

A Disquisition on Pedagogical Interventions for the Augmentation of English Speaking Skills in Secondary School Students

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ABSTRACT

As English continues to be the dominant global language for communication, academic success, and career advancement, it is crucial for students to attain proficiency in speaking. The project investigates strategies for enhancing oral communication skills through interactive and student-centered learning methods. The present study aimed at investigating the effect of a project based program on developing ESL conversation for secondary school students. Literature and related studies dealing with project based learning in ESL teaching and conversation were reviewed. A list of conversation components was prepared by the researcher as a guide for the design of the instruments. In addition, a pre-diagnostics and post conversation test was designed and a conversation rubric was adapted. This project focuses on the development of English language speaking skills among school students. Various approaches like role-play, group discussions, language games, debates, and digital tools are explored to build confidence, fluency, and clarity in spoken English. The objective is to create an engaging learning environment that fosters spontaneous conversation, practical application of vocabulary, and improved pronunciation. By integrating these methods, the project seeks to bridge the gap between theoretical language learning and its real-world use, making students more effective communicators. The paper also discusses the impact of cultural factors, learner motivation, and the role of technology in modern language learning.

KEYWORDS: English language - Speaking Skills - School Students - Interactive Learning.

INTRODUCTION

English is the most spoken language in the world as it is spoken by more than 1.3 billion people and it became the international language for communication, science, technology, commerce and different aspects of life. In an increasingly globalized world, English has become the lingua franca, serving as the primary

y means of communication in various sectors including education, business, and international relations. For students, developing strong English language speaking skills is crucial for academic performance and future career opportunities. However, in many schools, particularly in non-English medium, students struggle with oral proficiency. This project aims to address the gap by implementing targeted strategies to enhance English speaking skills among school students. Consequently, acquisition of conversation should be one of the main objectives of ESL classrooms. A Lesson should be a lively, unique experience that is achieved by conversations that are not contrived but incidental. Teaching learning processes should be conversation driven. This can be promoted through the integration of life experience into the classroom, Students' involvement, interaction, and collaboration with peers and teachers. Language programs designed for young learners should develop students' through interesting fun activities. This integration of life experience into the classroom, learner's individual styles and capabilities as well as student's social interaction with peers and teacher can be considered as the basics for constructive. One of Constructive applications inside the classroom is Project-based Learning {PBL}. In PBL context, students are actively engaged during the process while teachers guide the process, provide feedback to students and assess their performances. The powerful points about PBL are being part of real life as well as its ability to lead students to think, question, and investigate

PROJECT BASED LEARNING (PBL)

Project based learning as a student- centered way of teaching and learning which focuses on students' needs, interests, understanding and initiation. It organizes learning around projects. PBL is a method that allows students to plan, design, and conduct an extended project that results in a publicly exhibit product such as a publication or a presentation. The Process of Project based Learning Fragoulis and Tsiplakides (2009) identify FOUR stages for learning projects as the following:

- 1. Speculation:** includes the choice of the project topic.
- 2. Designing the activities for the project:** includes decisions about groups, roles, methodology, sources of information, places as well as activities. Some researchers call it "the planning phase".
- 3. Conducting the project activities:** includes students' implementation of all previously designed activities.
- 4. Evaluation :** This stage includes other as well as self- evaluation.

THE BENEFITS OF PROJECT-BASED LEARNING IN ENGLISH

One of the most significant advantages of PBL in English education is increased student engagement. By working on projects that interest them, students become more motivated to learn and participate actively in the classroom. Additionally, PBL fosters deep learning, as students must research, analyze, and synthesize information rather than simply memorize facts. Furthermore, PBL encourages collaborative learning, as students often work in teams, sharing ideas and learning from one another.

This collaborative aspect mirrors real-world work environments, where teamwork and communication are essential skills. Lastly, PBL promotes self-directed learning, empowering students to take responsibility for their education, manage their time effectively, and develop critical thinking skills. English language teaching at various stages can be studied. English has an important role in the world as an international language. The advantage is preparation to face English in a junior high school. When the students have graduated from an elementary school, then they enroll to a junior high school. In a junior high school, an English lesson is a compulsory subject and English is a foreign language so the student should learn it right from the elementary school level to avoid difficulties. The most important thing in learning English is time. Students need a brief time to understand the second language deeply so if they learn English in junior high school for the first time, it will be difficult for them. The third advantage is preparation to face the globalization era. In this globalization era everyone is supposed to be competent and improve his or her quality in order to face the challenges of life.

Teaching English at Junior level- The junior level is the lower secondary stage consisting of classes 6th, 7th and 8th. During this level, chief aim of English is language development. It is not possible for the beginners to grasp hidden secrets of literature to be familiar with difficult pronunciation and structure of sentences, so the teacher should simplify the terms for the students. Teacher should start the process of teaching from very a initial stage so that the learners may create an interest towards the language and gradually he/she may develop interest in language learning.

Teaching English at Senior level - Senior level is considered from level 9th to 12th, It is presumed that the learners must have achieved primary or basic knowledge of language. When students appear in senior level, they require to develop themselves to both point of view regarding language and literature. Senior level requires to be cautious to collect all the necessary components of learning. There has been a thrust towards running government schools especially providing instructions in English as a medium. Many model schools have been established for this purpose. They feel that to be able to grasp education at higher levels, children should be acquainted with it as early as possible. Sensing the importance of English language and its undeniable role in nation-building

METHODOLOGY OF THE STUDY

The project was undertaken using employ a mixed-method approach, combining qualitative and quantitative research methods. The participants will be school students from grades 6 to 9 in a non-native English-speaking country. The project will be undertaken for a total span six months and will include:

1. Pre-assessment:

A diagnostic test will be conducted to assess the current speaking skills of students. This will help identify areas that needs improvement, such as fluency, pronunciation, and vocabulary.

2. Implementation of Strategies

- Role-playing: Students will engage in role-play activities to simulate real-life conversations. This method encourages spontaneous communication and contextual learning.
- Group Discussions and Debates: Small group discussions and debates will be conducted to foster critical thinking, argumentation skills, and public speaking confidence.
- Language Games: Modified learning activities such as word association games and vocabulary building exercises will make the learning process enjoyable and interactive.
- Technology Integration: Tools such as English language learning apps, online speaking platforms, and digital storytelling applications will be used to support students' speaking practice.

3. Post-assessment:

After the six-month period, a follow-up assessment will be conducted to measure improvements in students' speaking abilities. Qualitative data from teacher observations and student feedback will also be collected to assess the overall effectiveness of the intervention.

As we have tested students from 6th to 9th standard to enomurate the issue of speaking English in school ,we have taken few methods to improve **vocabulary ,fluency,pronunciation and communication** .

IMPLEMENTATION AND DATA COLLECTION

1) CONTEXTUAL LEARNING

METHODS: Teach vocabulary through context rather than isolated word lists.

Students work on real world problems , developing solutions through research, collaboration ,and critical thinking .

BENEFITS: Students understand how words are used in sentence , which aids retention and comprehension

HOW TO IMPLEMENT: Use vocabulary from the texts students are reading, highlights how the words is used, and encourage them to make sentence using the new vocabulary

2) RAPID CONVERSATIONS

OBJECTIVE : To practice speaking without over thinking.

INSTRUCTIONS:

1. Pair students up.
2. Give them a topic (e.g., hobbies, weekend plans) and set a timer for 2 minutes.
3. Each student speaks for 1 minute on the topic without stopping. They can talk about anything related to the topic as long as they keep speaking.
4. After 2 minutes, switch topics and partners.

3) FLUENCY CIRCLE

OBJECTIVE: To encourage spontaneous, unstructured conversation.

INSTRUCTIONS:

1. Arrange the students in a circle..
2. One student starts by saying a sentence related to a theme (e.g., travel). The next student must continue the conversation by building on what was said.
3. Continue until everyone has spoken.

VARIATION: You can change the theme every 2 minutes to keep it engaging

4) ROLE PLAYING EVERYDAY SITUATIONS

OBJECTIVE: To practice communicating in common scenarios.

INSTRUCTIONS:

1. Give pairs or small groups of students role play scenarios
2. (e.g., asking for directions, making a phone call to schedule an appointment, ordering food at a restaurant).
3. Allow a few minutes for students to practice the dialogues.
4. Have pairs/groups perform their role play for the class.
5. Focus Points: Encourage students to speak clearly, ask questions, and listen carefully to their partner's responses.

5) EXPRESSING OPINIONS IN DISCUSSION

OBJECTIVE: To practice giving opinions and responding to others in conversation.

INSTRUCTIONS:

- a. Present the class with a simple debate topic (e.g., “Is it better to live in the city or the countryside?”).
- b. Divide students into two groups (city vs. countryside).
- c. Each group discusses their side for 2 minutes, then presents their arguments.
- d. Focus Points: Encourage students to express their opinions politely, support their arguments with reasons, and respond to the opposing side’s ideas.

6) PROBLEM SOLVING DISCUSSION

OBJECTIVE: To encourage group communication and cooperation.

INSTRUCTIONS:

1. Divide the class into small groups (3-4 students).
2. Present them with a problem to solve (e.g., “You are stranded on an island. You have five items with you. What are they and how will you use them to survive?”).

3. Each group discusses the problem, makes decisions, and presents their solution to the class.
4. Focus Points: Encourage clear explanation of ideas, active listening, and cooperative decision making

DATA ANALYSIS

The statistical analysis was made using data collected from students of C.S.I Matriculation Hr.Sec. School, from the class 6th to 9th, The paired samples t-test was used to investigate the of the hypotheses study.

PRE DIAGONISIS

| S.No | G.K & Skills (100) | Read comprehension (100) | Writing& Grammar (100) | Language &communication (100) | Speaking Skills (100) | TOTAL 300+200 =500 |
|-------------|-----------------------|-----------------------------|---------------------------|----------------------------------|--------------------------|-----------------------------------|
| Boys | 56/60 | 37/60 | 37/60 | 31/60 | 22/60 | 145/300 |
| Girls | 32/40 | 38/40 | 25/40 | 29/40 | 21/40 | 113/200 |
| GRAND TOTAL | 86 | 75 | 62 | 60 | 43 | 258/500 |

The per-diagnosis results were collected from the students of class 6th to 9th standard students randomly

ANALYSIS AND POST DIAGONISIS

| S.No | G.K & Skills (100) | Read comprehension (100) | Writing& Grammar (100) | Language &communication (100) | Speaking Skills (100) | TOTAL 300+200 =500 |
|-------------|-----------------------|-----------------------------|---------------------------|----------------------------------|--------------------------|-----------------------------------|
| Boys | 59/60 | 54/60 | 49/60 | 58/60 | 57/60 | 277/300 |
| Girls | 38/40 | 35/40 | 38/40 | 34/40 | 32/40 | 139/200 |
| GRAND TOTAL | 97 | 89 | 87 | 92 | 89 | 416/500 |

The data given has been collected from students after teaching English using PBL method

Discussion of the Results

Overall Conversation Performance

Performing projects in groups helped pupils to practice discussion in a safe environment. It enabled weak students to benefit from proficient students and thus enhanced their conversation level. Students turned from passive receivers into active participants in order to complete the assigned projects.

Students' Performance in Pronunciation: During the pre-test, most of the study group students could not pronounce correctly. Common errors were mostly related to the use of stress patterns, intonation, and the use of vowel sounds. In the post-test, students could pronounce all sounds correctly (consonants and vowels) as the program included many leading tasks and activities in which pupils' common pronunciation errors, including those resulting from interference of the mother tongue were removed. It can be concluded that teaching through projects improved students' pronunciation.

Students' Performance in Vocabulary: The results indicated that the teaching through projects improved students' use of vocabulary in actual conversations

Students' Performance in Accuracy: Although students didn't receive explicit instruction concerning grammar rules, during pre test ,post-test, the results show that students' had minor accuracies and they used more correct structures.

Students' Performance in Fluency: The study group students achieved progress in their fluency after the implementation of the program. This development is supported by students' perspectives about their learning and their development in accuracy, pronunciation and grammar. It is also supported by students' performance in the post test as well as teachers'.

Students' Performance in Communication: The participants communication skills obviously developed. They were able to respond correctly to questions and spoken instructions, take turns, maintain eye contact and use facial expressions correctly

1. Primary stage students should be given the opportunity to express their feelings as well as personal information fluently in English through authentic tasks such as projects.
2. Students should have more responsibility towards learning. They have to be trained to plan, search the internet and other resources, implement their plans, and even reflect on their own learning.
3. Supportive feedback throughout the project stages would help students to identify and strengthen their weak points This, increases their motivation and engage them.
4. There should be a change in teacher's role being a facilitator towards the learning process to a facilitator as a discussion organizer, helper, guide, and language advisor.
5. Teachers should concentrate on real-life situations which encourage learners to communicate in English freely inside the classroom.
6. Encourage students to carry out simple conversations with native speakers through the internet and record these conversations as projects

CONCLUSIONS

Project-Based Learning is a transformative approach to teaching English in schools. It fosters deeper engagement, enhances language proficiency, and equips students with essential skills for the future. By integrating real-world applications, collaboration, critical thinking, and technology, PBL makes English learning more dynamic, relevant, and effective. While challenges exist in its implementation, the benefits far outweigh the difficulties, making it a valuable pedagogical strategy for modern education. As educators continue to explore innovative teaching methods, embracing PBL can lead to more motivated, confident, and proficient English learners who are well-prepared for both academic and real-world communication challenges. Project-Based Learning (PBL) is a fun and effective way to learn new things in school. Instead of just reading from books and taking tests, you get to work on real projects that make learning exciting and relevant. When you work on projects, you understand your lessons better because you see how they apply to real-life problems. You also get to practice important skills like solving problems, working with others, and talking about your ideas. PBL helps you become more confident and independent. You learn to make decisions, manage your time, and think creatively. These skills are not just useful in school but also important for your future.

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