



НАУЧНАЯ АРТЕЛЬ

АКАДЕМИЧЕСКОЕ ИЗДАТЕЛЬСТВО

16+

ISSN (p) 2411-7161

ISSN (e) 2712-9500

№ 4/2026

**НАУЧНЫЙ ЖУРНАЛ
«IN SITU»**

Москва
2026

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EVALUATING THE EFFECTIVENESS OF PROJECT-BASED LEARNING IN DEVELOPING ENGLISH SPEAKING SKILLS FOR STUDENTS AT THE HANOI UNIVERSITY OF MINING AND GEOLOGY

Abstract

This study evaluates the effectiveness of Project-Based Learning (PBL) in enhancing the English speaking proficiency of non-English major students at the Hanoi University of Mining and Geology (HUMG). A quasi-experimental design was implemented across several English classes during the 2024 and 2025 academic years, with 234 valid survey responses collected post-intervention. The results indicate that a majority of students perceived significant improvements in motivation, confidence, fluency, vocabulary, and pronunciation. Despite relying on self-reported data, the findings suggest that PBL is an effective pedagogical method for developing communicative competence within the English as a Foreign Language (EFL) context. The study also discusses pedagogical implications and proposes directions for future research.

Keywords:

Project-Based Learning, English speaking skills, EFL, higher education, communication skills.

1. Introduction

Developing speaking skills is a paramount yet challenging objective in teaching and learning English as a Foreign Language (EFL), particularly for students in technical fields who often have limited opportunities for real-world communication. According to the interactionist perspective in second language acquisition, language development occurs through meaningful communication and the "negotiation of meaning" between learners (Michael Long, 1996). Providing frequent opportunities for language production is considered a prerequisite for enhancing speaking competence.

In the trend of learner-centered educational reform, Project-Based Learning (PBL) has gained increasing attention. According to Larmer et al. (2015), PBL is not merely an isolated activity but a comprehensive instructional strategy that bridges the gap between theory and practice. This model is rooted in John Dewey's (1938) experiential learning theory and Lev Vygotsky's (1978) social constructivism, emphasizing the central role of interaction, collaboration, and meaningful participation in knowledge construction. In language teaching, PBL shares similarities with Task-based Learning, where students engage in goal-oriented communicative activities to create specific products (Rod Ellis, 2003).

Numerous international studies have demonstrated that PBL contributes significantly to increasing learner motivation, confidence, and speaking effectiveness in EFL contexts. However, in Vietnam, research