Investigating the Benefits of Multimodal Project-Based Learning in Teaching English to International Students

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ABSTRACT

This research investigates how English as a Foreign Language (EFL) educators in Saudi Arabian higher education institutions modify their approach to implement project-based learning (PJBL) in their classrooms. Eleven EFL teachers with experience in PJBL implementation were selected for email interviews, and the data were analyzed using thematic analysis. The data was procured by means of email interviews conducted with the participants, wherein the interview questions were formulated based on the research inquiries and encompassed various dimensions of PjBL implementation in EFL instruction. The participants were instructed to furnish their responses to the questions via email, and subsequently, their replies were meticulously transcribed verbatim. The results showed that the teachers employed various adaptation strategies, including modifying the project tasks to suit the language level of the students, using scaffolding techniques to support learning, and incorporating multimodal elements into the projects. The study highlights the importance of teacher autonomy and flexibility in adapting PJBL to the needs of EFL learners. The findings also suggest that PJBL has the potential to enhance language learning and promote critical thinking skills. However, some limitations to PJBL implementation were identified, such as the need for additional training and resources. The study provides recommendations for EFL teachers and institutions to improve PJBL implementation and support effective language learning.

INTRODUCTION

English language proficiency is a crucial aspect of education and career development in Saudi Arabia, as it is the most commonly used language in international communication, especially in the fields of business, science, and technology. To meet the demand for English language proficiency, many higher education institutions in Saudi Arabia have incorporated English language courses into their curricula (Al-Shehri, 2020; Daraghmeh, et al.,2021). However, traditional teaching approaches may not be effective in promoting language learning, as they often lack engagement and motivation (Al-Abidi et al.,2023). In response to this challenge, project-based learning (PJBL) has emerged as a pedagogical approach that promotes meaningful and engaging learning experiences. PJBL involves students working on projects that are designed to address real-life problems, thereby promoting critical thinking, problem-solving, and collaboration. PJBL has shown promise in promoting language proficiency in EFL contexts, and it has become increasingly popular in EFL teaching in Saudi Arabia (Almazroui, 2022; Almuhammadi, 2020; Kassem, 2018)

PJBL is an instructional approach that is rooted in constructivist learning, wherein learners construct knowledge through multiple perspectives in a social context that is also dependent on the context. Scholars have identified five criteria for successful PjBL implementation, including a central focus on the curriculum, an emphasis on engaging students in grappling with major concepts, constructivist investigation, student-driven learning, and realism. PJBL typically involves certain elements, such as a central activity, a specific task, research, access to necessary resources, support, cooperation, and chances for reflection and application. However, despite its advantages, PJBL can be difficult for teachers to execute, as highlighted by researchers Loyens et al. (2023), Tamim et al. (2013), and Yau et al. (2023).

Despite the growing popularity of PJBL, there is limited research on its effectiveness in EFL classrooms, particularly in the Saudi Arabian context. Thus, this study's significance is to explore the potential benefits of multimodal PJBL on the language proficiency and overall development of EFL learners.

Objectives

The objectives of this study are:

1. To explore the effectiveness of multimodal PjBL in EFL classrooms in higher education institutions in Saudi Arabia.
2. To investigate how PjBL can be adapted to cater to the needs of EFL learners with different proficiency levels and learning styles.
3. To examine how EFL teachers collaborate with stakeholders to implement PJBL in EFL classrooms or institutions.
4. To determine the future of PjBL in EFL teaching and its role in enhancing EFL learners' language proficiency and overall development.

Study Question

How does the implementation of multimodal project-based learning in EFL classrooms impact the language proficiency and overall development of international students in higher education institutions in Saudi Arabia?

LITERATURE REVIEW

PjBL is a teaching method where students solve real-world problems. It has become popular in EFL teaching as it enhances language skills, critical thinking, and collaboration. According to Tamim et al. (2013), PjBL engages students in inquiry-based learning by solving relevant problems. Duffy and Cunningham (1996) describe it as a constructivist approach that promotes self-awareness of learning. Mergendoller and Thomas (2005) list five criteria for successful PjBL, including centrality to the curriculum, focus on major concepts, student-driven learning, and realism. Grant (2011) highlights common features such as an anchor activity, task, investigation, resources, scaffolding, collaboration, and reflection.

The basic principle of PjBL is to create a learning environment that allows learners to explore, apply, and transfer knowledge and skills in a meaningful context. This approach emphasizes the integration of content knowledge with critical thinking, problem-solving, and decision-making skills.

In EFL teaching, PjBL has been widely used to promote language learning in meaningful and authentic contexts. By engaging learners in real-world projects, PjBL provies opportunities for learners to use language in practical situations and to develop their language skills through interaction with peers and experts.

As per Aghayani and Hajmohammadi (2019), PjBL in EFL teaching is an instructional method that places a premium on student-centered and collaborative learning. By working on projects that necessitate language use in diverse contexts, students enhance their language skills while participating in a collaborative process. This definition underscores the crucial role of learner-centeredness and collaboration in PjBL, which are integral aspects of the approach. In essence, PjBL is a teaching strategy that immerses students in

authentic, real-world projects, fostering the integration of content knowledge, critical thinking, problem-solving, and decision-making skills. In EFL teaching, PjBL provides a meaningful and genuine context for language learning, highlighting the significance of learner-centeredness and collaboration.

Benefits of project-based learning for language learning

Project-based learning (PjBL) has been found to have a range of benefits for language learning in EFL classrooms. Here are some of the key benefits:

1. Promotes active engagement: PjBL promotes active engagement in learning by having students work on real-world projects that require the use of language skills. This can deepen learners' understanding of language concepts and reinforce their learning, according to Almazroui (2022).
2. Develops critical thinking and problem-solving skills: PjBL fosters critical thinking and problem-solving skills by having learners tackle real-world problems, enabling them to analyze and solve them. As a result, this enhances cognitive skills that can be applied to other situations (Rohm et al., 2021).
3. Provides opportunities for collaboration: PjBL provides opportunities for learners to collaborate with peers and experts, which can promote social and interpersonal skills as well as language development. Collaboration can also enhance learners' motivation and engagement in the learning process (Lai, 2021).
4. Integrates language skills: PjBL allows learners to integrate different language skills, including reading, and writing, speaking, listening, in a meaningful and authentic context. This integration can help learners develop their language skills in a more holistic way (Sirisrimangkorn, 2021).
5. Encourages learner autonomy: PjBL promotes learner autonomy by empowering them to decide on their projects and take accountability for their learning results. This can help learners develop self-regulation and autonomy, which are important for long-term learning and success (English & Kitsantas, 2013).
6. Provides authentic assessment opportunities: PjBL provides authentic assessment opportunities by allowing learners to demonstrate their learning through the completion of real-world projects. This can provide a more accurate and authentic measure of learners' language proficiency and development (Boss & Krauss, 2022).

PjBL has been found to have a range of benefits for language learning in EFL classrooms, including promoting active engagement, developing critical thinking and problem-solving skills, providing opportunities for collaboration, integrating language skills, encouraging learner autonomy, and providing authentic assessment opportunities. These benefits can help learners develop their language skills in a more meaningful and holistic way.

Implementation of project-based learning in EFL classrooms

Previous research has revealed that implementing project-based learning (PJBL) successfully in EFL classrooms requires meticulous planning, preparation, and implementation. In order to effectively implement PjBL in EFL classrooms, scholars have identified several key steps (Krajcik et al., 2008, Loyens et al.,2023; Sari & Prasetyo, 2021; Yuliani & Lengkanawati, 2017):

1. Define learning objectives: To implement PjBL, it is essential to establish specific learning objectives that align with the curriculum and learning outcomes. These objectives should be effectively communicated to learners and should inform the design and execution of the project.
2. Select an appropriate project: The project should be selected based on the learning objectives and should be authentic, relevant, and engaging for learners. The project should also allow learners to use language skills in a meaningful way and provide opportunities for collaboration and problem-solving.

3. Plan the project: The project should be carefully planned to ensure that it meets the learning objectives and allows for the integration of language skills. The project plan should include timelines, resources, and assessment criteria.

4. Provide support and scaffolding: Learners should be provided with support and scaffolding to help them complete the project successfully. This may include language support, technical support, and guidance on project management and problem-solving.

5. Encourage collaboration: Collaboration is an important aspect of PjBL, and learners should be encouraged to work together in groups or teams to complete the project. Collaboration can enhance learners' social and interpersonal skills as well as their language development.

6. Monitor and assess progress: The progress of the project should be monitored regularly to ensure that learners are on track and meeting the learning objectives. Assessment should be integrated into the project and should be based on clear criteria that align with the learning objectives.

7. Reflect and evaluate: At the end of the project, learners should reflect on their learning and evaluate their performance. This reflection and evaluation can help learners identify areas for improvement and can inform future PJBL projects.

Effective implementation of PJBL in English as a Foreign Language classrooms necessitate meticulous planning, ample support, and scaffolding. Additionally, it requires prioritizing collaboration, language integration, and authentic assessment. Successful implementation of PjBL can foster active engagement, critical thinking, problem-solving, collaboration, learner autonomy, and language development, as illustrated in Figure 1.
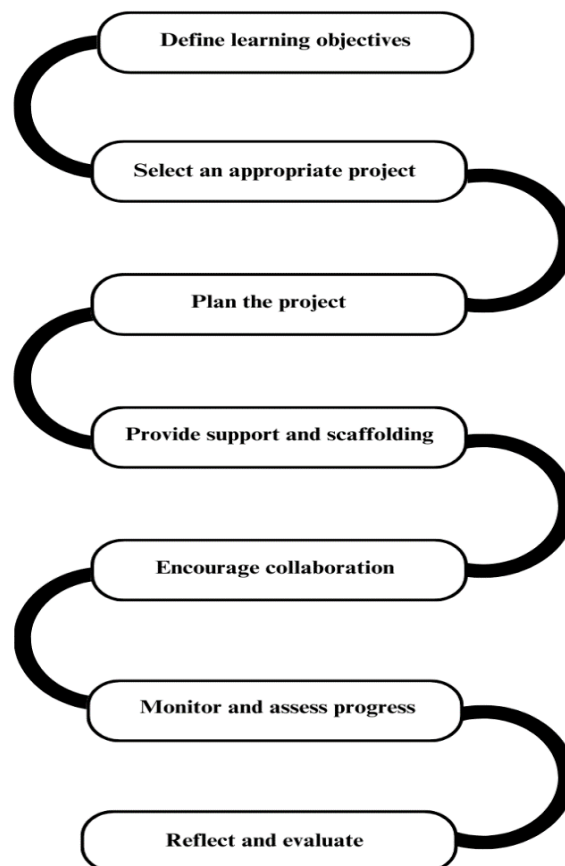

Figure 1. Key steps to implementing PjBL effectively in EFL classrooms

Multimodal project-based learning in EFL teaching

Multimodal project-based learning is an approach to EFL teaching that integrates multiple modes of communication and representation into project-based activities. This approach recognizes that language learning is not limited to verbal communication but can also involve visual, auditory, and other forms of representation (Miller et al., 2012).

Multimodal PJBL can involve a range of activities, such as creating videos, designing posters, composing songs, or producing digital presentations. These activities require learners to use multiple modes of representation, such as language, images, sound, and gestures, to communicate meaning effectively. The multimodal aspect of PjBL can enhance learners' engagement, creativity, and critical thinking. It can also provide opportunities for learners to develop their digital literacy and media literacy skills. In addition, multimodal PjBL can support the development of language skills, such as listening, speaking, reading, and writing, as learners engage in authentic communication and expression (Hafner & Ho, 2020; Jiang & Lee, 2022).

Various contexts, including language classrooms, language labs, or online learning environments, can benefit from the implementation of multimodal project-based learning (PJBL). To ensure that learners have the necessary resources, skills, and support to effectively engage in multimodal communication and representation, careful planning, preparation, and scaffolding are essential (Bouchey et al., 2021). Multimodal PjBL is an innovative approach to EFL teaching that recognizes the significance of integrating multiple modes of representation into language learning. It has the potential to enhance learners' engagement, creativity, and critical thinking, as well as their language skills and digital literacy.

Adaptation strategies for project-based learning in EFL teaching

Adaptation strategies are crucial in PjBL to cater to the diverse needs and learning styles of EFL learners. In adapting PjBL, EFL teachers must consider various factors such as language proficiency, cultural background, and prior knowledge. One of the most effective adaptation strategies is providing scaffolding support to students in the form of guidance, feedback, and resources. This helps learners to develop their skills gradually and gain a better understanding of the project. Another adaptation strategy is the use of differentiated instruction, where the teacher provides different levels of support and resources based on individual learners' needs. This ensures that all learners are challenged at an appropriate level and can succeed in the project. Incorporating multimedia elements into PjBL also enhances adaptation strategies, providing multiple modes of engagement, such as visual, auditory, and kinesthetic. Overall, adaptation strategies in PjBL are crucial to ensure that all EFL learners have the opportunity to succeed and develop their language proficiency while engaging in meaningful and relevant projects (Lu, 2021; Tally, 2015; Vu & Dinh, 2022)

The existing literature on PjBL in EFL teaching has mostly focused on Western contexts, and there is a paucity of research on its application in Saudi Arabian EFL classrooms. Moreover, few studies have explored how PjBL can be adapted to meet the needs of different learners, particularly those with varying proficiency levels and learning styles. Therefore, this study aims to address these gaps by examining the effectiveness of PjBL in the Saudi Arabian EFL context and how it can be adapted to cater to different learner needs.

METHODS

The methodology section of this study outlines the research design, data collection methods, and analysis procedures used to explore the advantages of multimodal project-based learning in teaching EFL to international students. It covers the research objectives, participant selection, data collection instruments, and procedures, as well as the rationale for choosing email interviews as the primary data collection method. The section also discusses ethical considerations and measures taken to ensure the validity, reliability, and generalizability of the findings.

Participants

Eleven English as a Foreign Language (EFL) teachers currently working in higher education institutions in Saudi Arabia were included in the study. All participants held either a Master's degree or a Doctorate in TESOL, Applied Linguistics, English Education, Education, English, or Linguistics. The participants had varied EFL teaching experience ranging from 2 to 15 years. Eleven participants, six of whom were female and five were male, were selected through purposive sampling based on their experience and proficiency in implementing project-based learning in their English as a Foreign Language classrooms at higher education institutions in Saudi Arabia. The age range of the participants was 31 to 52 years old.

Table 1. The participants characteristics

Participant ID	Qualifications	Sample Characteristics
1	Doctorate in TESOL, 10 years of EFL teaching experience	Male, age 45, teaches at a university in Saudi Arabia
2	Master's degree in English, TEFL certification, 3 years of EFL teaching experience	Female, age 39, teaches at a university in Saudi Arabia
3	Doctorate in Applied Linguistics, 7 years of EFL teaching experience	Male, age 37, teaches at a university in Saudi Arabia
4	Master's degree in education, CELTA certification, 5 years of EFL teaching experience	Female, age 31, teaches at a university in Saudi Arabia
5	Doctorate in English Education, 12 years of EFL teaching experience	Female, age 52, teaches at a university in Saudi Arabia
6	Master's degree in English, TESOL certification, 4 years of EFL teaching experience	Male, age 32, teaches at a university in Saudi Arabia
7	Doctorate in English, 8 years of EFL teaching experience	Female, age 38, teaches at a university in Saudi Arabia
8	Master's degree in Linguistics, 2 years of EFL teaching experience	Male, age 36, teaches at a university in Saudi Arabia
9	Doctorate in TESOL, 6 years of EFL teaching experience	Female, age 41, teaches at a university in Saudi Arabia
10	Master's degree in Education, TEFL certification, 3 years of EFL teaching experience	Male, age 39, teaches at a university in Saudi Arabia
11	Doctorate in Linguistics, 15 years of EFL teaching experience	Male, age 50, teaches at a university in Saudi Arabia

Instrument

Interview Questions

Table 2 presents a set of interview questions that are carefully crafted to elicit detailed and thoughtful responses from English as a Foreign Language (EFL) teachers regarding their experiences with PjBL. The questions cover a wide range of topics related to PJBL, such as its definition, benefits for EFL learners, essential skills and competencies that learners can develop through PJBL, and factors that influence its integration into the EFL curriculum. Additionally, the questions explore the challenges that teachers face when implementing PjBL, how they assess its effectiveness, and how they adapt it to meet the needs of

various learners. The interview also investigates the collaborative efforts of teachers and other stakeholders in implementing PjBL and the future of PjBL in EFL teaching

Table 2. Interview Questions for PJBL in EFL Classrooms

Q.1	Can you describe your experience with PjBL in teaching English as a Foreign Language?
Q.2	How do you define PjBL and its benefits for EFL learners?
Q.3	In your opinion, what are the most important skills or competencies that EFL learners can develop through PjBL?
Q.4	How do you integrate PjBL into your EFL curriculum, and what factors influence your decision to do so?
Q.5	Can you describe a successful PjBL project that you have implemented in your EFL classroom? What made it successful?
Q.6	What challenges have you faced when implementing PjBL in your EFL classroom, and how have you overcome them?
Q.7	How do you assess the effectiveness of PjBL projects in your EFL classroom?
Q.8	How do you adapt PjBL to meet the needs of different EFL learners, such as those with different proficiency levels or learning styles?
Q.9	How do you collaborate with other teachers or stakeholders to implement PJBL in your EFL classroom or institution?
Q.10	How do you envision the future of PjBL in EFL teaching, and what role does it play in enhancing EFL learners' language proficiency and overall development?

These questions are open-ended and encourage participants to share their experiences, opinions, and insights on PjBL in EFL teaching, and can provide rich data for your research study.

Data Collection

The data was collected through email interviews with the participants. The interview questions were developed based on the research questions and covered various aspects of PjBL implementation in EFL teaching. The participants were asked to respond to the questions via email, and their responses were written and transcribed verbatim.

Data Analysis

Thematic analysis was used to analyze the data collected from the email interviews. The transcribed data was carefully read and reread to familiarize the researcher with the data. Afterward, the data was coded and categorized, and themes and patterns related to the research question were identified. The coding process involved assigning labels to text segments that represented specific concepts or ideas related to the research question. These codes were then grouped into categories that reflected broader themes within the data. The constant comparison process was employed to ensure that the themes and patterns identified were consistent with the data and not influenced by preconceived notions or biases. The analysis was conducted manually to ensure accuracy and rigor in the interpretation of the data. The themes and patterns that emerged from the analysis provided insights into the experiences and perceptions of EFL teachers regarding the implementation of project-based learning in their classrooms.

Validity and Reliability

To ensure the validity and reliability of the study, various measures were taken. The interview questions were reviewed by a panel of experts to ensure their clarity and comprehensibility. The participants were informed of the study's purpose and procedures, and their consent was obtained before the interviews. To enhance the reliability of the study, the researcher maintained a reflexive journal to document the research process and potential biases. A reflexive journal is a tool used by researchers to document their thoughts and reflections throughout the research process (Edwards, 2023). It serves as a record of the researcher's personal biases, assumptions, and interpretations, which can influence the research findings. By maintaining a reflexive journal, researchers can enhance the validity and reliability of their study by acknowledging and addressing potential biases and reflecting on how their personal experiences and beliefs may have influenced the research process and findings. It is a way to ensure transparency and accountability in the research process.

Ethical Considerations:

The present study was conducted with a strong adherence to ethical principles. Informed consent, confidentiality, and anonymity were among the key ethical considerations upheld throughout the study. All participants' identities and personal information were kept confidential to maintain their anonymity in the study reporting. Furthermore, the researcher took necessary steps to ensure ethical considerations were met throughout the study. For instance, ethical clearance was obtained from the relevant institutional review board. Additionally, the confidentiality of participants' responses was ensured throughout the study, and all data collected and analyzed were kept secure and only accessible by the researcher. Email interviews were used as a data collection method to ensure flexibility in scheduling and conducting the interviews. This approach also enabled participants to provide thoughtful responses to the questions. In summary, the methodology used in this study was carefully designed to ensure the collection of valid and reliable data while upholding ethical considerations.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Result

The study yielded valuable results regarding the implementation of project-based learning in EFL classrooms. This section offers a brief overview of the findings, including the main themes and patterns that surfaced during data analysis. The subsequent discussion will emphasize the importance of these findings for EFL teaching and provide suggestions for future research and practical application.

1. *Can you describe your experience with project-based learning (PJBL) in teaching English as a Foreign Language (EFL)?*

Participant 1 stated, "I have been utilizing PJBL in my EFL classroom for numerous years, and it has proven to be a highly effective approach in engaging students in learning and promoting critical thinking and collaboration skills." Participant 2 also expressed their experience with PJBL, saying, "I have implemented PJBL with my EFL students in different contexts, such as writing, reading, and oral communication. It has been a successful approach to foster language acquisition and enable students to apply their language skills in genuine situations." Participant 6 added, "In my experience, PJBL is an effective strategy for enhancing student motivation and engagement in EFL learning. It provides opportunities for students to learn in a hands-on manner and develops their problem-solving and communication skills." Participant 10 also emphasized the value of PJBL, stating, "PJBL is an excellent tool for promoting student-centered learning in EFL classrooms. It facilitates the development of 21st-century skills and encourages students to take ownership of their learning process."

2. *How do you define PJBL and its benefits for EFL learners?*

PjBL is a teaching technique that requires students to cooperate in solving real-world issues using their knowledge and skills. Participant 3 believes that PJBL provides numerous advantages to EFL learners, including the enhancement of communication, critical thinking, and problem-solving skills, as well as the opportunity to practice language skills in genuine settings. Additionally, participant 4 described PJBL as a learner-centric approach that fuses language instruction with 21st-century skills like independent learning, innovation, and cooperation. These benefits make PJBL a popular approach in EFL classrooms, with participant 1 noting that they have used it effectively for several years to engage students and promote critical thinking and collaboration. Participant 2 also found success with PJBL, using it to promote language acquisition and help students apply their language skills in authentic contexts such as writing, reading, and oral communication.

3. *In your opinion, what are the most important skills or competencies that EFL learners can develop through PJBL?*

PJBL, as an instructional approach, is seen to offer various benefits for EFL learners. Participant 5 stated, "The most important skills that EFL learners can develop through PJBL are communication, critical thinking, and collaboration. These skills are essential for success in the 21st century and are highly valued by employers." Additionally, Participant 6 emphasized the benefits of PjBL, saying "PjBL helps EFL learners to develop a range of skills and competencies, including problem-solving, research, presentation, and reflection. These skills are important for academic success and for preparing students for future careers." Participant 9 added, "PjBL allows for authentic language use, which enhances the development of language skills in EFL learners. This approach promotes active learning, student-centeredness, and teacher collaboration." Finally, Participant 10 stated, "PjBL can be adapted to different levels and contexts of EFL instruction, which makes it a versatile and effective approach. It provides students with opportunities to develop language skills while engaging in meaningful and relevant projects."

4. *How do you integrate PJBL into your EFL curriculum, and what factors influence your decision to do so?*

When integrating Project-Based Learning (PJBL) into their EFL curriculum, participants 7 and 8 highlighted the importance of selecting or designing projects that are authentic, relevant, and engaging for their students. Participants 3 and 7 emphasized the need to align the projects with course objectives and student needs while considering available resources. Participant 8, on the other hand, stressed the importance of designing projects that are meaningful and relevant to students' lives and interests, while also promoting language development and 21st-century competencies. Additionally, participants 5 and 8 mentioned the importance of considering the goals of the course and the available technology when making decisions about PJBL integration. Both participants recognized the significance of thoughtful project selection and design as key factors in successfully integrating PJBL into their EFL curriculum.

Participants 9, 10, and 11 all have different approaches to integrating PJBL into their EFL curriculum. Participant 9 starts with a clear project goal and then identifies the language skills and content knowledge needed for students to achieve it. They also provide scaffolding and support throughout the project to help students succeed. Participant 10 involves students in the project design process by asking them to identify topics that interest them and working with them to develop projects that align with course objectives and their interests. This approach increases student engagement and motivation. Participant 11 focuses on the needs and interests of their students by conducting a needs analysis to identify areas where students need language development. They then design projects that address those needs and incorporate students' interests and cultural backgrounds into the project design to increase their motivation and engagement. These participants' approaches demonstrate the flexibility and adaptability of PJBL as an instructional approach, as they consider various factors when designing projects and prioritize student engagement and success.

5. *Can you describe a successful PJBL project that you have implemented in your EFL classroom? What made it successful?*

Participants 1 to 11 share a common interest in using PJBL in their EFL curriculum. They have a variety of approaches to integrating PJBL, including selecting authentic projects that align with course objectives, involving students in the project design process, and focusing on student needs and interests. Many of them emphasize the importance of scaffolding and support throughout the project and recognize the benefits of PJBL in developing a range of skills, including communication, critical thinking, collaboration, and creativity. Some successful PJBL projects that have been implemented in their classrooms include research projects on global issues and video projects that promote language development, creativity, and engagement. These approaches demonstrate the flexibility and effectiveness of PJBL as an instructional approach for EFL learners.

These successful PJBL projects, implemented by Participants 9 and 10, demonstrate the versatility of the approach and its ability to engage EFL learners in meaningful and authentic tasks that develop a range of language and 21st-century skills. Another effective PJBL project, as noted by Participant 11, involves designing a museum exhibit on a cultural topic. This project helps students to develop research, critical thinking, and presentation skills while also promoting cultural awareness and understanding. These projects highlight the various ways that PJBL can be implemented in the EFL classroom to promote language acquisition and the development of essential skills.

6. *What challenges have you faced when implementing PJBL in your EFL classroom, and how have you overcome them?*

PjBL is an educational strategy where students collaborate on a project that combines language learning and content knowledge. Both Participant 2 and Participant 3 underscore the significance of putting students at the forefront of PJBL. Participant 2 asserts that PJBL enables learners to manage their own learning and take responsibility for the project, which can heighten their enthusiasm and involvement. Correspondingly, Participant 3 affirms that PJBL prioritizes the learners' role in the educational process, providing them with the opportunity to devise their own concepts and solutions to authentic issues. The two participants highlight the advantages of a student-centered approach, which can result in increased motivation, engagement, and more profound learning.

Participant 6 adds to this by stating, "PJBL helps EFL learners to develop a range of skills and competencies, including problem-solving, research, presentation, and reflection. These skills are important for academic success and for preparing students for future careers." The skills developed through PJBL are essential for success in the 21st century and are highly valued by employers.

These participants discuss challenges they have faced when implementing PJBL in their EFL classrooms. Participant 11 highlights the challenge of managing time and workload, which can lead to student overwhelm and difficulty in meeting deadlines. To address this, they have implemented scaffolding strategies, clear guidelines, and ongoing support and feedback. Participant 12, on the other hand, notes the challenge of ensuring equal participation and engagement from all students, especially when students may feel unsure of their role or overwhelmed. To address this, they have provided clear roles and responsibilities and ongoing support and feedback to ensure that all team members contribute equally to the project. These challenges highlight the importance of effective scaffolding, clear guidelines, and ongoing support and feedback to ensure the success of PJBL projects in the EFL classroom.

7. *How do you assess the effectiveness of PJBL projects in your EFL classroom?*

PJBL projects in the EFL classroom require effective assessment strategies to evaluate student learning and project effectiveness. Participant 1, Participant 5, and Participant 9 all emphasize the importance of a variety of assessment tools, including rubrics, checklists, and self and peer evaluations. Participant 1 notes the importance of formative and summative assessments, as well as gathering feedback from students to

evaluate project effectiveness. Similarly, Participant 5 emphasizes the importance of encouraging student reflection and feedback to assess project effectiveness. Participant 9 highlights the importance of using a variety of assessments to evaluate both individual and group contributions, as well as overall project effectiveness. Effective assessment strategies ensure that students are held accountable for their learning and contribute equally to the project while also providing opportunities for student reflection and evaluation of the learning experience.

PJBL, or Project-Based Language Learning, is a student-centered instructional approach that integrates language learning and content knowledge through the completion of a project. According to Participant 4, "PJBL provides a context for authentic language use, which can improve students' communicative competence and language proficiency." By engaging in meaningful tasks and real-world problems, students are able to develop language skills in a natural and practical way. Participant 7 highlights that PjBL is advantageous for EFL learners who may encounter challenges with conventional language learning methods. By utilizing language in practical situations, learners can realize the importance and relevance of language learning, which can boost their motivation and engagement. Besides language acquisition, PjBL activities can also assist learners in cultivating critical thinking, problem-solving, and collaboration abilities, which are crucial 21st-century skills. Participant 6 notes that "PjBL helps EFL learners to develop a range of skills and competencies, including problem-solving, research, presentation, and reflection. These skills are important for academic success and for preparing students for future careers." Overall, PjBL is a flexible and effective approach that emphasizes student-centeredness, authentic language use, and the development of real-world skills.

To assess the effectiveness of PjBL projects in their EFL classrooms, participants use a variety of assessment strategies. Participant 1 explains that they "use a combination of formative and summative assessments, including rubrics, checklists, and self and peer evaluations." They also gather feedback from students to gain insights into the project's effectiveness. Participant 5 emphasizes the importance of reflection and self-evaluation, stating that "I encourage students to reflect on their learning throughout the project and provide opportunities for them to give and receive feedback." They also evaluate the overall effectiveness of the project based on student engagement and achievement. Participant 9 adds that they also use rubrics, checklists, and self and peer evaluations, and gather feedback from students to improve future projects. By using a variety of assessment strategies and seeking feedback from students, these participants are able to evaluate the effectiveness of PJBL projects and make improvements for future projects.

8. *How do you adapt PjBL to meet the needs of different EFL learners, such as those with different proficiency levels or learning styles?*

Adapting PjBL to meet the needs of different EFL learners is a key aspect of effective instruction, and several participants share their strategies for doing so. Participant 2 emphasizes the importance of differentiation based on proficiency levels and learning styles, stating, "I may provide more scaffolding or offer additional resources for students who are struggling, and I may offer more autonomy and flexibility for students who are more advanced." Similarly, Participant 10 notes the value of differentiated instruction and support, such as providing scaffolding or additional resources for struggling learners and opportunities for creative expression for advanced learners. Participant 6 takes a different approach, providing a variety of resources and materials to accommodate different learning styles and proficiency levels. They state, "I may provide visual aids or videos for visual learners, and I may offer more challenging tasks or opportunities for creative expression for advanced learners." By tailoring instruction to the individual needs and strengths of each learner, teachers can help ensure that all students can successfully engage with and benefit from PjBL projects in the EFL classroom.

9. *How do you collaborate with other teachers or stakeholders to implement PjBL in your EFL classroom or institution?*

Participant 3, 7, and 11 highlighted the importance of collaboration with other teachers and stakeholders to successfully implement PJBL in their EFL classrooms. They mentioned working with other teachers to align the curriculum and identify areas where PJBL can be integrated, as well as collaborating with stakeholders to identify authentic and meaningful projects that align with students' interests and goals. Additionally, Participant 7 emphasized the significance of engaging students in real-world contexts, while Participant 11 mentioned the involvement of community organizations and businesses in the collaboration process.

Participant 2 highlighted the significance of collaboration by stating, "Designing projects that cater to students' interests and meet their learning objectives requires collaboration with other teachers and stakeholders. According to Participant 8, collaboration is crucial for creating an engaging and diverse learning environment. Similarly, we acknowledge areas that require improvement and create projects that allow students to apply their skills and knowledge in practical situations. We believe that working with other teachers and stakeholders can help us design culturally relevant projects that appeal to students. Additionally, partnering with local businesses can offer authentic learning experiences that allow students to use their language skills in real-world contexts.

10. *How do you envision the future of PjBL in EFL teaching, and what role does it play in enhancing EFL learners' language proficiency and overall development?*

Participant 4 highlighted the potential of PJBL in enhancing EFL learners' language proficiency and overall development. According to them, PJBL provides an opportunity for students to promote cultural understanding and empathy. In the same vein, Participant 8 sees PJBL becoming more prevalent and integrated into EFL teaching in the future. They believe that PjBL offers a way for students to engage in authentic learning experiences and promote global citizenship and cultural understanding. Participant 5 and Participant 10 shared similar perspectives on the benefits of PjBL. Participant 5 stated that project-based learning is essential for students to link their classroom learning with real-life situations, which can be crucial for their future careers. Participant 10 added that project-based learning can foster a sense of accountability and ownership in students by involving them in project planning and execution. Furthermore, personalized learning experiences and a more profound comprehension of the topic can also result from project-based learning, according to Participant 10.

Discussion

The results of this study suggest that project-based learning is a beneficial approach for teaching English as a foreign language (EFL) to international students. The EFL teachers who participated in the study reported that project-based learning enhances language learning by promoting communication, collaboration, critical thinking, and creativity. These findings align with previous research on project-based learning in EFL teaching, which has also demonstrated its effectiveness in improving language proficiency and enhancing learner motivation (Alotaibi, 2020; Hafner & Ho, 2020; Jiang & Lee, 2022; Lu, 2021; Miller et al., 2012)

These findings highlight the importance of project-based learning as an effective teaching approach for EFL instruction in Saudi Arabian higher education institutions. Participants' feedback suggests that project-based learning is a beneficial method for enhancing language proficiency, offering students opportunities to apply language skills in practical situations and collaborate with peers (Alotaibi, 2020).

Furthermore, the findings of this study can inform the development of teacher training programs and professional development opportunities for EFL teachers in Saudi Arabia. By understanding the benefits of project-based learning and how it can be effectively implemented in EFL classrooms, teachers can enhance

their teaching practices and improve their students' learning outcomes (Al-khresheh et al.,2022; Alsamani & Daif-Allah, 2016)

In answering the research question of this study, "What are the benefits of multimodal project-based learning in teaching English to international students in higher education institutions in Saudi Arabia?", the results indicate that multimodal project-based learning can enhance language learning by incorporating multiple modes of communication, such as visual, auditory, and kinesthetic, and by promoting collaboration and critical thinking. incorporating multiple modes of communication, such as visual, auditory, and kinesthetic elements, make students engage with the language in a holistic manner. This approach caters to diverse learning preferences and enhances comprehension and retention of linguistic content. By utilizing different modes, students can actively participate in hands-on activities, listen to authentic language samples, visualize concepts through images or videos, and create multimedia projects, thereby reinforcing their understanding and language skills.

The use of multimodal PBL promotes meaningful and authentic language use (Chen, 2019). By engaging students in real-world tasks and projects, they are provided with opportunities to apply English in practical contexts. This not only fosters a deeper understanding of the language but also develops their communication, problem-solving, and critical-thinking skills. Moreover, working collaboratively on projects encourages peer interaction, intercultural communication, and the development of teamwork skills, which are crucial for success in a globalized society. Incorporating multiple modes of communication, such as visual, auditory, and kinesthetic elements, make students engage with the language in a holistic manner (Gilakjani et al, 2011). This approach caters to diverse learning preferences and enhances comprehension and retention of linguistic content. By utilizing different modes, students can actively participate in hands-on activities, listen to authentic language samples, visualize concepts through images or videos, and create multimedia projects, thereby reinforcing their understanding and language skills. Multimodal PBL also cultivates creativity and self-expression among students (Álvarez, 2021). It allows them to express their ideas and knowledge through various mediums, such as videos, presentations, artworks, or performances. This freedom of expression encourages autonomy and confidence, enabling students to explore and showcase their unique talents, perspectives, and cultural backgrounds. Such creative engagement in the learning process enhances motivation, fosters a positive classroom atmosphere, and promotes a sense of ownership over their language learning journey.

The findings suggest that multimodal project-based learning is a valuable approach for EFL teaching in higher education institutions in Saudi Arabia and that it has the potential to contribute to the development of EFL learners' language proficiency and overall development.

The results of this study highlight the importance of implementing effective instructional strategies, such as project-based learning, in EFL classrooms to enhance language learning and promote learner engagement and motivation. These findings have practical implications for EFL teachers and administrators in higher education institutions in Saudi Arabia, as well as for the development of EFL curricula and teacher training programs.

Limitations and recommendations

Although this study produced significant findings, there are limitations to consider. The small sample size may affect the generalizability of the results, and self-report data may introduce bias. Additionally, the study only focused on EFL teachers' perceptions and experiences in Saudi Arabia, limiting the transferability of the results to other contexts.

To overcome these limitations, future research could increase sample sizes, use multiple data sources to increase validity, explore other cultural and linguistic contexts, and investigate the impact of project-based learning on EFL learners' language proficiency and overall development. By addressing these limitations and

recommendations, future research can advance our understanding of the benefits of project-based learning in EFL teaching.

Pedagogical Implications

The findings of this study have important pedagogical implications for EFL teachers and institutions. Firstly, the study highlights the benefits of using PJBL in EFL teaching, particularly in developing students' language proficiency, critical thinking skills, and collaborative learning abilities. Therefore, teachers and institutions should consider integrating PJBL into their EFL curriculum to enhance their students' learning experiences. Secondly, the study indicates the importance of adapting PJBL to meet the diverse needs of EFL learners, such as those with different proficiency levels or learning styles. Teachers and institutions should tailor PJBL projects to accommodate learners' individual needs and provide appropriate support throughout the project. Thirdly, the study emphasizes the importance of effective collaboration among EFL teachers, stakeholders, and students in the successful implementation of PJBL. Therefore, institutions should encourage and provide opportunities for collaborative planning and implementation of PJBL projects. Finally, the study suggests the need for further research on the effectiveness of PJBL in different EFL contexts and with different learner populations to provide more comprehensive insights into its potential benefits.

CONCLUSION

The objective of this study was to investigate how project-based learning is employed in higher education EFL classrooms in Saudi Arabia. According to the findings, participants viewed PJBL favorably, citing its ability to augment language acquisition, critical thinking, problem-solving, and collaboration skills. However, the research also revealed challenges that EFL teachers face when implementing PJBL, such as inadequate training and support, resource constraints, and time limitations. This study provides valuable insights into the implementation of PJBL in EFL classrooms, and the findings can inform future research and practice in EFL teaching. Based on the study's limitations, it is recommended that further research should explore PJBL implementation across different EFL contexts in Saudi Arabia and consider incorporating student perspectives. Moreover, educational policymakers and institutions should provide more support and training to EFL teachers in implementing PJBL effectively.

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