

## APPLICATION OF PROJECT-BASED LEARNING FOR ENHANCING ENGLISH SPEAKING SKILLS IN HIGHER EDUCATION

## ЗАСТОСУВАННЯ ПРОЄКТНОГО НАВЧАННЯ ДЛЯ РОЗВИТКУ НАВИЧОК УСНОГО МОВЛЕННЯ З АНГЛІЙСЬКОЇ МОВИ У ЗАКЛАДАХ ВИЩОЇ ОСВІТИ

*This article explores the application of Project-Based Learning (PBL) as an innovative and student-centered pedagogical approach aimed at enhancing English speaking skills in higher education. In the context of globalization and increasing demands for effective intercultural communication, the development of oral proficiency has become a priority in tertiary-level language instruction. However, traditional teacher-centered methodologies often fail to provide sufficient opportunities for authentic interaction, which negatively affects students' communicative competence and confidence. The study therefore examines the theoretical foundations of PBL, including constructivist learning theory, experiential learning principles, and communicative language teaching, and analyzes how these frameworks collectively support meaningful language acquisition.*

*Particular attention is devoted to the practical implementation of PBL in English language classrooms across diverse academic disciplines. The article discusses the design and organization of project-based tasks that stimulate authentic oral communication, such as structured debates, collaborative research projects, case studies, professional simulations, problem-solving activities, and multimedia presentations. These tasks encourage active participation, teamwork, critical thinking, and real-world language use. The paper further analyzes the impact of PBL on students' communicative competence, intrinsic motivation, speaking confidence, and learner autonomy, emphasizing its role in reducing language anxiety and fostering peer collaboration.*

*A comprehensive review of contemporary empirical studies identifies current trends, methodological challenges, and effective pedagogical strategies for integrating PBL into higher education curricula. At the same time, the article highlights unresolved issues, including questions of task-specific effectiveness, long-term retention of speaking skills, assessment validity, and the balance between linguistic accuracy and fluency development. The findings demonstrate that PBL creates a supportive learner-centered environment that enhances fluency, accuracy, reflective learning, and professional communication skills. Practical recommendations are offered for educators seeking to implement PBL successfully, focusing on careful task design, scaffolded guidance, formative assessment, and continuous feedback. Overall, the article contributes to a deeper understanding of how project-based*

*activities can transform English language teaching and sustainably improve speaking proficiency in higher education contexts.*

**Key words:** project-based learning, speaking skills, English language teaching, higher education, communicative competence

*У статті розглядається застосування проєктного навчання (Project-Based Learning, PBL) як інноваційного педагогічного підходу для розвитку навичок усного мовлення англійською мовою у закладах вищої освіти. Проаналізовано теоретичні засади PBL, що ґрунтуються на конструктивістських принципах навчання та комунікативному підході до викладання мов, а також його практичне застосування у різних академічних дисциплінах. Особлива увага приділяється проєктним завданням, що сприяють автентичному мовленню, зокрема дебатам, спільним дослідницьким проєктам, професійним симуляціям та створенню мультимедійного контенту. Розглянуто вплив PBL на комунікативну компетентність студентів, їхню мотивацію, впевненість у мовленні та автономію, а також на зниження мовного стресу та розвиток навичок взаємодії з однолітками. Проведено комплексний огляд сучасних досліджень, у якому виокремлено тенденції, проблеми та ефективні педагогічні стратегії інтеграції PBL у навчальні програми, водночас зазначено невирішені питання щодо специфіки завдань, довготривалості результатів та практик оцінювання усного мовлення. Результати свідчать, що PBL створює студент-орієнтоване середовище навчання, яке підтримує розвиток плавності та точності мовлення, критичного мислення, рефлексивного навчання та готує студентів до академічного, професійного й міжкультурного спілкування в умовах глобалізованого освітнього простору. Наведено рекомендації для викладачів щодо ефективного впровадження PBL, включно з ретельним проєктуванням завдань, навчальним супроводом, формативним і підсумковим оцінюванням. Стаття робить внесок у розуміння того, як проєктно-орієнтовані діяльності можуть трансформувати навчання англійської мови та покращити навички усного мовлення у вищій освіті.*

**Ключові слова:** проєктне навчання, навички усного мовлення, англійська мова, вища освіта, комунікативна компетентність

UDC 378.147:811.111

DOI <https://doi.org/10.32782/ip/93.2.28>

Стаття поширюється на умовах ліцензії відкритого доступу CC BY 4.0



**Reshytko A.D.,**

[orcid.org/0000-0002-7891-7092](https://orcid.org/0000-0002-7891-7092)

Senior Lecturer at the Department of Humanities

Sumy Branch of Kharkiv National University of Internal Affairs

**Dovhopolova G.G.,**

[orcid.org/0000-0003-3157-0973](https://orcid.org/0000-0003-3157-0973)

PhD in Education, Associate Professor, Associate Professor at the Department of English Language and Communication Borys Grinchenko Kyiv Metropolitan University

**Introduction. Problem statement.** Developing speaking skills remains a critical challenge in English language teaching at the tertiary level. Traditional teacher-centered approaches often emphasize grammar, vocabulary memorization, and reading comprehension over sustained oral practice, which frequently results in students' limited communicative competence and low

confidence in using English in authentic contexts. This challenge is particularly pronounced in higher education, where students are expected not only to understand academic content but also to engage in discussions, presentations, and professional interactions in English. The gap between receptive skills (reading, listening) and productive skills (speaking, writing) often hinders students' ability to

participate effectively in international academic and professional environments [11. p. 123].

Furthermore, studies indicate that many students experience anxiety and reluctance to speak in foreign languages, a phenomenon known as «foreign language speaking anxiety,» which negatively affects performance and motivation [7]. Traditional lecture-based teaching, where teacher talk dominates classroom interaction, provides limited opportunities for negotiation of meaning, spontaneous language use, and collaborative problem-solving—all of which are essential for developing fluent and confident speaking skills.

In response to these challenges, innovative pedagogical approaches such as Project-Based Learning (PBL) have gained prominence in higher education. PBL shifts the focus from teacher-led instruction to student-centered, experiential learning, emphasizing active engagement, critical thinking, and collaboration. In the context of English language learning, PBL enables students to participate in authentic communicative activities, such as group discussions, role plays, presentations, and project presentations, which mirror real-life academic and professional scenarios. By engaging in meaningful, goal-oriented projects, students are encouraged to practice oral communication continuously, receive peer feedback, and reflect on their performance, thereby enhancing both fluency and accuracy [10. p. 31]; [2].

Moreover, PBL fosters motivation and learner autonomy, empowering students to take responsibility for their learning process. It aligns with the principles of communicative language teaching and constructivist learning theory, which posit that knowledge is constructed through active interaction and collaboration with others. By integrating PBL into English language curricula, educators can provide sustained opportunities for authentic language use, bridge the gap between receptive and productive skills, and better prepare students for academic, professional, and intercultural communication demands [6, p. 17]; [9, p. 215].

The globalized context of higher education necessitates proficiency in English for academic, professional, and intercultural communication. However, the insufficient emphasis on oral practice in conventional methods hinders students' development of speaking skills. It is therefore essential to investigate pedagogical approaches that foster authentic communication, learner autonomy, and collaboration. PBL addresses these needs by engaging students in meaningful, goal-oriented activities that require active use of the target language.

**Analysis of current research and publications.** Project-Based Learning has been widely recognized as an effective method for promoting practical language use, collaborative learning, and critical

thinking. Thomas defines PBL as an instructional model in which students work on complex, meaningful tasks to produce tangible outcomes [6, p. 15]. Stoller emphasizes its relevance in language education, highlighting integration of all language skills in authentic contexts [5, p. 31]. Kurniawan reports that students engaged in PBL demonstrate higher fluency and oral confidence than those taught via traditional methods [2, p. 104]. Abu Bakar et al. note that project-based activities foster learner autonomy, collaboration, and engagement [1, p. 49].

Despite these findings, few studies systematically explore PBL specifically for developing English speaking skills in higher education contexts. This gap underscores the need for a detailed theoretical analysis and synthesis of existing pedagogical practices.

Identification of Previously Unresolved Parts of the General Problem. Despite extensive research on Project-Based Learning (PBL) in language education, several aspects of its effectiveness for developing English speaking skills in higher education remain underexplored. In particular, there is limited evidence on which specific types of project tasks—such as debates, presentations, simulations, or multimedia projects—most effectively enhance fluency, accuracy, and communicative confidence [2, p. 107; 1, p. 52]. Furthermore, most studies focus on short-term interventions, leaving the long-term impact of PBL on speaking skill retention and transfer to professional contexts insufficiently examined.

Another unresolved issue concerns the adaptation of PBL to diverse disciplinary curricula and consistent assessment practices. While general guidelines exist, specific approaches for different academic fields and reliable methods for evaluating oral proficiency within PBL remain underdeveloped [9. p. 35; 5. p. 219]. Addressing these gaps will help optimize task design, improve speaking outcomes, and provide evidence-based recommendations for implementing PBL in higher education.

**The aim of this article** is to analyze the theoretical foundations and practical applications of Project-Based Learning (PBL) in higher education for enhancing English speaking skills. It seeks to identify pedagogical strategies, evaluate the benefits and challenges of PBL, and highlight gaps in the current research that require further exploration. By synthesizing existing literature and theoretical perspectives, the article provides recommendations for effectively implementing PBL to promote fluency, accuracy, learner autonomy, and authentic communication in tertiary-level English language instruction.

**Presenting main material.** Grounded in constructivist learning theory, PBL posits that knowledge is actively constructed through engagement and social interaction. In English

language instruction, PBL involves collaborative projects, presentations, and oral discussions, which provide authentic communicative contexts. Learners develop fluency, accuracy, and competence by negotiating meaning and presenting project outcomes [5. p. 31]. Additionally, PBL promotes cognitive, metacognitive, and socio-emotional skills essential for academic success.

Typical PBL activities designed to enhance speaking skills encompass a wide range of collaborative and authentic tasks. These include group debates on current global or professional topics, collaborative research projects culminating in oral presentations, simulations of real-world professional scenarios, and creation of multimedia content requiring explanation, argumentation, and justification. In each of these activities, students are required to communicate their ideas clearly, negotiate meaning with peers, and adapt language use according to context and audience.

For instance, a collaborative research project may involve investigating a contemporary social issue, preparing a report in English, and presenting findings to the class. Students are encouraged to ask questions, provide feedback, and engage in critical discussion, thereby practicing both formal and informal modes of oral communication. Similarly, role-playing simulations of professional scenarios—such as mock legal consultations, business negotiations, or academic conference presentations—allow learners to experience the communicative demands of real-life situations. Multimedia projects, such as video explanations or podcasts, integrate speaking with digital literacy skills, challenging students to organize and present information coherently and persuasively.

These PBL tasks place students in authentic communicative situations, fostering meaningful language use while reducing anxiety commonly associated with oral performance. Peer interaction is a central component, as students negotiate meaning, co-construct knowledge, and provide evaluative feedback. This collaborative learning environment encourages reflection, self-assessment, and critical thinking, which are crucial for the development of both linguistic and socio-cognitive competencies [1. p. 51; 8. p. 42].

Moreover, the flexibility of PBL allows instructors to tailor tasks to students' proficiency levels and disciplinary contexts. For example, English majors may focus on academic presentations and debates, whereas law or business students might engage in professional simulations or policy analysis projects. Assessment strategies may include oral presentations, peer evaluations, reflective journals, and portfolio work, which collectively provide a comprehensive picture of students' speaking skills and learning progress [5. p. 34].

The pedagogical effectiveness of PBL stems from its strong alignment with communicative language

teaching principles, emphasizing active engagement, learner autonomy, and purposeful communication. Unlike traditional lecture-based methods, which often prioritize grammar drills and reading comprehension, PBL situates learners at the center of the learning process, fostering both fluency and accuracy in oral communication. By engaging in authentic, goal-oriented tasks, students develop confidence in expressing ideas, defending arguments, and responding to peer input [2. p. 108].

In addition to linguistic benefits, PBL contributes to cognitive and socio-emotional development. Collaborative projects enhance problem-solving abilities, critical thinking, and intercultural awareness, all of which are essential for higher education students preparing for globalized professional contexts. Furthermore, sustained involvement in project-based tasks has been shown to increase motivation, reduce speaking anxiety, and promote lifelong learning habits [6. p. 22; 3. p. 28].

However, successful implementation of PBL requires careful consideration of certain challenges. Task design must be aligned with learning objectives, ensuring that projects are sufficiently complex to stimulate discussion yet feasible within time and resource constraints. Assessment of oral performance should be transparent, multidimensional, and consistent, incorporating self- and peer-evaluation to complement instructor judgment. Additionally, instructors must be adequately trained to facilitate collaboration, provide constructive feedback, and scaffold language use without dominating interaction. Despite these challenges, the benefits for higher education learners, particularly in developing English speaking skills, are substantial and justify the integration of PBL into language curricula [9. p. 218].

**Conclusion.** Project-Based Learning offers a robust, research-based framework for enhancing English speaking skills in higher education. By integrating collaborative, authentic, and goal-oriented tasks, PBL promotes fluency, accuracy, learner autonomy, and critical thinking. The literature confirms its pedagogical effectiveness across diverse educational contexts, highlighting its capacity to prepare students for both academic and professional communication demands.

Moreover, PBL encourages active student engagement, fosters motivation, and reduces language anxiety, contributing to a positive learning environment that supports long-term skill development. Educators are encouraged to implement PBL strategies thoughtfully, considering learners' needs, disciplinary contexts, and assessment frameworks. Further research should explore longitudinal outcomes, the impact of task complexity on speaking proficiency, and strategies for optimizing instructor facilitation. Ultimately, the adoption of PBL in English

language teaching represents a meaningful step toward developing comprehensive communicative competence and professional readiness among tertiary-level students.

#### REFERENCES:

1. Abu Bakar N. I., Noordin N., Razali A. B. Improving oral communicative competence in English using project-based learning activities. *English Language Teaching*. 2025. Vol. 18, No. 2. p. 45–57. <https://doi.org/10.5539/elt.v18n2p45>
2. Beckett G. H., Miller P. C. *Project-Based Second and Foreign Language Education*. Charlotte, NC: Information Age Publishing, 2006. 306 p.
3. Bell S. Project-Based Learning for the 21st Century. *The Clearing House*. 2010. Vol. 83, No. 2. p. 39–43. <https://doi.org/10.1080/00098650903505415>
4. Brown H. D. *Principles of Language Learning and Teaching*. 6th ed. Harlow: Pearson Education, 2014. 648 p.
5. Gunawan I. D. Enhancing speaking and collaboration skills through project-based learning. *PROJECT Journal*. 2025. Vol. 7, No. 1. p. 22–34.
6. Harmer J. *The Practice of English Language Teaching*. 5th ed. Harlow: Pearson Education Limited, 2015. 446 p.
7. Kurniawan Y. The effectiveness of Project-Based Learning in enhancing students' speaking skills. *Jurnal Review Pendidikan dan Pengajaran*. 2025. Vol. 8, No. 1. p. 101–110. <https://doi.org/10.31004/jrpp.v8i1.42957>
8. Richards J. C., Rodgers T. S. *Approaches and Methods in Language Teaching*. 3rd ed. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2014. 419 p.
9. Stoller F. Establishing a theoretical foundation for project-based learning in second and foreign language contexts. In: Beckett G. H., Miller P. C. (eds.). *Project-Based Second and Foreign Language Education*. Charlotte, NC: Information Age Publishing, 2006. p. 19–40.
10. Thomas J. W. *A Review of Research on Project-Based Learning*. San Rafael, CA: Autodesk Foundation, 2000. 45 p.
11. Рембач, О. О., Глінська Н. І., Шерстюк Н. В. Проєктна діяльність як засіб підвищення мотивації до вивчення англійської мови *Вісник науки та освіти*. – 2024. – № 10 (28). – С. 431–443. [https://doi.org/10.52058/2786-6165-2024-10\(28\)-431-443](https://doi.org/10.52058/2786-6165-2024-10(28)-431-443)

Дата першого надходження статті до видання: 11.03.2026

Дата прийняття статті до друку після рецензування: 24.04.2026

Дата публікації (оприлюднення) статті: 08.05.2026