

USING PROJECT-BASED METHOD IN EFLT CLASSES

***Abstract:** This study investigates the effects of Project-Based Learning (PBL) on English as a Foreign Language (EFL) learners' language proficiency. Utilizing a quasi-experimental design, the study compares the language development of students exposed to a PBL approach with those receiving traditional instruction. The findings suggest that PBL positively influences learners' communicative competence, motivation, and collaborative skills.¹ This research contributes to the growing body of literature supporting the integration of PBL into EFL classrooms.*

***Keywords:** Project-Based Learning, EFL, Language Proficiency, Communicative Competence, Motivation, Collaborative Learning.*

Introduction:

In today's interconnected world, effective communication in English is crucial. Traditional EFL teaching methods, often focusing on grammar rules and rote memorization, may not adequately prepare learners for real-world communication.² Project-Based Learning (PBL), an instructional approach centered around student-driven projects, offers a potentially more engaging and effective alternative.³ PBL encourages active learning, collaboration, and critical thinking, fostering a deeper understanding of the target language and culture.⁴ This study aims to explore the impact of PBL on EFL learners' language proficiency, focusing on communicative competence, motivation, and collaborative skills.

Literature Review

PBL has its roots in constructivist learning theories, emphasizing active knowledge construction and learner autonomy (Dewey, 1938; Piaget, 1950).⁵ In the context of language learning, PBL promotes meaningful language use in authentic

contexts (Stoller, 2002).⁶ Several studies have demonstrated the positive effects of PBL on various aspects of language acquisition, including vocabulary development (Beckett & Miller, 2006), oral fluency (Fried-Booth, 2002), and writing skills (Thomas, 2000). Research also suggests that PBL enhances learner motivation and engagement (Larmer et al., 2015).⁷ However, some studies have highlighted potential challenges, such as the need for careful project design and teacher training (Bell, 2010). This study builds upon this existing research by examining the specific impact of PBL on EFL learners' communicative competence, motivation, and collaborative skills in a particular educational context.

Methodology

The study was conducted with two groups of EFL learners (N=60) at Fergana State University in Uzbekistan, divided into an experimental group and a control group, each comprising 30 participants. The experimental group was instructed using a Project-Based Learning (PBL) approach, while the control group received traditional grammar-based instruction. The PBL group participated in a semester-long project focused on creating a tourist guide for their city, which involved stages such as research, planning, production, and presentation. In contrast, the traditional group followed a textbook-based curriculum emphasizing grammar and vocabulary exercises.

Data collection methods included pre- and post-tests designed to assess communicative competence through oral presentations and role-plays, a motivation questionnaire to measure engagement levels, and observations of group work to evaluate collaborative skills. The analysis of quantitative data, such as test scores and questionnaire responses, was performed using statistical methods, including t-tests and ANOVA. Qualitative data from observations were thematically analyzed to gain deeper insights into student collaboration and interaction. This comprehensive methodology aimed to explore the impact of the PBL approach on developing communicative competence and fostering student motivation in the EFL context.

Discussion

The results of the study indicated a statistically significant improvement in communicative competence for the PBL group compared to the traditional group. The PBL group also demonstrated higher levels of motivation and more effective collaborative skills.⁸ These findings suggest that engaging in authentic projects provides learners with opportunities to practice using the target language in meaningful contexts, leading to improved communicative abilities.⁹ The collaborative nature of PBL also fosters teamwork and communication skills.¹⁰ The observation data revealed that PBL students were more actively engaged in the learning process, demonstrating greater autonomy and problem-solving skills. Below we have gathered the advantages and disadvantages of using Project-based method in Uzbekistan EFLT context (see table 1).

Advantages	Disadvantages
Increased Motivation and Engagement: Students are more invested in relevant projects.	Time-Consuming: PBL requires significant planning, implementation, and assessment time.
Enhanced Communicative Competence: Projects provide authentic language use opportunities.	Potential for Uneven Participation: Some students may dominate group work.
Development of 21st-Century Skills: PBL fosters critical thinking, collaboration, and creativity.	Assessment Challenges: Assessing project work requires diverse methods beyond traditional tests.
Real-World Application: Projects connect learning to real-world situations.	Teacher Training and Preparation: Effective PBL requires trained and supported teachers.

Table 1. Advantages and disadvantages of using PBLT in EFLT classes

Conclusion

The conclusion of this study highlights the significant impact of the Project-Based Learning (PBL) approach on developing the communicative competence, motivation, and collaborative skills of EFL learners at Fergana State University in Uzbekistan. The findings demonstrate that students engaged in PBL activities, such as creating a tourist guide for their city, showed marked improvements in their ability to effectively communicate in English, particularly in oral presentations and role-plays, compared to those receiving traditional grammar-based instruction. Moreover, the motivation questionnaire results revealed that PBL participants displayed higher levels of engagement and interest in their learning process, indicating that the hands-on and interactive nature of PBL positively influenced their attitudes toward language learning.

Additionally, observations of group work highlighted the development of essential soft skills, such as teamwork, problem-solving, and collaboration, which are crucial for students' academic and professional success. The statistical analysis of quantitative data reinforced these outcomes, confirming the effectiveness of PBL in enhancing language learning outcomes. In light of these findings, this study underscores the value of incorporating PBL approaches into the EFL curriculum in Uzbekistan, particularly for higher education institutions aiming to align language teaching methods with global standards and the practical needs of learners. Future research could explore the long-term impacts of PBL on language acquisition and extend its application to other fields of study and educational contexts. The results also provide a foundation for policymakers and educators to promote innovative and student-centered teaching methodologies in foreign language education.

References

1. Beckett, G. H., & Miller, P. C. (2006).¹³ Project-based second and foreign language education: Past, present, and future. *Information Age Publishing*.
2. Bell, S. (2010).¹⁴ Project-based learning for the 21st century: Skills for the future. *Clearing House: A Journal of Educational Strategies, Issues¹⁵ and Ideas*, 83(2), 39-43.¹⁶

3. Dewey, J. (1938).¹⁷ *Experience and education*. Kappa Delta Pi.
4. Fried-Booth, D. L. (2002). *Project work*. Oxford University Press.
5. Larmer, J., Mergendoller, J., & Boss, S. (2015). *Setting the standard for project based learning: A proven approach to rigorous classroom instruction*.¹⁸ ASCD.
6. Piaget, J. (1950). *The psychology of intelligence*. Routledge.
7. Stoller, F. L. (2002). Project work: A means to promote language content learning.¹⁹ *English Teaching Forum*, 40(1), 12-19.