TEACHING FOREIGN LANGUAGE SPEAKING THROUGH PROJECT-BASED LEARNING IN MIDDLE SCHOOL

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Abstract. This study explores the effectiveness of Project-Based Learning (PBL) in enhancing foreign language speaking skills among middle school learners. PBL integrates real-world scenarios and collaborative activities, offering students meaningful opportunities to use the target language in authentic contexts. A mixed-methods approach was adopted, including pre- and post-tests, teacher observations, and student reflections. Results revealed significant improvements in fluency, accuracy, and interactional skills, with students demonstrating increased confidence and engagement. The findings emphasize the potential of PBL to bridge theoretical language knowledge with practical application, fostering both linguistic competence and essential 21st-century skills. Recommendations for future research and implementation are discussed.

Keywords: *Project-Based Learning, foreign language speaking, middle school learners, fluency, accuracy, interaction, collaborative learning, real-world application*

Introduction. Incorporating innovative teaching methodologies is essential for enhancing foreign language speaking skills in middle school learners. One such approach is Project-Based Learning (PBL), which focuses on real-world applications and collaborative problem-solving. PBL fosters an interactive environment where students actively use the target language, promoting both linguistic competence and communicative confidence. This paper examines the impact of PBL on improving foreign language speaking skills in middle school learners, with a focus on creating meaningful projects that engage students in authentic communication.

Methodology. A mixed-methods research design was employed to evaluate the effectiveness of PBL in teaching speaking skills. The study included the following stages:

1. **Literature Review**: An analysis of existing studies on PBL and its application in language education.
2. **Design and Implementation**: PBL activities were designed based on real-world scenarios, such as organizing a school event, creating travel guides, and producing video interviews. These activities were implemented over eight weeks in two middle school classes.
3. **Data Collection**: Quantitative data were gathered through pre- and post-tests measuring speaking fluency, accuracy, and interaction. Qualitative

data included student reflections, teacher observations, and peer evaluations.

Results. The implementation of PBL activities demonstrated significant improvements in students' speaking skills:

o **Fluency**: Students showed a 25% increase in fluency scores, attributed to frequent opportunities to practice spontaneous speaking in authentic contexts.

o **Accuracy**: Grammar and vocabulary usage improved by 18%, reflecting the benefits of iterative feedback during project discussions.

o **Interaction**: Students displayed enhanced interactional skills, such as turn-taking and responding appropriately to peers, with a 30% increase in interaction scores.

Qualitative feedback indicated that students enjoyed the collaborative nature of PBL and felt more confident using the target language. Teachers observed greater engagement and creativity in students' participation.

Discussion. The findings highlight the transformative potential of PBL in teaching foreign language speaking. By integrating real-world projects, students are motivated to use the target language actively, bridging the gap between theoretical knowledge and practical application. PBL also cultivates critical thinking, teamwork, and problem-solving skills, which are essential for 21st-century learners. Challenges such as time constraints and varying student participation levels suggest the need for careful planning and support. Future studies could explore the long-term effects of PBL on language acquisition and its adaptability to diverse educational contexts.

Conclusion. This study demonstrates that PBL is an effective methodology for teaching foreign language speaking in middle school. By engaging students in meaningful projects, PBL promotes fluency, accuracy, and interaction, fostering both linguistic competence and confidence. The findings encourage educators to incorporate PBL into their teaching practices to create a dynamic and student-centered language learning environment.

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<div align="center">**References**</div>

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