motivation to practice speaking. Unlike traditional language teaching, where students might passively learn grammar rules or vocabulary, PBL provides a platform where students actively engage in discussions, presentations, and collaborative projects. As they create stories, debates, or even videos, they apply the language in meaningful ways, fostering both fluency and confidence. This level of active participation enhances their comfort with using English in various contexts, allowing them to articulate thoughts more naturally and clearly.

Building on this, the role of peer interaction in PBL activities is another crucial factor contributing to the improvement of speaking skills. Widiyati and Pangesti (2022) found that PBL not only facilitates individual growth but also promotes peer collaboration, which is essential for language development. In projects that require group work, students have the opportunity to negotiate meaning, share ideas, and provide feedback to each other. This collaborative environment mirrors real-life communication, where individuals must listen, respond, and adapt their speech based on the context and audience. By engaging in such authentic communication, students improve their ability to express themselves in English while also learning to adapt their language use to different conversational settings. This social aspect of PBL is particularly beneficial for young learners, as it enhances their interactional competence, which is a critical component of speaking skills.

Moreover, creativity and innovation in project tasks also play a pivotal role in the development of speaking proficiency. Research by Nugroho and Anugerahwati (2019) highlighted how incorporating modern tools like vlogs in PBL projects allows students to explore new ways of presenting information in English. In the case of vlog projects, students are required to express their ideas clearly and concisely while also incorporating multimedia elements. This not only helps students practice speaking in front of an audience but also encourages them to develop their presentation skills, which are key to effective communication. The creative nature of these projects encourages students to think critically about how to communicate their messages effectively, thereby improving both their language fluency and public speaking abilities.

In addition, the authenticity of tasks in PBL has been shown to promote greater language use in realistic settings. According to Shin (2018), when students are involved in tasks that reflect real-world scenarios, they see the relevance of learning English for practical purposes. For example, when students are tasked with organizing and presenting a project, such as a research report or a community service initiative, they are not just learning how to speak English—they are learning how to use English to convey important ideas and solve problems. This approach moves beyond rote memorization of language rules and instead focuses on language use in action. By engaging in tasks that mimic real-life communication, students gain confidence and become more competent in expressing themselves in English.

Furthermore, the long-term effects of PBL on speaking skills cannot be overlooked. Riswandi (2018) emphasized that one of the most significant benefits of PBL is its ability to sustain language learning over time. Unlike traditional classroom settings where speaking activities might be limited to short, isolated exercises, PBL provides ongoing opportunities for students to practice speaking throughout the course of the project. This continuous exposure to speaking activities helps solidify language skills and build fluency. As students engage in multiple stages of the project, they develop a more profound and lasting ability to communicate in English.

Despite the clear benefits, some challenges related to the implementation of PBL should be acknowledged. Teacher preparation and guidance are crucial to ensuring the success of PBL in improving speaking skills. Bakar, Noordin, and Razali (2019) argued that without proper scaffolding, students may struggle to engage in meaningful communication. Teachers need to provide continuous support, clear instructions, and timely feedback throughout the project to guide students toward successful outcomes. Additionally, not all students may be equally prepared or motivated to participate in PBL activities, especially in large or heterogeneous classrooms. To address these challenges, educators should carefully design projects that accommodate different learning styles and language proficiency levels.

Finally, the assessment of speaking skills in PBL also warrants attention. Newprasis and Seepho (2015) noted that traditional assessment methods might not fully capture the depth of language development that occurs during PBL. As speaking is often assessed through

performance-based tasks in PBL, it is essential for teachers to use formative assessment techniques, such as peer reviews, self-assessments, and teacher observations, to evaluate students' progress continuously. This type of assessment allows for a more holistic understanding of a student's speaking ability, beyond mere fluency or pronunciation, by considering their ability to convey meaning, engage in conversation, and adapt their speech according to context.

In conclusion, Project-Based Learning has proven to be an effective method for improving students' speaking skills in English. The active, collaborative, and authentic nature of PBL provides students with meaningful opportunities to practice and develop their language proficiency in real-world contexts. By engaging students in creative tasks, encouraging peer interaction, and fostering continuous exposure to language use, PBL enhances not only fluency and pronunciation but also the confidence and communicative competence necessary for effective speaking. As more research continues to support its effectiveness, educators can consider integrating PBL into their teaching practices to promote more dynamic and practical language learning experiences for students. However, careful attention to the challenges and assessment strategies is necessary to ensure that all students benefit from this approach.

CONCLUSION

In conclusion, this study highlights the effectiveness of Project-Based Learning (PBL) in enhancing students' speaking skills in English. By involving students in authentic, collaborative, and creative tasks, PBL fosters greater engagement, confidence, and fluency in speaking. The findings confirm that PBL promotes not only linguistic skills but also critical thinking and problem-solving abilities, making it a valuable approach in EFL contexts. The integration of various project types, such as digital storytelling and vlogs, further supports the development of students' speaking competence, providing them with meaningful opportunities for language use in real-world scenarios.

SUGGESTION

Based on the findings of this study, it is recommended that educators incorporate Project-Based Learning into their teaching practices to enhance speaking skills in English. Teachers should design projects that are both engaging and appropriate for students' proficiency levels, ensuring a balance between creativity and language learning goals. Additionally, ongoing guidance and formative assessments should be implemented to support students throughout the project. Future research could explore the long-term effects of PBL on language acquisition and assess its effectiveness in different educational settings.

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