
From Traditional Learning to Experiential Learning: Implementing Project-Based Approaches in English Language Teaching in Telangana's Higher Education Institutions

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Abstract: Project-Based Learning (PBL) is the student centric approach for English teaching that is based on learning through real projects. Unlike the traditional ways of teaching, PBL involves students in significant activities like Role-play, Debate, Group Discussion that improve their communication, critical thinking, and problem-solving skills. This study investigates the effectiveness of Project-Based Learning (PBL) in English Language Teaching (ELT) in Undergraduate Public Colleges/ Government Degree Colleges in Telangana, India. It is aimed at monitoring how interactive the students become, how much language skills are developed, and what problems arise while changing from traditional techniques to hands-on learning for students. A questionnaire was distributed among the students of Public colleges. 110 undergraduate students attempted the questionnaire, and their answers were summarized using statistical analysis. The results show that 93.6% of the students were familiar with PBL and had undergone PBL related activities, like Group discussions, Debates etc.,. Most of the students found that PBL activities were more interactive (70.9%), communicated better, and were more confident about speaking (69.1%). However, problems like stage fright, lack of coordination, and poor teacher support were faced by students. Most of the students wished to have more PBL activities in English curriculum, and the analysis showed that most of the students were certain that PBL can be helpful. This study confirms that PBL has the potential to improve language skills and offers practical suggestions for overcoming problems in colleges with limited resources.

Keywords: Project-Based Learning (PBL), English Language Teaching (ELT), Higher Education, Student Engagement, Communication Skills, Experiential Learning, Rote Learning, Collaborative Learning, Teacher Support

1. Introduction: Mastery of English language is crucial in higher education for international communication, academic achievement and professional development. English proficiency involves academic and professional accomplishment by reading, writing, speaking, and listening. Government degree colleges/Public sector colleges have students belonging to various linguistic groups and are exposed less to English, and thus effective pedagogies must be used.

National Research Council (2000) discovered that students learn more if they are actively involved in content, question, and discuss with students—conditions which are not provided in rote approaches. Project-Based Learning (PBL) is the student centric approach for English teaching that is based on learning through real projects. Unlike the traditional ways of teaching, PBL involves students in significant activities like Role-play, Debate, Group Discussion that improve their communication, critical thinking, and problem-solving skills. In colleges, particularly in Public Sector Colleges/Government degree colleges, PBL can enhance English proficiency by fostering teamwork, creativity, and real application of the language. With real projects, students build confidence in using English in college and work environments. This paper presents how PBL can assist in English language teaching, its benefits, and the challenges of implementing it in higher education in Telangana.

2. Literature Review:

2.1: Project-Based Learning: Definition and Principles Project-Based Learning (PBL) is a learner-centered approach that enables students to learn by engaging in complex, real-world problems and projects over an extended period (Barron & Darling-Hammond, 2008). Key principles of PBL include student-centered learning, inquiry-based instruction, collaboration, and integration of multiple skills (Thomas, 2000). In English teaching, PBL fosters active engagement through research, presentations, creative writing, role-plays, and multimedia projects.

2.2 Benefits of Project-Based Learning to the Teaching of English: Project-Based Learning (PBL) offers an Aladdin's cave of advantages to English teaching, a fact attested by several research studies. Firstly, there is the growth of communicative competence, since PBL actively involves learners in speaking, listening, reading, and writing exercises situated in actual life settings, thereby improving overall communicative capacity in the English language (Beckett & Slater, 2005). Secondly, there is the much-needed boost to critical thinking and problem-solving capacities, from mere memorization to challenging learners to apply analytical, synthetic, and usefully practical applications of language (Stoller, 2006). Thirdly, PBL facilitates enhanced motivation and learner participation, as it brings language-related activities closer to real life and individual interests, thereby enhancing the learning experience through stimulating and interactive learning (Moss & Van Duzer, 1998). Further, PBL encourages team collaboration and social harmony, since learners participate in collaborative work, in the process of which they acquire requisite social and business communication skills (Krajcik & Blumenfeld, 2006). On the whole, these advantages bring PBL into prominence as a sound and lively approach to teaching the English language.

2.3 Challenges to the Implementation of Project-Based Learning in Telangana's Institutions of Higher Learning: While PBL has numerous advantages, implementing Project-Based Learning (PBL) in Telangana higher education institutions of higher learning is faced with numerous serious challenges. One of them is the deep-rooted model of curriculum, which is highly framed in terms of rote memorization and standardized tests, and therefore prevents potential from adopting innovative pedagogy like Project-Based Learning (PBL) (Reddy & Rao, 2020). Second, teacher readiness is the biggest challenge because nearly all of the teachers are not specially trained in the pedagogical processes of PBL and therefore need a highly advanced professional training mechanism to achieve high levels of readiness for implementing and adopting this pedagogy of instruction (Vijayalakshmi, 2021). Third, limited facilities are also a challenge to the problems of its adoption, particularly in state colleges due to limited use of digital tools of learning, flexible learning classrooms, and redesigned assessment mechanisms (Sharma & Prasad, 2018). Finally, assessment-related issues are also a reason for the complexity of its application, as conventional tests and examinations are less suited to measure project-based teaching; therefore, various assessment tools like portfolios, peer assessment, and presentations need to be utilized (Mishra, 2019). Overcoming these challenges is a milestone towards the successful application of PBL in the higher education platform of Telangana.

2.4 Best Practices and Successful Case Studies: There have been several Indian initiatives showcasing successful implementation of Project-Based Learning (PBL) in English language instruction. They are model cases and offer ideas that could perhaps be emulated by others. One such popular initiative is the CELS-inaugurated PBL model by the University of Hyderabad, which introduced project-based evaluations into the English syllabus so students could apply linguistic ability to real-world contexts. A strategy like that not only improved the students' English ability but also increased engagement and active participation in learning practices (Krishnan, 2022). This implies successful implementation of PBL in university education is likely to take place where institutions offer support and initiate innovative pedagogy.

3. Methodology: This study employed a quantitative method in exploring the adoption of project-based learning (PBL) in English courses of Telangana universities. A quantitative study design was used to evaluate the impact of PBL on students' language learning, using standardized questionnaires as the data collection tool.

3.1: Objectives: The following objectives have been set to direct research in establishing the efficacy of Project-Based Learning (PBL) and challenges that are apparent in its application with the objective of enhancing pupils' English language proficiency.

1. To assess the influence of PBL on students' inclination towards English language learning.
2. To identify problems and opportunities for the integration of PBL into the curriculum.

3.2: Research Questions: According to the objectives of the current study, the following research questions have been formulated to study the influence of Project-Based Learning

(PBL) on language development among students, and evaluate the practical constraints of its implementation.

1. How does Project-Based Learning (PBL) affect students' motivation for improving English language skills compared to traditional learning?
2. What are the challenges faced by the students in using PBL in English language learning?
3. How to overcome the challenges faced by the students in using PBL in English language learning?

3.3: Tools: For collection of information for the inquiry, a standardized inquiry tool was created and utilized, as described in the subsequent sections. A well-designed closed-ended questionnaire based on some specific themes derived during the study was formulated. A great deal of care was taken to design the instrument to ensure that it would be easy, relevant, and user-friendly to the respondents. The questionnaire was conducted across three women's Degree Colleges to procure data that could best represent the target population. This data collection effort, therefore, yielded a total of 110 responses and hence a quite large sample size for further interpretation and analysis.

3.4: Themes: The study investigates a number of major themes, starting with Awareness and Participation in Project-Based Learning (PBL), which deals with measuring to what extent learners and educators are aware of PBL methods and to what degree they are engaged. Besides, it investigates the levels of Participation and Confidence in Using English, considering how engagement with project-based activity enhances learners' confidence and capability in using English for speaking. In addition, the research is also on Challenges and Teacher Support, in which challenges faced by the students and teachers in applying PBL are brought to the limelight, along with how supportive pedagogies can assist in overcoming the challenges. The theme of Effectiveness of PBL and Recommendations discusses the general effectiveness of project-based learning on language learning and offers practical suggestions to make it easier to implement in English language teaching.

3.5: Sample: The research was conducted by actively involving 110 students from three Government Degree Colleges, which were termed Public Sector Undergraduate Colleges, of the Telangana higher education system. Participants were purposively chosen to reflect different student constituencies, thus providing a variety of perspectives and improving the validity of the research. Students were engaged using structured questionnaires based on Project-Based Learning (PBL) practices. Through the utilization of government-run institutions, the study sought to acquire real data and real-world experiences, that is, highlighting challenges and opportunities common to public-sector learning institutions. Purposive sampling enabled the researchers to establish the effectiveness, awareness levels, confidence levels, and participation rates of students in the use of English with the help of PBL, offering full data and informed information on the application of project-based approaches in Telangana's public undergraduate education system.

3.6: Data Collection Method: For the purpose of data gathering in the study, a standardized questionnaire with mostly closed-ended questions was prepared and distributed. The instrument was properly made to elicit precise and quantifiable data from the students on their exposure and familiarity with Project-Based Learning (PBL).

The questionnaire addressed two principal concerns:

1. Pre-existing knowledge and experience of students regarding PBL, including knowledge of its principles, concepts, and classroom application.
2. The specific challenges and issues faced by students in the actual real-time implementation of PBL in their own learning context.

The closed-ended question format facilitated systematic analysis of the data and made interpretation of the responses provided by the students easier. This approach guaranteed collection of standardized, consistent, and reliable data, which was necessary to measure the success of PBL and identify areas where it could be improved in Telangana's undergraduate English language instruction.

Survey Format:

The questionnaire contained closed-ended questions on:

- Students' prior experience with traditional teaching methods.
- Their motivation and engagement in PBL-related tasks and projects.
- The perceived effectiveness of PBL in enhancing their English communication skills.

3.7: Implementation Process: The procedure of carrying out this research involved three well-organized and systematic steps. The first step was the selection of sample, Next was administration of the questionnaire, which was carried out by the distribution of the structured survey to a preselected sample of 110 undergraduate students via an online platform, hence making it accessible, quick to deliver, and with high participation.

Subsequent to this, data collection was conducted within a specified and well-defined timeframe, which gave students adequate time to respond to the questions diligently and deeply. This phase was closely observed to ensure optimum participation rates and completeness and correctness of the answers provided.

Finally, data analysis was carried out with extreme care by using quantitative methods, mainly descriptive statistical methods (Percentage). These analysis tools allowed systematic scrutiny of the responses gathered, yielding correct summaries and data graphical presentations through measures such as frequency distributions, percentages, and mean scores. As a result of this systematic procedure, the researchers could clearly observe patterns, trends, and significant findings concerning the awareness of the students about Project-Based Learning as well as real-life problems encountered in using it.

4. Results Discussion: It presents a detailed analysis and interpretation of the data collected, highlighting key findings in relation to the research objectives and questions

4.1 Awareness and Participation in PBL

Category	Percentage
Aware of PBL	93.6%
Very clear understanding of PBL	92.5%
Lack clarity in understanding	7.5%
Students who participated in PBL	93.6%
Most common project type (Group Presentations)	74.5%

Observation: The data shown in the table indicates a strong level of awareness of Project-Based Learning (PBL) among the students, as 93.6% of the students reported familiarity with the approach. Importantly, 92.5% of the respondents showed a strong grasp of PBL, indicating that a considerable number of students possess extensive knowledge of the fundamental principles and applications of PBL. Additionally, an identical percentage of students (93.6%) indicated that they have engaged in PBL-related activities. Among the various types of participation, group presentations were identified as the most frequently experienced activity by 74.5% of the students as a typical feature of their PBL activities. These results indicate that PBL is not merely well-known but also practiced extensively, particularly through collaborative activities, and hence emphasize the significance of interactive and participatory learning environments for English language learning.

4.2 Engagement and Confidence in English Communication

Category	Percentage
Very engaged in PBL	70.9%
Somewhat interested in PBL	20.9%
Neutral towards PBL	8.2%
Strongly agree PBL improves proficiency	62.7%
Increased confidence in communication	69.1%

Most improved skill (Speaking)	46.3%
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Observation: The findings show that the majority of the students (70.9%) self-identified as highly active learners in Project-Based Learning (PBL) activities, with high levels of engagement with the pedagogic approach. Furthermore, 62.7% of the respondents strongly agreed that their participation in PBL has resulted in improvements in their English language skills. In terms of improvement in some skills, oral skills showed the highest improvement since 46.3% of the students recognized it as the skill area in which they felt the most evident improvement. Furthermore, 69.1% of the respondents reported a rise in confidence levels when communicating through English. The findings show that PBL not only encourages active participation but also positively impacts core language skills, especially those related to oral skills. The observed rise in the confidence level among the students further demonstrates the ability of PBL to promote supportive and empowering learning environments that are conducive to language learning.

4.3 Challenges and Teacher Support

Category	Percentage
Lack of confidence	57.3%
Teamwork difficulties	21%
Insufficient teacher guidance	21%
Request for more training sessions	66.4%
Receive regular teacher support	79%

Observation: Data analysis indicates that a lack of confidence was the greatest challenge for students pursuing Project-Based Learning (PBL), with 57.3% of the respondents identifying it as a major challenge. This was followed by team-related challenges, identified by 21% of the student population, and lack of teacher support, identified by 21%. However, the majority of students (79%) identified receiving sufficient support from their teachers while pursuing PBL activities. However, the recurring nature of some challenges suggests that additional interventions might be necessary. Interestingly, 66.4% of the students identified a need for additional session-specific training sessions to tackle these challenges. These findings support the need to sustain strong support systems in PBL programs, especially programs that enhance student confidence, enhance collaborative skills, and offer systematic teacher support to ensure effective PBL implementation.

4.4 Effectiveness of PBL and Recommendations

Category	Percentage
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Rate PBL as very effective	67.3%
Advocate for increased use of PBL	71.8%

Observation: Analysis of the survey responses reveals that the majority of the students (67.3%) view Project-Based Learning (PBL) to be especially effective in engaging them, as illustrated by the distribution of responses in relation to the effectiveness of PBL. In addition, 71.8% of the respondents showed a positive leaning in favor of extended implementation of PBL approaches to English language education. These findings highlight the positive perception of PBL by the students and illustrate its potential for broader implementation. However, they also propose the need for cooperation in order to promote its effectiveness. Specifically, developing cooperative learning situations and addressing problems of student self-confidence and group work in an orderly manner may assist in optimizing the effectiveness of PBL activities in English classes.

5. Key Findings: The following key findings emerged from the analysis of student responses, highlighting their experiences, perceptions, and challenges related to the implementation of Project-Based Learning (PBL) in English language classrooms

5.1 Awareness and Participation in PBL: Students showed a high level of awareness about Project-Based Learning (PBL), actively engaging in a series of project-based activities. Their involvement is an indicator of a positive acceptance and willingness to collaborate with new learning paradigms.

5.2 Student Engagement and Self-Efficacy in English Communication: A very high proportion of students were more actively involved in PBL activities and valued the positive effect of PBL on their English communication. Students indicated that they became much more confident at speaking and were braver to speak well in English because of PBL.

5.3 Team issues and Teacher Support: Issues related to team dynamics and inadequate support from educators were common challenges faced by a significant portion of the student body. Although most students received considerable assistance from their teachers, it is evident that there is a pressing need for more organized training sessions to tackle these concerns and enhance overall performance.

5.4 Effectiveness of PBL and Recommendations: Students reported a positive perception of Project-Based Learning (PBL), recognizing its impact on their motivation for learning activities. A tendency is developing that is supportive of returning more PBL approaches to English teaching. To optimize the value of PBL, it is recommended that opportunities for teamwork be optimized and issues related to student confidence and cooperation be overcome.

6. Suggested Interventions: According to the general findings made from the research, a number of propositions and recommendations are advanced as an effort to further extend the application and efficacy of Project-Based Learning (PBL) as an approach to learn English language.

For Students:

- Foster a culture of teamwork to help students build confidence and improve collaboration skills through PBL activities.
- Provide opportunities for students to engage in real-life, meaningful tasks that develop both language proficiency and essential soft skills.
- Promote regular student engagement and critical thinking by making PBL a consistent and integral part of the English curriculum.
- Aim to transform PBL into a student-centered, empowering methodology that fosters language acquisition and supports the development of independent, lifelong learners.

For Teachers:

- Encourage teachers to adopt and implement Project-Based Learning regularly in English language classes.
- Design and implement comprehensive faculty development programs to equip teachers with the knowledge, skills, and resources required to facilitate effective PBL.
- Establish institutional support systems to assist students in overcoming difficulties related to English language use and communication.

7. Conclusion: This research identifies that Project-Based Learning (PBL) is a powerful pedagogical tool for enhancing students' learning of the English language and motivation within the context of higher education, particularly for college and university students. The research reveals that students, whether they are from rural or other environments, become more confident, motivated, and engaged when they are engaged in working on real, authentic, real-world projects that focus on collaboration and creativity. These project-based tasks not only make learning more meaningful but also empower students to apply language skills in practical contexts. Although several challenges persist—such as limited access to adequate resources, infrastructure, and consistent teacher support—the positive student response indicates that PBL holds significant transformative potential. It shifts the paradigm of English language instruction from a traditional, teacher-centered model to a dynamic, student-centered practice that is focused on developing practical skills, achieving communicative goals, and fostering learner autonomy.

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