

The Effectiveness of Project Based learning Method in Improving Students' English Negotiation Ability on Students of International Business Administration

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Abstract

This study explores the impact of the Project-Based Learning (PBL) approach on improving English negotiation skills among students enrolled in the International Business Administration program. Negotiation skills are vital for business students, especially in international environments where English is the dominant language. The research employs a quasi-experimental methodology, comparing two groups: one group uses PBL while the other follows traditional instructional methods. Pre- and post-assessments were conducted to track the development of negotiation skills. The results reveal that students exposed to PBL experienced a significant enhancement in their negotiation abilities compared to those in the traditional learning environment. The findings highlight that PBL, with its focus on teamwork, real-world application, and critical thinking, serves as an effective teaching strategy for fostering negotiation skills in international business settings. This study emphasizes the value of PBL in cultivating essential soft skills within business education.

Keywords: Project-Based Learning, negotiation skills, English, International Business Administration, teaching strategies, skill enhancement

1. INTRODUCTION

In the modern globalized business landscape, negotiation skills are essential for achieving successful outcomes across various business situations. For students pursuing International Business Administration, acquiring negotiation skills in English is especially important, as English is widely regarded as the global business language. Strong negotiation abilities equip professionals to handle complex business interactions, participate in discussions, and secure mutually beneficial agreements. However, developing these skills within an academic environment can be difficult, as traditional teaching methods may not provide sufficient engagement or the practical experiences necessary to build proficiency. Thus, it is vital to explore alternative instructional approaches that can more effectively enhance students' negotiation skills in English.

One such approach is Project-Based Learning (PBL), a dynamic educational method that encourages active learning through hands-on problem-solving, collaboration, and critical thinking. In contrast to conventional lecture-based teaching, PBL engages students by involving them in projects that mirror real-world situations. This approach helps deepen their understanding of subject matter, as they are prompted to apply theoretical knowledge in practical scenarios. In the realm of language learning, PBL is particularly valuable, as it immerses students in communicative activities that replicate real-world business negotiations. As a result, PBL offers significant potential to enhance students' English negotiation skills by fostering an environment of interactive and experiential learning.

Although PBL is increasingly recognized as an effective teaching strategy, there has been limited research into its impact on the development of specific soft skills, such as negotiation, within business education. Much of the existing literature has focused on PBL's effects on overall academic achievement or language acquisition, without examining its influence on negotiation skills in particular, especially in an English-language context. Given the significance of negotiation in the field of international business and the necessity for students to master these skills in English, it is critical to evaluate how well PBL supports the development of negotiation abilities. Assessing PBL's effectiveness in this area could offer valuable insights into its role as a pedagogical tool in business education.

This study aims to evaluate the effectiveness of the Project-Based Learning method in improving English negotiation skills among students in the International Business Administration program. By comparing the negotiation abilities of students who engage with PBL to those taught through more traditional methods, this research seeks to determine whether PBL is a superior approach for fostering these essential skills. The findings of this study could have important implications for educational practices and may contribute to the adoption of more engaging, practical teaching methods that better prepare students for the complexities of international business negotiations.

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

Project-Based Learning (PBL) has gained significant recognition in recent years as a novel educational method that focuses on active student participation through experiential, hands-on learning. Unlike conventional teaching techniques, PBL enables students to collaborate on real-world projects, which has been found to enhance critical thinking and promote a deeper comprehension of subject matter (Thomas, 2000). Research suggests that PBL motivates students to take responsibility for their learning, fostering independence and encouraging the application of theoretical concepts in practical contexts (Blumenfeld et al., 1991). Its implementation in language learning has proven particularly successful, as it engages students in authentic communicative tasks, thereby improving both language skills and problem-solving abilities (Beckett & Slater, 2005).

Within business education, negotiation skills form a key part of the curriculum, equipping students to manage complex interpersonal interactions in professional environments. Lewicki, Barry, and Saunders (2016) argue that effective negotiation entails strong communication skills, cultural sensitivity, and the ability to reach mutually beneficial outcomes. As the business world becomes increasingly international, proficiency in English negotiations is essential for business students (Harvey & Harvey, 2013). Traditional lecture-based approaches, however, often fail to provide the interactive and practical experiences necessary to develop these skills. PBL offers an alternative, engaging students in business-related scenarios that enhance their negotiation skills in a more practical and relevant way (Duch, Groh, & Allen, 2001).

Several researchers have examined the influence of PBL on language development, particularly in settings where English is not the students' first language. For example, Stoller (2006) found that PBL significantly improved students' communicative abilities by offering real-world language practice opportunities. Likewise, Fragoulis and Tsiplakides (2009) discovered that PBL enhanced students' speaking proficiency by involving them in projects that required negotiation, teamwork, and decision-making. These results suggest that PBL not only

supports language learning but also cultivates crucial soft skills, such as negotiation, which are essential for success in business education (Larmer & Mergendoller, 2010).

Despite these encouraging findings, there is limited research specifically investigating the role of PBL in enhancing negotiation skills within the context of business education. Most of the existing literature focuses on broader applications of PBL in academic or language-learning environments (Barron & Darling-Hammond, 2008). This reveals a gap in research that needs to be addressed, particularly in examining how PBL can develop core skills like negotiation, particularly in English, among students preparing for careers in international business. Additionally, much of the current research emphasizes general academic improvements, highlighting the need for more focused studies on skills like negotiation within specialized programs such as International Business Administration (Hmelo-Silver, 2004).

This research seeks to fill this gap by exploring the effectiveness of the Project-Based Learning method in developing English negotiation skills among International Business Administration students. By grounding the study in the theoretical framework of PBL and building upon prior research in language learning and business education, this study aims to expand the literature on interactive, student-centered teaching methods. The findings will offer insights into the potential of PBL to enhance negotiation skills, helping educators implement more effective teaching strategies to prepare students for the complex demands of global business environments.

3. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

This study employs a quasi-experimental design to explore the effectiveness of the Project-Based Learning (PBL) approach in enhancing the English negotiation skills of students in the International Business Administration program at the State Polytechnic of Bengkalis. A quasi-experimental design is particularly useful in this context because it facilitates the comparison of different instructional methods while controlling for external factors that may impact the results (Campbell & Stanley, 1963). For this research, two distinct groups of students were selected for comparison: one group was taught using the PBL approach, while the control group followed conventional teaching methods. Pre- and post-tests were administered to evaluate the progress in students' negotiation skills, offering a clear comparison of the effectiveness of each teaching method.

The participants in the study were students enrolled in the International Business Administration program at the State Polytechnic of Bengkalis. A total of 60 students were randomly divided into two groups: 30 students in the experimental group and 30 students in the control group. The experimental group received instruction based on PBL principles, where students worked on a series of negotiation projects designed to mimic real-world business negotiations. On the other hand, the control group adhered to a traditional lecture-based curriculum, focusing on theoretical concepts and individual assignments. Random assignment ensured that both groups were comparable in terms of academic background and abilities, minimizing potential biases in the outcomes (Creswell, 2014).

To evaluate the effectiveness of each instructional method, pre-tests and post-tests were conducted for both groups. The pre-test measured the students' baseline negotiation skills before the start of the instructional intervention, establishing a reference point for later comparison. Once the instructional period concluded, post-tests were administered to determine any improvement in negotiation abilities. These assessments were designed to evaluate various negotiation aspects, such as communication, cultural awareness, and the ability to reach mutually beneficial agreements, following models by Lewicki, Barry, and Saunders (2016).

This quantitative data enabled a detailed comparison of how the PBL method impacted negotiation skills compared to traditional teaching techniques.

In addition to the quantitative data, qualitative data was also collected through student feedback and classroom observations. This mixed-methods approach, which combines both qualitative and quantitative data, provides a more holistic understanding of the learning experience (Johnson & Onwuegbuzie, 2004). Throughout the instructional period, observations were made focusing on student engagement, participation, and problem-solving during negotiation exercises. After the instruction was completed, students were surveyed to gather feedback on their learning experiences and their perception of how well the PBL method supported their development of negotiation skills. The qualitative data offered additional insights into the benefits and challenges of PBL in comparison to traditional teaching methods.

The analysis of the data involved both descriptive and inferential statistical methods to compare the performance of the experimental and control groups. Descriptive statistics were used to summarize the students' results in both the pre-test and post-test, highlighting the mean scores and standard deviations for each group. This provided an overview of student performance over the course of the study. Inferential statistical tests, including a paired t-test, were conducted to determine if the observed differences between the pre- and post-test scores were statistically significant (Field, 2013). These tests allowed for a more thorough comparison of the two instructional methods and whether PBL led to meaningful improvements in negotiation skills.

By combining qualitative and quantitative analyses, this study's design was further strengthened. While the quantitative data provided concrete, measurable results, the qualitative insights added depth by capturing students' perspectives and experiences throughout the learning process. Together, these methods offered a robust framework for assessing the impact of PBL on negotiation skills. The blend of student surveys, observational data, and statistical analysis ensured that the findings accurately reflected both the academic outcomes and practical experiences of the students in the International Business Administration program.

Overall, this mixed-method approach provided a comprehensive evaluation of the effectiveness of PBL in improving English negotiation skills among International Business Administration students at the State Polytechnic of Bengkalis. By comparing PBL with traditional teaching methods, this study offers significant insights into how innovative instructional strategies like PBL can better equip students for the complexities of international business negotiations. The findings contribute to the broader discourse on effective pedagogical practices in business education, emphasizing the advantages of experiential, student-centered learning.

4. RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS

The demographic data of the respondents can be seen on the table 1 as follow:

Table 1. The Frequency Distribution and Percentage of the Students' Demographic Data

No	Variable	Frequency	Percentage
1	Gender		
	a. Male	7	11,7%
	b. Female	53	88,3%
2	Age		
	a. 20 years old	18	30 %
	b. 21 years old	35	58,3%
	c. 22 years old	7	11,7%

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Data were analyzed using the t-test (pre and post-test design). Before conducting the t-test, researchers conducted a data normality test using the Shapiro-Wilk test, homogeneity, and histograms. Based on this test, the data was found to be normally distributed because the $p\text{-value} > 0.05$, which means that the English Negotiating Skill score data of pre-test and post-test students are homogeneous. Furthermore, the results of the analysis of the effect of PBL activities on student English Negotiating Skill scores can be seen in Table 2. It shows that there is a significant effect of the PBL program on student English Negotiating Skill scores ($t(60) = -2.947, p < 0.05$).

Table 2. The Comparison of Mean Negotiating Skill Score of Students Before and After Intervention by using Paired T-Test (n = 60)

Test Times	Negotiating Skill Score		t	p-value
	Mean	SD		
Pre-Test	56,4	25,26	-2.947	0.05
Post-Test	82,3	31,31		

Both pre-test and post-test scores were evaluated for the experimental and control groups to assess the impact of Project-Based Learning (PBL) on students' negotiation skills. Prior to any instruction, both groups demonstrated similar levels of ability. The experimental group's average pre-test score was 56.4, while the control group scored 55.7, showing minimal difference. However, after the instructional intervention, the experimental group exhibited a remarkable improvement, with their post-test average rising to 82.3. In contrast, the control group showed only a moderate improvement, with their post-test average reaching 65.4. The significant improvement in the experimental group's performance indicates that students who were taught using the PBL method made more substantial gains in their negotiation skills compared to those who received traditional instruction.

To confirm the significance of the observed score improvements, a paired t-test was applied to both the pre- and post-test data. The results revealed that the score increase for the experimental group was statistically significant ($p < 0.05$), affirming that PBL had a significant positive effect on their negotiation skills. In contrast, although the control group showed a slight improvement, the change in their scores was not statistically significant ($p > 0.05$). These findings support the hypothesis that the PBL method is superior to traditional teaching methods in enhancing negotiation skills.

This is in accordance with Yusuf et al. (2021) conducted a study on the use of PBL in enhancing English speaking skills among engineering students. They found that PBL encourages learners to use English more effectively in professional and technical contexts. Although the focus was not specifically on negotiation, the study emphasized the development of communication skills critical for business interactions, aligning with the outcomes seen in this research. In addition, Putra & Asrori (2020) examined PBL in vocational education and its role in improving students' professional communication skills. They concluded that PBL not only enhances language fluency but also boosts confidence in using English in specific job-related situations, such as negotiations. This research supports the findings of the current study, highlighting how PBL can create a learning environment where students are better prepared for real-world professional challenges.

Furthermore, In addition to the quantitative data, qualitative feedback was gathered through surveys completed after the instructional period. Students in the experimental group expressed higher levels of motivation and engagement, noting that PBL allowed them to actively practice negotiations and apply theoretical knowledge to real-world business scenarios. Many students also indicated that working collaboratively improved their communication and

problem-solving abilities. Meanwhile, students in the control group found the traditional lecture-based format less interactive and felt it lacked opportunities for practical negotiation exercises. This feedback highlights how PBL not only improves negotiation skills but also promotes student involvement by offering a more dynamic and practical learning environment.

The results of this study carry significant implications for business education, particularly for programs like International Business Administration at the State Polytechnic of Bengkalis. Strong negotiation skills are crucial for students entering international business roles where effective communication is key. The findings suggest that incorporating PBL into the curriculum could lead to more favorable learning outcomes by fostering essential soft skills such as negotiation, teamwork, and communication, which are vital in the global business context. In addition to improving academic performance, PBL also equips students with the practical skills needed to face real-world challenges. By engaging in simulated negotiation scenarios, students develop the confidence to apply their skills in various professional settings.

Thus, the significant benefit of using Project-Based Learning (PBL) to teach negotiation skills in English is its ability to simulate authentic business scenarios. By engaging students in tasks such as case studies, role-playing activities, and group discussions, PBL mirrors the situations they are likely to encounter in their future careers. This hands-on learning approach promotes deeper cognitive involvement, which is crucial for developing advanced language functions like negotiation. In the case of the International Business Administration students at the State Polytechnic of Bengkalis, this research demonstrates that PBL's collaborative and interactive nature was highly beneficial. It provided students with the opportunity to practice both linguistic skills and essential soft skills, such as teamwork and negotiation, in a holistic manner. For business professionals, these competencies are vital—not only in grasping business-specific English terminology but also in effectively negotiating and managing conflicts in international settings.

5. CONCLUSION

While this research highlights the effectiveness of PBL, it also acknowledges some challenges. Implementing PBL successfully requires thorough planning and guidance to ensure that all students are engaged and that the projects meet the desired learning outcomes. Additionally, educators must be adequately trained to design and implement PBL activities, particularly in language learning contexts where accuracy is just as important as fluency.

Future studies could investigate the long-term effects of PBL on students' negotiation skills once they enter the workforce. Additionally, it would be useful to examine how PBL can be adapted for digital or hybrid learning environments, especially as online education continues to grow in importance.

This research affirms the effectiveness of Project-Based Learning in improving the English negotiation skills of International Business Administration students. By involving students in realistic business contexts, PBL encourages more meaningful language learning and the development of practical skills, making it an excellent method for preparing students for the global business environment.

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