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Exploring a College English Teaching Model Integrating Task-Based Learning (TBL) and Project-Based Learning (PBL)

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Abstract: This study investigates the integration of Task-Based Learning (TBL) and Project-Based Learning (PBL) in college English teaching to enhance students' language proficiency, engagement, and critical thinking. By combining these methodologies, we propose a model that addresses communicative competence, collaborative skills, and project management abilities. We conducted a mixed methods study with a control and experimental group of students over one semester, assessing language proficiency, engagement, and satisfaction. Results indicate that the TBLPBL integrated model significantly enhances students' communicative skills and engagement compared to traditional methods.

1. Introduction

In recent years, college-level English teaching has shifted from traditional lectures to learner-centered models emphasizing practical use and interaction, driven by the importance of communicative and collaborative skills in a globalized society. Task-Based Learning (TBL) focuses on real-world tasks to enhance communicative competence, promoting fluency and motivation by immersing students in purposeful language use. Project-Based Learning (PBL) complements this by encouraging in-depth, extended learning through collaborative projects that integrate language skills with critical thinking. Together, TBL and PBL align with constructivist theories, offering a complementary approach that enhances language proficiency while fostering teamwork and problem-solving, essential for both academic and professional contexts.

2. Literature Review

2.1 Overview of TBL and PBL in Language Education

Task-Based Learning (TBL) emphasizes communicative tasks, encouraging learners to develop fluency and confidence through meaningful real-world activities. Ellis highlights its effectiveness in enhancing speaking and listening skills by focusing on task completion over accuracy, aligning with

communicative language teaching principles[1]. Studies by Kim and Park confirm TBL's ability to improve motivation and retention by embedding language use in practical contexts[2]. This approach is particularly beneficial for college English learners, who require applicable skills beyond the classroom.

Project-Based Learning (PBL) fosters critical thinking and collaboration through extended projects that integrate language skills with problem-solving. PBL supports cognitive and language development by involving students in complex, real-world problems[3]. Chang and Chen demonstrated that PBL increases engagement by making learning directly relevant to students' academic and professional goals[4]. Tran and Duong further emphasized PBL's role in enhancing teamwork and decision-making, essential for comprehensive language learning[5].

2.2 Integration of TBL and PBL in Language Education

The integration of TBL and PBL merges immediate task-oriented learning with long-term, reflective projects[6]. Wang and Xu note that this combination fosters a complete learning cycle, enhancing both fluency and critical thinking[7]. Brown and Zhang found that this approach significantly boosts engagement and motivation by linking immediate tasks to long-term objectives[8]. Despite its potential, more empirical studies are needed to explore the combined effects on language proficiency and collaborative skills in diverse educational contexts [9].

3. Methodology

This study employed a mixed-methods design to evaluate the effects of integrating TBL and PBL in college English teaching, using quantitative and qualitative data to assess language proficiency, engagement, and student perceptions. Over a 16-week semester, 60 non-English major college students were divided into an experimental group exposed to the TBL-PBL model and a control group receiving traditional instruction focused on grammar and vocabulary.

3.1 Data Collection

Language proficiency was measured with preand post-tests assessing speaking, listening, reading, and writing. Engagement surveys gauged motivation and interest through Likert-scale questions. Semi-structured interviews with 10 students from each group provided insights into their learning experiences, while classroom observations documented interaction and collaboration in the experimental group.

3.2 Data Analysis

Preand post-test results were statistically analyzed using t-tests, and survey responses were compared between groups. Qualitative data from interviews and observations were coded thematically to identify recurring perceptions and engagement patterns, offering a comprehensive view of the TBL-PBL model's impact.

4. Results and Data Analysis

4.1 Pre and Post-Test Scores

As shown in **Table 1**: For the experimental Group, the mean pre-test score for the experimental group was 65 out of 100, and the post-test mean score rose to 80. This represents a 15-point improvement, or an increase of approximately 23%.

For the control group, the mean pre-test score was 66, and the post-test mean score increased slightly to 69, reflecting only a 3-point gain (or 5% improvement).

Table 1: Language Proficiency Test Scores (Preand Post-Test)

Group	Pre-Test Mean Score	Post-Test Mean Score	Improvement (%)
Experimental	65	80	23
Control	66	69	5

4.2 Statistical Analysis of Language Proficiency

A paired sample t-test was conducted to assess the significance of the improvement within each group. For the experimental group, the increase in scores from pre-test to post-test was statistically significant ($t(29) = 8.57$, $p < 0.01$), indicating that the TBL-PBL integrated model significantly enhanced students' language proficiency. The control group, however, did not show a statistically significant change in scores ($t(29) = 1.45$, $p > 0.05$), suggesting that traditional methods had limited impact on proficiency development.

4.3 Survey Analysis of Engagement and Motivation

The engagement and motivation survey included questions on students' interest in learning, perceived relevance of their tasks, and motivation to participate actively in the class. The survey results indicated significantly higher engagement levels in the experimental group.

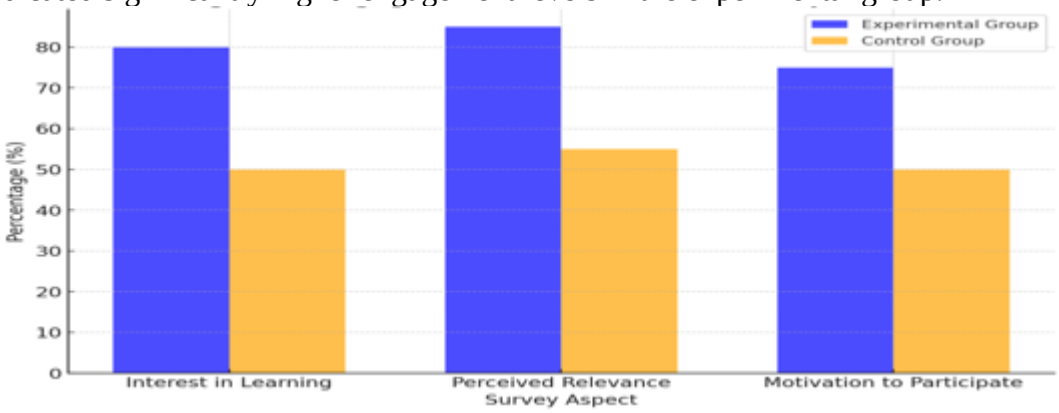

Figure 1: Engagement and Motivation Survey Results

Figure 1 shows a comparative bar chart of engagement survey results across three aspects (interest, relevance, and motivation) for both groups. The experimental group demonstrates consistently higher levels across all engagement factors, emphasizing the positive impact of TBL-PBL on students' attitudes toward learning.

Interest in Learning: 80% of the experimental group students reported an increased interest in learning English after participating in the TBL-PBL integrated course, compared to only 50% in the control group.

Perceived Relevance: 85% of experimental group students agreed that the tasks and projects were relevant to their personal and professional goals, whereas only 55% of control group students shared this sentiment.

Motivation to Participate: 75% of students in the experimental group expressed increased motivation to participate actively in class activities, in contrast to 50% in the control group.

An independent samples t-test confirmed that the differences in engagement levels between the

experimental and control groups were statistically significant ($p < 0.05$), supporting the hypothesis that the TBL-PBL model is more effective in enhancing student engagement and motivation.

4.4 Collaborative Skills and Critical Thinking

4.4.1 Qualitative Analysis of Interview Feedback

In the post-semester interviews, 10 students from each group provided feedback on their experiences with the teaching model. Analysis of the interviews revealed that students in the experimental group developed stronger collaborative skills and a higher level of critical thinking compared to those in the control group.

Collaborative Skills: Students in the experimental group cited significant improvements in teamwork, communication, and responsibility-sharing. They highlighted tasks that required role negotiation, collective decision-making, and problem-solving. One student commented, “The group projects taught me how to listen to others’ ideas and work toward a common goal, something I rarely experienced in traditional classes.”

Critical Thinking: The TBL-PBL model encouraged experimental group students to consider multiple approaches to solving problems and to justify their choices. A participant shared, “The projects made me think deeply about how to express ideas clearly and logically in English, not just follow a script.”

Real-World Application: Experimental group students frequently noted that they found the TBL-PBL activities relevant to real-world situations, which reinforced their motivation to engage fully. One student explained, “Learning through these tasks felt meaningful because I could see how I might use English outside of the classroom.”

By contrast, students in the control group reported fewer opportunities for collaboration and critical thinking. Their classroom activities were largely individual and focused on memorization, which limited their engagement with language as a communicative tool.

4.4.2 Classroom Observations

Classroom observations supported the feedback provided by the experimental group students. Observers noted high levels of engagement and collaboration during group tasks in the experimental group, as students actively discussed strategies, delegated roles, and solved issues collectively. For instance, during a project simulation of a business meeting, students were observed engaging in extensive planning and negotiation, demonstrating their ability to use English effectively in collaborative settings.

In contrast, control group students were observed engaging in limited peer interaction and relied heavily on the instructor for guidance. This observation aligns with the survey and interview results, indicating that the traditional model did not promote as much autonomous language use or teamwork.

4.5 Summary of Key Findings

The findings from the data analysis demonstrate that the TBL-PBL integrated model positively impacted students' language proficiency, engagement, motivation, and collaborative skills. Specifically:

1) Language Proficiency: The experimental group showed a statistically significant improvement in language proficiency, with a 23% increase in scores compared to a modest 5% in the control group.

2) Engagement and Motivation: Survey results indicated higher levels of engagement and

motivation among students in the TBL-PBL group, as evidenced by their interest, perceived relevance, and motivation to participate.

3) Collaborative Skills and Critical Thinking: Interview and observational data highlighted that the TBL-PBL model fostered collaborative skills and critical thinking in the experimental group, with students demonstrating more initiative, active participation, and problem-solving abilities than those in the control group.

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