

PROJECT-BASED LEARNING THROUGH MULTIPLE ORAL PERFORMANCE MODES: A QUALITATIVE EXPLORATION OF EFL SPEAKING DEVELOPMENT IN HIGHER EDUCATION

Yulianti¹,

¹ Universitas Pendidikan Indonesia, Indonesia,

✉ (e-mail) drayulianti72@gmail.com

Ahmad Bukhori Muslim²,

² Universitas Pendidikan Indonesia, Indonesia,

✉ (e-mail) abukhmuslim@upi.edu

Wawan Gunawan³

³ Universitas Pendidikan Indonesia, Indonesia,

✉ (e-mail) wagoen@upi.edu

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ABSTRACT

Developing speaking skills remains a significant challenge for English as a Foreign Language (EFL) learners in higher education. While Project-Based Learning (PBL) has been recognized as an effective student-centered approach, limited studies have explored the integration of presentation, storytelling, and debate activities within a single project framework to enhance speaking proficiency. This study aims to investigate the implementation of PBL and examine its contribution to students' speaking development. A qualitative case study design was employed involving EFL students enrolled in speaking courses at a higher education institution. Data were collected through classroom observations, semi-structured interviews, recall interviews, speaking performance assessments, and document analysis. The findings reveal that PBL was implemented through five stages: project planning, collaborative inquiry, project development, oral performance implementation, and reflection. The integration of presentation, storytelling, and debate activities improved students' fluency, pronunciation, vocabulary mastery, grammatical accuracy, and communicative competence. Furthermore, students reported increased confidence, motivation, classroom participation, and willingness to communicate, while experiencing lower levels of speaking anxiety. These findings suggest that PBL provides authentic learning experiences that effectively support speaking development and foster positive learner engagement in EFL contexts.

Keywords: Project-Based Learning, Speaking Skills, EFL Learners, Oral Performance, Higher Education.

INTRODUCTION

Speaking is one of the most essential skills in English language learning because it enables learners to communicate ideas, express opinions, and

participate effectively in academic and social interactions. In English as a Foreign Language (EFL) contexts, however, many students encounter difficulties in developing speaking proficiency due to limited opportunities for authentic communication, low confidence, insufficient vocabulary, and anxiety when speaking in front of others. These challenges often result in passive classroom participation and hinder the development of communicative competence, which is a fundamental goal of language education.

To address these challenges, educators have increasingly adopted student-centered approaches that encourage active learning and meaningful communication. One such approach is Project-Based Learning (PBL), which emphasizes collaboration, inquiry, problem-solving, and the production of authentic outcomes. Recent studies have demonstrated that PBL can significantly enhance students' language skills, critical thinking, creativity, and engagement in EFL classrooms (Guo et al., 2023; Krajcik & Shin, 2024). Through project activities, learners are provided with opportunities to use English in realistic situations, thereby improving both linguistic competence and communication confidence.

In speaking instruction, oral performance activities such as presentations, storytelling, and debates have been widely recognized as effective strategies for developing speaking skills. Presentations help students organize ideas and improve public speaking abilities, storytelling promotes fluency and creativity, while debates foster critical thinking and spontaneous communication. Previous studies have reported positive outcomes from these activities when implemented separately. For example, presentation-based instruction has been found to improve speaking confidence and pronunciation, storytelling activities contribute to fluency and vocabulary development, and debate-based learning enhances argumentation skills and communicative competence (Rahman et al., 2023; Chen & Wang, 2024; Nurhayati et al., 2025).

Despite these benefits, existing studies have predominantly examined presentations, storytelling, and debates as independent instructional techniques. Limited research has investigated how these three oral performance activities can be systematically integrated within a Project-Based Learning framework to support speaking development. Furthermore, most previous studies have focused on quantitative outcomes,

providing insufficient insight into how students experience and benefit from the integration of multiple speaking activities throughout the project process. This indicates a significant gap in the literature regarding the pedagogical value of combining diverse oral performance modes within a single project-based environment.

Addressing this gap is important because speaking proficiency requires not only linguistic knowledge but also authentic interaction, collaboration, and opportunities for meaningful language use. Integrating presentations, storytelling, and debates into PBL may provide learners with diverse communicative experiences that foster fluency, confidence, and engagement more

effectively than using a single activity. Therefore, a deeper understanding of this integrated approach is needed to inform speaking pedagogy in higher education EFL contexts.

Based on these considerations, this study aims to investigate the implementation of Project-Based Learning through presentation, storytelling, and debate activities and to explore how these integrated oral performance activities contribute to the development of EFL students' speaking skills. The findings are expected to contribute to the growing body of research on PBL and provide practical insights for educators seeking to enhance speaking instruction through authentic and student-centered learning experiences.

REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURES

Project-Based Learning in EFL Education

Project-Based Learning (PBL) has become one of the most widely implemented student-centered approaches in language education due to its emphasis on authentic learning experiences and active student participation. Rooted in constructivist learning theory, PBL encourages learners to construct knowledge through inquiry, collaboration, problem-solving, and reflection rather

than relying solely on teacher explanations (Bell, 2010; Krajcik & Shin, 2024). In EFL contexts, PBL provides meaningful opportunities for students to use English in real-world situations, allowing them to connect classroom learning with practical communication needs. Through project activities, students become responsible for investigating topics, gathering information, discussing findings, and presenting outcomes using the target language. Such experiences promote

learner autonomy and increase engagement because students perceive the tasks as relevant to their academic and professional lives. Furthermore, PBL creates a learning environment where language is used as a tool for communication rather than merely as a subject of study. This characteristic aligns closely with communicative language teaching principles, which emphasize meaningful interaction as the foundation of language acquisition.

The effectiveness of PBL in language education has been supported by numerous studies. Guo et al. (2020) reported that project-based instruction positively influences academic achievement, motivation, and collaborative learning across different educational contexts. Similarly, Beckett and Miller (2006) argued that project work enhances language learning because students engage in authentic communication while completing meaningful tasks. In EFL classrooms, project activities encourage learners to negotiate meaning, exchange ideas, and solve problems collaboratively, all of which contribute to language development. Benlaghrissi and Ouahidi (2024) further found that project-based learning significantly improved students'

speaking performance by increasing opportunities for interaction and authentic language use. These findings suggest that PBL not only supports linguistic development but also fosters essential twenty-first-century skills such as communication, creativity, critical thinking, and teamwork. Consequently, PBL has become increasingly relevant in higher education environments where students are expected to develop both language proficiency and professional competencies.

From a sociocultural perspective, language learning is viewed as a social process that occurs through interaction and collaboration with others (Vygotsky, 1978). PBL supports this perspective by creating opportunities for learners to participate in meaningful social interactions throughout the learning process. Students work together to discuss ideas, share responsibilities, and solve problems while using English as the primary medium of communication. Through these interactions, learners receive linguistic input, feedback, and scaffolding from peers and instructors, which contribute to language acquisition. Additionally, project activities encourage reflection and self-assessment, enabling students to evaluate their progress and

identify areas for improvement. Recent research has also shown that PBL reduces speaking anxiety because learners focus on completing meaningful tasks rather than simply demonstrating language knowledge (Hastuti & Malihah, 2024). Therefore, PBL offers a comprehensive framework that supports both cognitive and communicative aspects of language learning in EFL settings.

Speaking Skills in EFL Contexts

Speaking is widely recognized as one of the most essential skills in language learning because it serves as the primary means of communication in both academic and social contexts. However, speaking is also considered one of the most challenging skills for EFL learners because it requires the integration of multiple linguistic and communicative components. Effective speaking involves not only grammatical accuracy and vocabulary knowledge but also pronunciation, fluency, discourse management, and interactional competence (Brown, 2007; Nation & Newton, 2009). Learners are expected to process information rapidly, formulate ideas, and produce language simultaneously during communication. This complexity often makes speaking

more demanding than receptive skills such as reading and listening. As a result, many EFL learners experience difficulties when attempting to communicate effectively in English. These challenges frequently affect learners' confidence and willingness to participate in classroom discussions.

Several factors contribute to speaking difficulties among EFL learners. One of the most commonly reported barriers is speaking anxiety, which often results from fear of making mistakes, negative evaluation, or insufficient language proficiency (Horwitz et al., 1986). In many EFL contexts, opportunities for authentic communication are limited because classroom instruction focuses heavily on grammar and examination preparation. Consequently, students may possess theoretical knowledge of English but struggle to apply it in real communicative situations. Richards (2008) argues that speaking competence develops through meaningful interaction rather than through isolated language drills. Similarly, Goh and Burns (2012) emphasize the importance of communicative tasks that encourage learners to use language for genuine purposes. Therefore, speaking instruction should create environments that support risk-taking, interaction, and active

participation. Such environments help learners develop confidence while improving their communicative abilities.

Recent studies suggest that communicative and task-based approaches are particularly effective in promoting speaking development because they provide opportunities for authentic language use. Activities that involve collaboration, discussion, and problem-solving encourage learners to engage in meaningful communication while practicing linguistic forms. Furthermore, speaking proficiency develops more effectively when learners participate in diverse communicative situations that require both prepared and spontaneous speech. Through repeated practice, students gradually improve their fluency, pronunciation, and communicative competence. In higher education settings, speaking skills are especially important because students are expected to present ideas, participate in discussions, and communicate professionally. Consequently, educators need to adopt innovative instructional approaches that encourage active communication and support learners' speaking development. This need has contributed to the growing interest in approaches such as Project-Based Learning, which integrates

authentic communication into the learning process.

Presentation Activities and Speaking Development

Presentation activities are among the most frequently used instructional strategies in EFL classrooms because they provide learners with structured opportunities to practice oral communication. Through presentations, students are required to research information, organize content, and communicate ideas clearly to an audience. This process encourages learners to engage in extensive preparation and rehearsal, which contributes to language development. Presentations also require students to use appropriate vocabulary, grammatical structures, and discourse markers to convey information effectively. Furthermore, learners develop audience awareness as they learn to adjust their language according to listeners' needs and expectations. These skills are essential for academic and professional communication because effective presentations involve more than simply speaking in front of others. Therefore, presentation activities contribute to the development of both linguistic and communicative competence.

Research has consistently demonstrated the benefits of presentations for speaking development. King (2002) found that oral presentations improve learners' confidence and communication skills by providing meaningful opportunities for language production. Similarly, Brooks and Wilson (2014) reported that presentation activities enhance pronunciation, fluency, and public speaking abilities. During presentations, learners are exposed to authentic communication situations that require them to articulate ideas clearly and respond to audience questions. Such experiences help students become more comfortable using English in public settings. Recent studies by Rahman et al. (2023) further indicate that presentation-based instruction contributes positively to vocabulary acquisition, speaking confidence, and communicative competence. These findings suggest that presentations are effective tools for

promoting oral language development in EFL classrooms.

In addition to linguistic benefits, presentation activities also foster learner autonomy and critical thinking. Students are responsible for selecting topics, conducting research, and organizing information before delivering their presentations. This process encourages independent learning and develops students' ability to evaluate and synthesize information. Technology-enhanced presentations have further expanded opportunities for speaking practice by incorporating multimedia resources and interactive feedback mechanisms (Cha et al., 2024). Through repeated participation in presentation tasks, learners gradually overcome communication anxiety and become more confident speakers. Consequently, presentations remain a valuable instructional strategy for enhancing speaking skills in higher education EFL contexts.

METHODS

Research Design

This study employed a qualitative case study design to investigate the implementation of Project-Based Learning (PBL) through presentation, storytelling,

and debate activities in enhancing EFL students' speaking skills. A qualitative approach was selected because it allows researchers to explore participants' experiences, perceptions, and interactions

in natural learning settings (Creswell & Poth, 2018). The case study design was considered appropriate as it provides an in-depth understanding of a particular educational phenomenon within its real-life context. Specifically, this study focused on how Project-Based Learning was implemented in speaking classes and how students experienced the integration of multiple oral performance activities throughout the project process.

Research Setting and Participants

The study was conducted in the English Education Department of a higher education institution during the 2025/2026 academic year. The participants consisted of 30 undergraduate EFL students enrolled in a speaking course. Purposive sampling was employed to select participants because they had direct experience with Project-Based Learning activities involving presentations, storytelling, and debates. The participants represented a suitable sample for examining speaking development because they regularly engaged in oral communication tasks throughout the course. In addition, one speaking lecturer who implemented the Project-Based Learning approach participated in the study to provide

additional perspectives regarding classroom practices and students' progress.

Research Instruments

Multiple instruments were utilized to ensure comprehensive data collection and triangulation. The first instrument was classroom observation, which was used to examine students' participation, interaction patterns, communication practices, and project implementation processes. An observation checklist and field notes were employed to record classroom events systematically.

The second instrument was semi-structured interviews. Interviews were conducted with selected students and the lecturer to explore their perceptions, experiences, challenges, and benefits related to the implementation of Project-Based Learning. The semi-structured format enabled participants to provide detailed responses while allowing the researcher to ask follow-up questions for clarification.

The third instrument was speaking performance assessment. Students' speaking performances during presentations, storytelling sessions, and debates were evaluated using a speaking

rubric adapted from Brown (2004), including fluency, pronunciation, vocabulary, grammar, and comprehension. These assessments provided supporting evidence regarding students' speaking development throughout the project activities.

The fourth instrument was document analysis. Relevant documents such as lesson plans, project guidelines, students' project reports, presentation materials, and reflective journals were collected and analyzed to provide additional insights into the implementation of Project-Based Learning.

Data Collection Procedures

Data collection was conducted over one academic semester and followed several stages. First, the researcher observed classroom activities during the implementation of Project-Based Learning to understand the learning process and students' engagement in speaking activities. Second, students participated in project activities that integrated presentations, storytelling, and debates as part of their speaking course requirements. Third, speaking performances were assessed using the speaking rubric during each oral performance activity. Fourth,

semi-structured interviews were conducted with selected students and the lecturer after project completion to gather in-depth information regarding their experiences and perceptions. Finally, relevant documents were collected and reviewed to support and verify findings obtained from observations and interviews.

Data Analysis

The data were analyzed using thematic analysis procedures proposed by Creswell and Poth (2018). The analysis began with organizing and transcribing all observation notes, interview recordings, assessment results, and documents. Subsequently, the researcher read the data repeatedly to gain a comprehensive understanding of participants' experiences.

The coding process involved three stages. First, open coding was conducted to identify significant statements and recurring concepts related to Project-Based Learning implementation and speaking development. Second, axial coding was employed to categorize related codes into broader themes. Third, selective coding was performed to establish relationships among themes and

develop meaningful interpretations of the findings.

The identified themes were interpreted and compared across different data sources to ensure consistency and credibility. The analysis focused on two main areas: (1) the implementation process of Project-Based Learning through presentation, storytelling, and debate activities, and (2) students' speaking development as reflected in fluency, pronunciation, vocabulary, grammar, confidence, and communicative competence.

Trustworthiness

To ensure the trustworthiness of the findings, the study employed credibility,

transferability, dependability, and confirmability strategies (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). Credibility was established through data triangulation by comparing findings from observations, interviews, speaking assessments, and document analysis. Member checking was conducted by sharing interview summaries with participants for verification. Dependability was maintained through detailed documentation of research procedures, while confirmability was strengthened by maintaining an audit trail throughout the research process. These procedures enhanced the accuracy, reliability, and trustworthiness of the study findings.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

FINDINGS

To provide a comprehensive overview of the findings, the results obtained from classroom observations, interviews, speaking performance assessments, and document analysis are summarized in Table 1. The findings focus on the implementation of Project-Based Learning through presentation, storytelling, and debate activities and their contributions to students' speaking

development. The analysis revealed several major themes related to the project implementation process, improvements in speaking performance, communicative competence, learner engagement, confidence, and collaborative learning experiences. These themes emerged consistently across multiple data sources, indicating the effectiveness of integrating various oral performance activities within a Project-

Based Learning framework. The summary presented in Table 1 highlights the key findings and serves as the basis

for the detailed discussion in the subsequent sections.

Table 1. Summary of Findings

Theme	Subtheme	Key Findings
Enactment of PBL	Project Planning	Topic negotiation and collaborative decision-making
	Collaborative Inquiry	Knowledge construction through interaction
	Project Development	Rehearsal and preparation of oral performances
	Oral Performance	Authentic communication through presentation, storytelling, and debate
	Reflection	Evaluation of learning experiences and progress
Linguistic Development	Fluency	Reduced hesitation and increased speech continuity
	Vocabulary	Expanded lexical repertoire
	Pronunciation	Improved intelligibility
	Grammar	Greater structural accuracy
	Communicative Competence	More effective interaction
Affective Development	Confidence	Increased self-confidence
	Motivation	Higher learning engagement
	Anxiety Reduction	Lower communication apprehension
	Participation	Greater classroom involvement
	WTC	Increased willingness to communicate

Theme 1: The Enactment of Project-Based Learning Through Multiple Oral Performance Modes

The analysis revealed that Project-Based Learning (PBL) was enacted through five interconnected stages: (1) project planning, (2) collaborative inquiry, (3) project development, (4) oral performance implementation, and (5) reflection. These stages created a structured learning

environment that enabled students to engage in authentic communication while developing their speaking skills.

Project Planning Stage

The project planning stage involved topic selection, group formation, and task distribution. During this stage, students actively negotiated ideas and collaboratively determined project goals. Classroom observations

indicated that students were encouraged to discuss potential topics and make collective decisions regarding project implementation.

One participant explained:

“We had to discuss many ideas before deciding on a topic. Even though our English was not perfect, we tried to communicate in English during the discussion because our lecturer encouraged us to do so.”
(Participant 3)

The planning stage functioned as an initial opportunity for communicative interaction. Students were required to express opinions, negotiate meanings, and justify their choices. These communicative demands promoted active language use and established the foundation for subsequent project activities.

From a pedagogical perspective, the lecturer's role during this phase was primarily facilitative. Rather than providing direct instruction, the lecturer offered guidance and scaffolding when students encountered difficulties. This support enabled learners to perform tasks beyond their current level of competence.

Collaborative Inquiry Stage

The second stage involved information gathering, collaborative discussion, and inquiry-based learning activities. Students worked in groups to collect information from various sources and exchange ideas related to their project topics.

One student commented:

“When I explained information to my group members, I had to speak English more often. It helped me practice speaking naturally because we were discussing real information.” (Participant 7)

Observational data demonstrated that collaborative inquiry generated extensive opportunities for interaction. Students frequently asked questions, clarified information, and provided explanations to one another. Such interaction facilitated language production and encouraged meaningful communication.

Furthermore, collaborative inquiry promoted knowledge construction through social interaction. Students learned not only from instructional materials but also from peer discussions and collaborative problem-solving activities.

Project Development Stage

The project development stage involved preparing presentations, storytelling performances, and debate arguments. During this stage, students transformed collected information into oral performance products.

Participants reported that repeated rehearsal and peer feedback contributed significantly to their speaking development.

One participant stated:

“Practicing before the presentation helped me organize my ideas better and reduced my nervousness when speaking in front of the class.” (Participant 11)

Students engaged in multiple cycles of revision and rehearsal. These activities enabled them to refine pronunciation, vocabulary use, and grammatical accuracy before delivering their performances.

The findings suggest that project development served as a bridge between collaborative preparation and authentic communication performance.

Oral Performance Implementation Stage

The oral performance stage represented the culmination of the project process. Students participated in three major speaking activities: presentations, storytelling sessions, and debates. Each oral performance mode contributed differently to speaking development. Presentation activities encouraged students to communicate information systematically and confidently before an audience. Storytelling activities promoted creativity, narrative competence, and expressive language use. Debate activities challenged students to defend arguments, respond spontaneously, and engage in critical discussion.

One student reflected:

“Debate was the most challenging activity because I had to think quickly and respond immediately, but it improved my confidence significantly.” (Participant 5)

Classroom observations revealed increased student engagement during oral performance sessions. Students demonstrated greater willingness to participate and showed noticeable

improvements in communication effectiveness.

Reflection Stage

The final stage involved reflective evaluation of project experiences and speaking performances. Students reported becoming more aware of their strengths and weaknesses as language learners.

One participant explained:

“After the project, I realized that I could speak English more confidently than before. I still make mistakes, but I am not afraid anymore.” (Participant 8)

Reflection facilitated metacognitive awareness and encouraged students to evaluate their learning progress. This process contributed to both linguistic improvement and personal growth.

Theme 2: Linguistic Improvements Through Multiple Oral Performance Modes

The findings demonstrated five major areas of linguistic development: fluency, vocabulary, pronunciation, grammatical accuracy, and communicative competence.

Improved Fluency

Fluency emerged as one of the most significant areas of improvement.

Students reported greater ease in maintaining communication and reduced hesitation during speaking tasks.

A participant stated:

“Before the project, I often stopped because I did not know what to say. Now I can continue speaking even when I make mistakes.” (Participant 12)

Observational data confirmed that students produced longer utterances and demonstrated fewer communication breakdowns during final performances.

Expanded Vocabulary Repertoire

Students reported substantial vocabulary growth throughout the project process. Because project activities required information gathering and topic exploration, students encountered new lexical items and academic terminology.

One participant remarked:

“I learned many new words from articles, videos, and discussions. I used those words during my presentation and debate.” (Participant 4)

Vocabulary development was particularly evident during storytelling and debate activities, where students

employed more varied and contextually appropriate expressions.

Enhanced Pronunciation

Repeated oral practice contributed to improved pronunciation accuracy and intelligibility. Students became increasingly aware of stress patterns, intonation, and articulation.

One participant commented:

“When we practiced repeatedly, I became more aware of how English words should be pronounced.”
(Participant 10)

The opportunity to rehearse performances before presenting them publicly played a crucial role in pronunciation development.

Improved Grammatical Accuracy

Although grammatical errors remained present, students demonstrated greater control over sentence structures and language forms. Several participants reported paying closer attention to grammar when preparing oral performances. This improvement was particularly evident during presentations, where students had more opportunities to organize and revise their language.

Enhanced Communicative Competence

Beyond individual linguistic components, students demonstrated improvements in overall communicative competence. They became more capable of organizing ideas, maintaining interaction, responding appropriately, and adapting language to different communicative contexts. These findings suggest that PBL facilitated not only language accuracy but also meaningful communication.

Theme 3: Affective Improvements Through Project-Based Learning

The findings also revealed significant affective development among participants.

Increased Self-Confidence

The most frequently reported affective outcome was increased confidence. Students indicated that repeated speaking opportunities reduced their fear of public speaking.

One participant noted:

“I am much more confident now because I have practiced speaking many times in front of my classmates.” (Participant 6)

Enhanced Motivation

Project activities increased learners' motivation to participate in speaking tasks. Students perceived the projects as meaningful and relevant to their learning needs.

A participant explained:

“Learning speaking became more interesting because we were creating something and working toward a goal.”
(Participant 2)

Table 2. Summary of Themes and Findings

Theme	Subtheme	Key Findings
Enactment of PBL	Project Planning	Topic negotiation and collaborative decision-making
	Collaborative Inquiry	Knowledge construction through interaction
	Project Development	Rehearsal and preparation of oral performances
	Oral Performance	Authentic communication through presentation, storytelling, and debate
Linguistic Development	Reflection	Evaluation of learning experiences and progress
	Fluency	Reduced hesitation and increased speech continuity
	Vocabulary	Expanded lexical repertoire
	Pronunciation	Improved intelligibility
	Grammar	Greater structural accuracy
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	Affective Development	Confidence
Motivation		Higher learning engagement
Anxiety Reduction		Lower communication apprehension
Participation		Greater classroom involvement
	WTC	Increased willingness to communicate

DISCUSSION

The findings revealed that Project-Based Learning (PBL) effectively

enhanced students' speaking skills through the integration of presentation, storytelling, and debate activities.

Students demonstrated improvements in fluency, pronunciation, vocabulary mastery, grammatical accuracy, and overall communicative competence. These findings support the argument that speaking proficiency develops more effectively when learners engage in authentic communication rather than isolated language practice. Through project activities, students actively used English to discuss ideas, solve problems, and present project outcomes. This result is consistent with Benlaghrissi and Ouahidi (2024), who found that project-based learning provides meaningful opportunities for authentic interaction and significantly improves EFL learners' speaking performance. Furthermore, recent studies indicate that PBL creates communicative environments that encourage learners to use language purposefully and confidently.

Another important finding concerns the positive contribution of presentation activities to students' speaking development. The observation and interview data showed that presentations encouraged students to organize ideas systematically, improve pronunciation, and develop confidence in public speaking situations. During project presentations, students learned to

communicate information clearly while maintaining audience engagement. Repeated presentation practice enabled learners to become more familiar with speaking before an audience and gradually reduced communication anxiety. This finding aligns with recent research showing that presentation-based activities improve oral communication competence, speaking confidence, and public speaking skills among EFL learners. Additionally, students developed greater awareness of discourse organization and audience needs throughout the presentation process.

The findings also demonstrate that storytelling activities played a significant role in improving speaking fluency and creativity. Students reported that storytelling allowed them to express ideas more freely and use English in a meaningful context. Through narrative construction, learners practiced organizing events logically while producing extended spoken discourse. This process encouraged the development of vocabulary, pronunciation, and communicative confidence. Moreover, storytelling promoted emotional engagement because students often connected personal experiences and cultural perspectives with their stories.

Previous studies have similarly reported that storytelling activities support language production, creativity, and speaking fluency by encouraging learners to communicate authentic experiences through extended speech.

The implementation of debate activities further contributed to students' speaking proficiency by promoting critical thinking and spontaneous communication. During debates, students were required to formulate arguments, defend opinions, and respond immediately to opposing viewpoints. Such communicative demands encouraged learners to think critically while producing language in real time. The findings indicate that debates strengthened students' confidence, argumentation skills, and interactional competence. In addition, students became more willing to participate actively in classroom discussions because they were challenged to express and justify their perspectives. These findings are supported by Purwati et al. (2024), who reported that project-based speaking activities integrated with higher-order thinking tasks significantly improve communicative competence and oral performance.

Another noteworthy finding is that the integration of presentation, storytelling, and debate activities within a single project framework provided more comprehensive speaking experiences than a single instructional technique. Each activity contributed to different dimensions of speaking competence. Presentations developed organizational and public speaking skills, storytelling enhanced fluency and creativity, while debates strengthened critical thinking and spontaneous communication. The combination of these activities enabled learners to practice various communicative functions throughout the project process. Consequently, students experienced a more holistic development of speaking competence. This finding supports recent literature suggesting that multimodal project activities create richer opportunities for language learning because learners engage in diverse communicative situations and authentic language use.

The findings further revealed that collaboration was a crucial factor influencing speaking development during project implementation. Students frequently interacted with peers during project planning, information gathering, rehearsals, and performance activities.

These collaborative interactions provided opportunities to negotiate meaning, exchange feedback, and practice English continuously. According to sociocultural learning theory, language development occurs through social interaction and collaborative engagement. The present findings support this perspective by demonstrating that students improved their speaking abilities through meaningful communication with peers. Similar findings were reported by Zhong et al. (2025), who found that project-based speaking activities significantly increase behavioral, cognitive, emotional, and agentic engagement among EFL learners.

Furthermore, the interview findings indicated that students experienced increased motivation and reduced speaking anxiety throughout the project activities. Many participants initially reported nervousness when speaking English but gradually became more confident as they engaged in repeated oral performance tasks. The authentic nature of project work shifted students' attention from language errors to communication goals, enabling them to participate more actively. This finding is consistent with previous studies showing that project-based learning

fosters learner motivation by creating meaningful and relevant learning experiences. Increased confidence and willingness to communicate are particularly important because they contribute directly to long-term speaking development. Therefore, PBL not only improves linguistic competence but also strengthens the affective factors necessary for successful language learning.

Overall, the findings suggest that Project-Based Learning through presentation, storytelling, and debate activities provides an effective pedagogical framework for enhancing EFL students' speaking skills. The approach supports linguistic development, communicative competence, critical thinking, collaboration, and learner motivation simultaneously. Unlike traditional teacher-centered instruction, PBL creates authentic learning experiences that require students to use English for meaningful communication. The integration of multiple oral performance activities allows learners to develop various dimensions of speaking competence while participating in collaborative projects. Consequently, this study contributes to the growing body of literature supporting the use of project-based approaches in speaking instruction. The findings also provide practical implications for educators seeking innovative and student-centered strategies to improve speaking proficiency in higher education EFL contexts.

CONCLUSIONS

This study investigated the implementation of Project-Based Learning (PBL) through the integration of presentation, storytelling, and debate activities to enhance EFL students' speaking skills. The findings revealed that PBL provided authentic and meaningful learning experiences that encouraged students to actively use English throughout the learning process. Through project-based activities, students demonstrated significant improvements in fluency, pronunciation, vocabulary mastery, grammatical accuracy, and overall communicative competence. These findings indicate that PBL serves as an effective instructional approach for promoting speaking development because it creates opportunities for meaningful interaction, collaborative learning, and real-world communication. Furthermore, the implementation of PBL enabled students to become more engaged in classroom activities and develop greater responsibility for their own learning. Therefore, PBL can be considered a valuable pedagogical approach for supporting speaking instruction in higher education EFL contexts.

The findings further showed that each oral performance activity contributed uniquely to students' speaking development. Presentation activities helped students improve public speaking abilities, confidence, and organizational skills when delivering information to an audience. Storytelling activities enhanced speaking fluency, creativity, and learners' ability to express ideas through meaningful narratives. Meanwhile, debate activities strengthened critical thinking, argumentation skills, and spontaneous communication by encouraging students to defend opinions and respond to opposing viewpoints. The integration of these three activities within a single project framework provided learners with diverse communicative experiences that addressed multiple dimensions of speaking competence. As a result, students developed not only linguistic abilities but also communication strategies that are essential for academic and professional contexts.

In addition to linguistic improvements, Project-Based Learning positively influenced students' affective development. The participants reported

increased motivation, confidence, willingness to communicate, and active participation in classroom interactions, while experiencing reduced speaking anxiety. These findings suggest that PBL creates a supportive learning environment that encourages learners to use English more confidently and effectively. This study contributes to the growing body of literature by demonstrating the benefits of integrating presentation, storytelling, and debate activities within a project-based

framework. The findings also provide practical implications for EFL lecturers seeking innovative and student-centered approaches to speaking instruction. Future studies are recommended to involve larger samples, different educational contexts, and mixed-methods designs to further examine the long-term effects of integrated project-based speaking activities on students' communicative competence and academic achievement.

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