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**ESP students' perceptions about the impact of  
Project based learning on their speaking skill.**

**The Case of 2<sup>nd</sup> Year Economic Sciences at Msila University**

**Dissertation Submitted to the Department of English in Partial fulfillment  
of the Requirements for the Master's Degree**

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# DEDICATION

In the Name of **Allah**, Most Gracious, Most Merciful

I dedicate this work to:

My dearest parents who believed in me and encouraged me, your love have shaped me into who I am today.

My sisters and brother who have been my source of strength.

To my friends who supported me and stood by my side.

To my family, **BABOUNE&GUERROUM** who celebrated my achievements as their own and had been a part of my happy moments.

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who strengthened me to accomplish this work.

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for evaluating this research study

In terms of my research, I thank all the participants in my study who have  
provided with the necessary data

## ABSTRACT

Enhancing ESP students' speaking skills plays an important role in the educational process. The significance posits that teachers, in response to the dynamic educational landscape, are argued to incorporate and adopt appropriate methodologies and strategies in order to create the needed environment for students. This study aims to explore the effects of Project-Based Learning (PBL) in enhancing students' speaking skills in English for Specific Purposes (ESP) environment, through conducting a case study on second year students at the Department of Economic Sciences at Mohamed Boudiaf University, Msila, Algeria. We hypothesized that a well-planned PBL instruction is effective teaching method to develop the ESP students' speaking skill. Moreover, students would show positive attitudes towards the implementation of PBL. To test this research hypothesis and to achieve the research objectives, a descriptive quantitative questionnaire administered to 2nd-year economic sciences students, it was sent online to 40 students. The main findings clearly showed that PBL is regarded as an effective tool to improve ESP student's speaking skills, along with their attitude, engagement, self-confidence, and active learning, as students investigate real-world issues in a collaborative environment, and mentioned some challenges that they have faced within PBL context.

**Keywords:** Project-Based Learning (PBL), English for Specific Purposes (ESP), speaking skills, Collaborative Environment

## **List of abbreviations**

**PBL:** Project Based Learning

**ESP:** English for Specific Purposes

**PBI:** Project Based Instructions

**VS:** Versus

**FL:** Foreign Language

**TL:** Target Language

**ELT:** English Language Teaching

**NA:** Needs Analysis

## **List of Figures**

**Figure 01:** Kolb's Learning Cycle

**Figure 02:** students' age

**Figure 03:** Gender Distribution

**Figure 04:** Duration of English language study

**Figure 05:** attitude toward speaking English

**Figure 06:** speaking difficulty

**Figure 07:** engaging in speaking activities

**Figure 08:** students' responsibility to develop speaking

**Figure 09:** challenges in class speaking

**Figure 10:** students' attitude toward PBL environment

**Figure 11:** indicating nervousness when attending PBL classes

**Figure 12:** Improving oral performance

**Figure 13:** Improving vocabulary and pronunciation through PBL

**Figure 14:** using English in daily life

**Figure 15:** Improving listening and comprehension skills

**Figure 16:** students' confidence in oral class

**Figure 17:** teamwork and collaboration promotion

**Figure 18:** Importance of Improving Oral Performance rather than High Scores

## **List of Tables**

**Table01:** Ziegenfuss's comparison chart between the classical based classrooms and PBL

**Table 02:** Differences between speech and writing

## Table of Contents

Dedication.....	II
Acknowledgments.....	III
Abstract.....	IV
List of Abbreviations.....	V
List of Appendices.....	XV
List of Figures.....	XVIII
List of Tables.....	IX
Table of Contents.....	X

### **General Introduction**

Introduction.....	.01
1. Statement of the Problem .....	.02
2. Significance of the study .....	.02
3. Aims of the Study.....	.02
4. Research Questions.....	.03
5. Research Hypotheses.....	.03
6. Research Methodology .....	.03
7. The research structure.....	.04

### **Chapter One: Literature Review**

#### **1.1.Section One: Implementing Project Based Learning in ESP Classes**

##### **Introduction**

- 1.1.2. Origins of PBL
- 1.1.3. Definition of PBL
- 1.1.4. Types of PBL
- 1.1.5. Characteristics of PBL
- 1.1.6. Stages of PBL
- 1.1.7. Benefits of PBL
- 1.1.8. Teachers role
- 1.1.9. PBL VS traditional classroom
- 1.1.10. Challenge of PBL implantation

1.1.10.1. Organization challenges

1.1.10.2. Monitoring challenges

1.1.10.3. Personal challenges

### **Conclusion**

## **1.2. Section Two: Speaking Skill**

### **Introduction**

1.2.2. Speaking definition

1.2.3. Speaking and other skills

1.2.3.1. Relationship between speaking and listening

1.2.3.2. Relationship between speaking and writing

1.2.3.3. Relationship between speaking and reading

1.2.4. Teaching speaking

1.2.5. Purpose of speaking

1.2.6. Speaking skill components

1.2.7. Types of speaking performance

1.2.8. Factors affecting oral performance

1.2.8.1. External factors

1.2.8.2. Internal factors

### **Conclusion**

## **Chapter Two: Fieldwork and data collection**

### **Introduction**

2.1. Population and Sampling

2.2. Research Methodology

2.3. Research Tools

2.4. Students' questionnaire

2.4.1. Description of the questionnaire

2.4.2. Data Analysis and interpretation of the questionnaire

2.5. Discussions of the findings

2.6. Limitation of the study

2.7.General recommendation

## **Conclusion**

**General Conclusion**

**List of References**

**Appendix**

**Résumé**

**الملخص**

# **General Introduction**

## **Introduction**

Proficiency in English has become increasingly essential for English for Specific Purposes (ESP) students' who aim to succeed in their academic and professional fields and to be able to communicate within those specific domains such as medicine, business or any other domain. Among the four primary language skills -listening, speaking, reading, and writing- speaking is an essential skill used to communicate and share thoughts and ideas, noting that beyond general English mastery, speaking professionally involves knowledge of specialized vocabulary and terminology relevant to the field and relies on a deep understanding of the subject matter.

However, teaching ESP students to speak fluently and confidently remains a challenging task. Traditional language instruction methods, often rooted in grammar-focused approaches, may not adequately address the unique needs of ESP learners, who require specific language skills to their fields of study or work. Project-based instruction (PBI) has emerged as a pedagogical approach in the field of language education that emphasizes active learning, real-world application, and collaborative problem-solving, making it particularly suitable for ESP contexts. It helps them to directly apply their language skills to situations they are likely to encounter in their careers.

### **1. Statement of the Problem**

In Algeria, English is taught at the primary educational level, yet university students find speaking a complex and challenging skill and face many difficulties when practicing it. The educational process was based on teacher centered instructions, in which students are not engaged and find limited opportunities to practice or develop their abilities; noting the overcrowded university classes and the session time do not allow all of them to participate.

Foreign language teaching methodology has been changing over time; however, there is no single best method to use; and it stills the interest of many researchers to find an effective method, based on the given context. Project-Based Learning (PBL) is viewed as a suitable solution for most of the learning obstacles; researchers have looked at PBL as a teaching method that can be used with almost students despite their levels of proficiency, classes and abilities (Stoller, 1997)

## **2. Significance of the study**

English has become the most world's spoken language; it has attained the status of an international language, so improving ESP students' speaking skills in English can enhance their ability to communicate effectively in professional settings, leading to better opportunities and future careers. Therefore, investigating project-based instruction, as an innovative teaching method, is an act of high importance as it offers an opportunity to enhance students' confidence, engagement, and ability to effectively express themselves.

## **3. Aims of the Study**

The present study aims to provide information about the use of PBL and the challenges that encounter students and teachers while implementing this method. Moreover, this study aims to investigate the learners' attitude toward the application of PBL in ESP classrooms and developing their speaking skill. Besides, this research tries to find out the effects of using such a method on their confidence and motivation.

## **4. Research Questions**

Based on what has been discussed before, the current study seeks to address the following main research questions:

- 1) What perceptions do ESL students hold about the impact of PBL on their speaking skill?

## **5. Research Hypotheses**

With the consideration of the above questions, it is hypothesized:

- Students would hold great perceptions about the impact of PBL on their speaking skill?

## **6. Research Methodology**

### **6.1. Choice of Method**

This study about investigating the students' perceptions on PBL's impact on their speaking skill, the most adequate method is a descriptive study that employs a quantitative method. It is considered as the appropriate way to achieve the aims of this study.

### **6.2. Sample of the Study**

Since this study is about ESP students, the population consists of second year economic sciences students at Mohamed Boudiaf University, Msila, Algeria. The sample is selected randomly from the total number of this department; 40 students participated and helped to conduct the research

### **6.3. Data Gathering Tool**

To conduct the study effectively, the tool of investigation used in this study is a questionnaire. It is sent online to economic sciences second year students with total number of 40 students, they were asked to answer different questions about the topic of the study to collect information about their point of views.

## **7. The research structure**

In this research, two variables which are linked will be described; the project based learning and speaking skill in ESP classrooms. This research is divided into two chapters; one is for the theoretical part and the other for the practical

First, chapter one itself is divided into two sections, the first one deals with speaking skill and the difficulties that students face while attempting to speak English and the other is about implementing PBI in ESP context

Finally, the second chapter focuses on the study's practical application. It demonstrates the data gathering process, the sampling that consists of second year economic sciences students at Mohamed Boudiaf University, Msila, Algeria, who have been chosen randomly, as well as the questionnaire analysis and discussion of the findings

# **Chapter One:**

# **Literature Review**

## **1.2. Section One: Implementing Project Based Learning in ESP Classes**

### **Introduction**

- 1.1.11. Origins of PBL
- 1.1.12. Definition of PBL
- 1.1.13. Types of PBL
- 1.1.14. Characteristics of PBL
- 1.1.15. Stages of PBL
- 1.1.16. Benefits of PBL
- 1.1.17. Teachers role
- 1.1.18. PBL VS traditional classroom
- 1.1.19. Challenge of PBL implantation
  - 1.1.19.1. Organization challenges
  - 1.1.19.2. Monitoring challenges
  - 1.1.19.3. Personal challenges

### **Conclusion**

## 1.1. **Section One** : Implementing Project Based Learning in ESP Classes

### 1.1.1. **Introduction**

It is high time Algerian ESP classes adopt a new educational approach, which conforms to the 21st century students' skills. Few decades ago, many educational approaches were indeed teacher-centered, this means that the focus was generally on the teacher as the primary source of knowledge and authority in the classroom.

Nowadays, all foreign languages education domains and especially the field of English language have witnessed a paradigm shift, with a growing emphasis on learner-centered approaches that foster practical language skills. One approach that has gained attention is Project-Based Learning (PBL), serves as an instructional approach that prioritizes active learning engagement. It revolves around the creation and completion of projects that reflect real-world scenarios. This pedagogical approach transforms students from passive and recipients of information into active participants in their learning process. PBL integrates language acquisition with problem-solving, critical thinking, collaboration, and presentation skills—qualities highly esteemed in professional contexts.

Incorporating Project-Based Learning into ESP classrooms offers a dynamic approach to language instruction by immersing learners in contextually relevant, skill-based projects, they can bridge the gap between language proficiency and professional success.

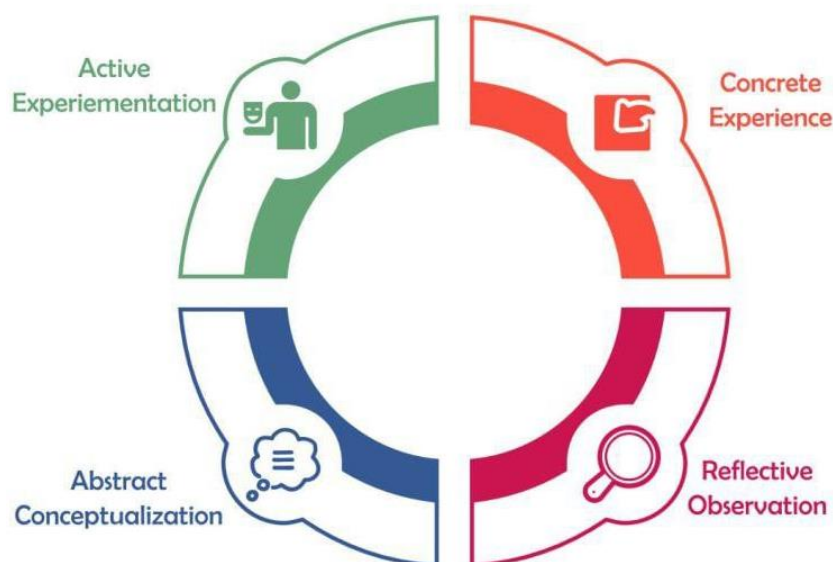
### 1.1.2. **Origins of PBL**

The Project-Based Learning process is not a new concept in education, one of the earliest precursors to PBL can be found in the late 19th and early 20th centuries. Its origins PBL can be traced to the American philosopher and educator John Dewey, he stated that: “The teacher is not in the school to impose

certain ideas or to form certain habits in the child, but is there as a member of the community to select the influences which shall affect the child and assist him in properly responding to these influences” (Dewey, 1897, p. 9) he emphasized learning by doing and hands-on experiences and stressed the importance of practical, real-world experiences for students. His philosophy laid the foundation for the idea that students learn best when actively engaged in solving meaningful problems and conducting investigations.

Another critical influence on the development of PBL is the concept of experiential learning, championed by David Kolb. In the 1980s, Kolb proposed his experiential learning cycle, which consists of four stages: concrete experience, reflective observation, abstract conceptualization, and active experimentation. This cycle closely aligns with the iterative nature of PBL, where students engage in real-world projects, reflect on their experiences, apply theoretical knowledge, and continually refine their understanding through hands-on activities.

**Figure 01: Kolb’s Learning Cycle**



*Source.*David Kolb (1984)

Railsback (2002, p.7) maintains that "Project-based instruction strategies have their roots in the constructivist approach" while Cohen et al. (2004) defined constructivism as "a theory which regards learning as an active process in which learners construct and internalize new concepts, ideas and knowledge based on their present and past knowledge and experiences" (p. 167) It is learning theory that asserts learners actively construct their knowledge, they engage with new information and experiences and build their own understanding and meaning. Constructivist theorists like Jean Piaget and Lev Vygotsky have emphasized the importance of social interaction and problem-solving; PBL incorporates these constructivist principles as it fosters collaboration and critical thinking

### **1.1.3. Definition of PBL**

The term project based learning seems to be broad, having different meanings and it can be defined from different perspectives in order to meet the needs of researchers, Morgan (1984) asserts that PBL is not restricted to only one precise definition, but it is also viewed and defined from different dimensions, in which it has been an interest of many educators for more than 40 years.

Project-Based Learning is an instructional educational approach where students learn by actively engaging in real-world, meaningful projects or activities that require them to apply what they have learned, researched, and problems solved in a practical context. Thomas (2000) defined PBL as "a model that organizes learning around projects" (p.1) The primary focus is on projects or tasks that are designed to be engaging, real-world, and relevant to the curriculum. These projects serve as the central organizing structure for learning.

PBL gained a considerable attention in the field of education, Blumenfeld et al (1991) defined it as "a comprehensive approach to classroom learning and teaching that is designed to engage students in an investigation of authentic problems" (p.369) Thus, it represents An effective pedagogical approach that

engages students in authentic investigations of real-world problems. Its principles, design, and benefits are aligning with the goals of modern education, and involving them in problems or challenges that are relevant to the world around them; and that seeks to prepare them with the needed skills as it is based on 21st century skills like communication and presentation.

Furthermore, Patton and Robin (2012) stated that "Project-Based Learning refers to students designing, planning, and carrying out an extended project that produces an output" (p.13) The process typically begins with a problem that serves as the project's first point. Students then work autonomously to investigate, gather information, plan and design according to the challenges they face and develop a solution. This requires critical thinking, problem-solving, creativity, and collaboration as Bender (2012) claimed in few words: "working cooperatively to solve a problem" (p. 7) Collaboration is an important element, Arpin and Capra (2001) defined this as an "opportunity for students to develop their own information by interacting with their group mates and environment"(p.12) in which, students enhance their communication and teamwork, as it promotes a deeper understanding of the subject and encourages knowledge application.

Project-Based Learning is the instructional strategy of empowering students to pursue content knowledge on their own and demonstrate their new understanding through a variety of presentation modes (Klein, 2009, p.8) It is a teaching approach that focus on engaging rather than receiving information from teachers, students are encouraged to take responsibility of their learning and this will promote their autonomy and foster a sense of motivation by allowing them to choose their topics that interest them. According to Florez (1999, p.17), the use of PBL activities in teaching English is said to foster students' autonomy and encourage active and student-centered language practice, it creates a learning environment where students have the freedom to make decisions, take responsibility of their projects, and actively engage in their learning process.

This autonomy not only enhances their academic growth but also prepares them for the responsibilities and decision-making they will encounter in the real world.

In conclusion, project-based instruction is designed to foster deeper understanding, critical thinking, problem-solving, and collaboration skills while making learning more engaging and relevant to students.

#### **1.1.4. Types of PBL**

Projects can be divided into various types and classifications, depending on the goals, subject matter, and context. Stoller (1997) assumes that: "project work can be taken on diverse configurations. The most suitable format for a given context depends on a variety of factors including curricular objectives, course expectations, students proficiency levels, student interests, time constraints, and availability of materials" (p2). Many researchers categorize the project work into the following different types.

Henry (1994) suggests three types of projects

- **Structured projects:** in which students work on projects with specific guidelines, objectives, and a clear framework provided by the teacher or educational institution, the topic, the tools, the methodology are all set and planned by him. They provide a structured framework that helps learners understand the process and expectations.
- **Unstructured projects:** This type gives students a high degree of freedom to define their own project goals, research methods, and outcomes. The teacher provides minimal guidance, allowing students to explore topics independently, they often choose their topics of interest and be creative in their thinking
- **Semi-structured projects:** they strike a balance between structured and unstructured approaches, they provide some teachers' guidance and

support when needed while allowing students a degree of independence, so the organization in this type is shared between the teacher and the students.

Projects can also be varied based on the data collection techniques

- **Research Projects:** These involve systematic investigation and analysis of a particular topic or issue.
- **Text Projects:** These projects focus on analyzing written or textual data, information are gathered through literary texts or reports.
- **Correspondence Projects:** they are also called distance education; they required to communicate with different kinds of individuals from business, schools or governmental agencies often via emails.
- **Survey Projects:** These projects rely on the collection of structured data through surveys. Surveys can be conducted through various mediums, including online forms, phone interviews, or in-person interactions.
- **Encounter projects:** they refer to projects that involve direct face-to-face interactions or encounters with subjects or participants

Moreover, Eyring (2001, p.339) introduces the most comprehensible project's classification

- **Collections projects:** These projects involve students gathering and organizing a collection of items, data, or artifacts related to a specific topic.
- **Informational projects:** they focus on research and the presentation of information. Students investigate a topic, gather data, and present their findings.
- **Orientation projects:** or placement projects, they are designed to help students get discover a new subject, environment, or concept.

- **Social welfare projects:** projects made according to the needs and to make a positive impact on the community.

To conclude, the appropriate choice of the project type for a particular context depends on the objectives to improve students' needs and level, time limits and accessibility of materials.

### **1.1.5. Characteristics of PBL**

Project-based approach began to gain popularity in the 21st century among researchers for its ability to engage students in active and meaningful learning experiences. Depending on PBL definitions which claim that projects are built on the principle of learning by doing, Stoller (2002,p. 110) listed the following characteristics of project work:

- Projects in the learning process are student-centered, PBL shifts the focus from the teacher to the student which led them to take ownership of their learning and play an active role in designing and planning the project. This autonomy fosters independence and self-directed learning.
- Projects in the learning process are cooperative rather than competitive, collaboration is a cornerstone of PBL, where students learn to communicate, share responsibilities, exchange information and reinforce each other's strengths
- PBL centers on real-world problems or challenges that are relevant to students. Projects should reflect authentic situations, allowing students to see the practical applications of what they are learning.
- Project work is a content-based rather than specific language targets, the primary goal is for students to deepen their understanding of this content, where the focus is often on exploring and mastering subject matter or content knowledge, while language skills are developed as a natural product

All of these characteristics play a key role in supporting the learning process of the students within an ESP classroom.

### **1.1.6. Stages of PBL**

The process typically involves three main stages according to Fried-Booth (1986)

- 1) **Classroom planning:** The first stage of PBL, classroom planning, is important for setting the foundation for a successful PBL experience. The teacher defines the project and introduces the question or problem that will serve as the central focus of the entire process, in addition to setting the objectives, the work formation, the resources and the time needed. During this phase, he play a pivotal role in guiding and supporting students through the initial steps of the project
- 2) **Carrying out the project:** In this stage, students move on to the heart of PBL and engage in the practical part. They gather information, data, and insights related to the topic, and they use the skill they had acquired, collaborative work, problem solving, and creative thinking
- 3) **Reviewing the work:** The final stage involves reviewing and reflecting on the project. After presenting to the audience, students evaluate their own work and their group; hence, they receive feedback and notes from the teacher. This encourages metacognition and helps them recognize their strengths and areas for improvement.

### **1.1.7. Benefits of PBL**

It has been broadly agreed that the implementation of PBL in ESP classrooms brings a lot of benefits to students and the educational process as a whole. Railsback (2002) have listed some of those benefits

- Preparing students for the workplace, it tasks students with real problem which they will encounter in their future

- Increasing social and communication skills
- Providing collaborative opportunities to construct knowledge, the collaborative work encourages the sharing of ideas and experiences between students.
- Enabling students to make and see connections between disciplines
- Allowing learners to use their individual learning strengths and diverse approaches to learning
- Providing a practical, real-world way to learn to use technology.

(pp. 9-10)

Alan and Stoller (2005) summarize the most important benefits of integrating PBL in educational context: "The result is often authenticity of experience, improved language, and content knowledge, increased metacognitive awareness, enhanced critical thinking and decision making abilities, the intensity of motivation and engagement, improved social skills, and familiarity with target language resources" (pp. 11-12) it is considered as one of the recommended models of learner-centered method that effectively help both students and teachers.

### **1.1.8. Teachers role**

Project-based learning is a learner-centered instruction; it is assumed that there is a significant shift in the role of the teacher and that of student in the teaching and learning process; Simpson (2011, p.48) claims that: "It is clear that teachers are less formal and less dominant when students have more control over their own learning." teachers in PBL act as guides and facilitators of the learning process. Instead of delivering lectures and providing all the answers, they guide students through the inquiry process; they encourage autonomy

and independence, allowing students to take responsibility of their learning

Additionally, teachers encourage collaboration and teamwork among students. PBL often involves group projects, and teachers must guide students in developing effective communication skills, resolving conflicts, and working cohesively toward common goals. Teachers promote a positive learning environment where students feel safe to express their ideas

Mc.Ghee&Kozma (2001, p3-6) suggested the transformed teacher's roles as an instructional designer, trainer, collaborator, team coordinator, advisor, and monitoring and assessment specialist. Through these roles, teachers create an environment where students can engage in meaningful, student-driven learning experiences

### **1.1.9. PBL VS traditional classroom**

Both Project-Based Learning and traditional classroom education share the fundamental goal of learning and enhancing students' understanding, however, they achieve this goal through different methodologies; there are many distinctive features between them according to the table

**Table01:** Ziegenfuss's comparison chart between the classical based classrooms and PBL

<b>Classical classroom</b>	<b>PBL</b>
Teacher - centered and the teacher responsible for the learning	Student-centered, students help each other and the teacher just facilitates the learning
Transmitting knowledge to a group	Constructing of individual knowledge
Focuses on the memorization of material	Focuses on the understanding of content
Surface Learning	Deep learning
Learning out of context	Authentic learning in the context
Individual learning	Group learning
Classical assessment	Performance-based assessment

Model (cited in Mapes, 2009.p9)

PBL places students at the center of their learning experience. It involves active, hands-on, and inquiry-based learning. Students tackle real-world problems or projects, fostering critical thinking and problem-solving skills while traditional education is often teacher-centered. Students typically receive knowledge through lectures and textbooks, with limited opportunities for hands-on engagement. In addition, PBL tends to be more engaging because it taps into students' interests and provides a sense of purpose through real-world applications where traditional education may struggle to maintain student engagement

The effectiveness of these methods can vary depending on various factors; PBL tends to be more engaging as it encourages active participation and creativity unlike classical method where learners are primarily involved as passive participants. Moreover, PBL encourages a deeper understanding of concept and requires more flexibility and resources, while students in other methods may memorize information and struggle to retain it in real life. All that will help students achieve better results and lead to better transfer of knowledge.

### **1.1.10. Challenges in PBL Implementation**

Despite the numerous benefits of the PBL approach, the challenges can be recognized through the difficulties faced by teachers and students; According to Fried-Booth (1986), the possible problems that occur in PBL environment are divided into three categories.

#### **1.1.10.1. Organization challenges**

Projects organization is a real challenge, it refers to the management of the educational process; it includes: time management which is one of most teachers' fears because they are restricted to a limited time, while projects often need more than the period provided. In addition, adopting new methodology for those who are familiar with the traditional teaching approach, thus, the change in the roles must be with the adaptation of methods, materials and assessment.

#### **1.1.10.2. Monitoring challenges**

They are related to the difficulties teachers face in assessing student progress and ensuring that learning objectives are met. Moreover, when it comes to group work, it is challenging to ensure that every student is actively contributing and learning.

#### **1.1.10.3. Personal challenges**

The focus is on the individual student's experience and growth; some students may struggle with self-motivation and the ability to seek resources independently. In addition, PBL requires effective communication where students face difficulties in expressing ideas, resolving conflicts, or working with group members.

### **1.1.11. Conclusion**

In conclusion, PBL is seen as a beneficial way of teaching and learning that helps both students and teachers in many aspects. The

current section attempted to provide an overview of the project based learning (PBL) it began by reviewing its origin and defining it. Then, it referred to the types of projects, benefits, characteristics and stages and it highlighted the main challenges when implementing PBL

## **1.2. Section Two: Speaking Skill**

### **Introduction**

1.2.2. Speaking definition

1.2.3. Speaking and other skills

1.2.3.1. Relationship between speaking and listening

1.2.3.2. Relationship between speaking and writing

1.2.3.3. Relationship between speaking and reading

1.2.4. Teaching speaking

1.2.5. Purpose of speaking

1.2.6. Speaking skill components

1.2.7. Types of speaking performance

1.2.8. Factors affecting oral performance

1.2.8.1. External factors

1.2.8.2. Internal factors

### **Conclusion**

## **1.2. Section Two : Speaking Skill**

### **1.2.1. Introduction**

English language learning opens up a world of opportunities, both personally and professionally, due to the widespread influence in various aspects of modern life: trade, science, technology or education

The process of English language learning typically involves acquiring the four essential language skills: reading, writing, listening and speaking. They are interconnected and complement each other. Each skill plays a crucial role but the speaking skill stands out as one of the most dynamic and practical aspects of language learning

Developing effective speaking skills is essential for students of English for specific purposes (ESP) as it enables them to communicate confidently and successfully. ESP students focus on acquiring language skills that directly relate to their chosen fields (business, medicine, engineering) It involves more than just acquiring vocabulary and grammatical structures; it requires students to master various aspects of oral communication. ESP students need to familiarize themselves with specialized vocabulary and discourse patterns in their professional area; they must develop the ability to communicate using appropriate terminology to allow them to participate in presentations or meetings, above all, to communicate technical information in a precise way.

### **1.2.2. Speaking Definition**

The effective use of English as a target language (TL) through speaking is one of the primary objectives for learners, as speaking is a fundamental form of human communication. There are numerous definitions of speaking provided by different researchers.

Chaney (1999) stated that "speaking is the process of building and sharing meaning through the use of verbal and nonverbal symbols in a variety of contexts" (p.13) speaking is not only the act of producing words, it is a complex

process in which individuals build and share meaning. It refers to the ability to communicate effectively and fluently using spoken language. Verbal symbols are the linguistic tools we use to convey our thoughts including sentences and words. In the other hand, nonverbal symbols play an equally important role in communication, it includes body language, gestures and voice tone. Speaking is not limited to use only one form but rather involves interplay between the two.

Bailey (2005) claimed that "speaking is an interactive process of constructing meaning that involves producing, receiving and processing information" (p.2) while Bashir et Al (2011) added "speaking is a productive skill, it is complicated that it seems at first and involves more than producing words" (p.38) there are two categories of skills in the educational process which are receptive skills also known as passive skills ( reading and listening ) and productive or active skills ( writing and speaking ) they complement and reinforce each other and this complementarity lies in how they work together. When you improve your productive skills, you often gain a deeper understanding of the language's structure, vocabulary usage, and grammar rules; this enhanced understanding then improves your receptive skills

Speaking is a productive skill, it refers to the ability to create and produce language, convey meaning and communicate with others using spoken words. It involves generating original sentences and conveying thoughts, ideas, or information. Productive skills require a grasp of vocabulary, grammar, and proper usage of the language to effectively deliver ideas.

Furthermore, Canale and Swain (1980) claimed that "speaking skill involves the integration of linguistic knowledge, strategic competence and social and cultural knowledge to produce and comprehend meaningful and appropriate spoken discourse" (p.120) The statement highlights the multifaceted nature of speaking by identifying its key components. Linguistic knowledge refers to the understanding of language's grammar, vocabulary and pronunciation, it involves structural rules to understand and interpret the spoken language. In addition,

strategic competence is the ability to use various communication strategies effectively to overcome challenges and difficulties and enable individuals to use them during the process of speaking such as rephrasing, self-repair, body language and clarification requests. Social and cultural knowledge emphasizes the sociocultural of language use; it is about being aware and understanding of the social and cultural norms and practices and being familiar with values, beliefs and traditions associated with the language being used

Many researchers defined the term speaking and agreed that is a fundamental skill in language learning and it is not just pronouncing words but expressing ideas effectively with the appropriate use of grammar rules, the right choice of vocabulary and respecting the social and cultural side.

### **1.2.3. Teaching speaking**

Teaching speaking skills has been a topic of interest for many researchers in the field of foreign languages education, Richards (2008) indicates that "the mastery of speaking skills in English is a priority for second language or foreign language learners" (p.19) as it fosters effective communication, boosts confidence, and enhances career prospects. Moreover, Bygate (1987) claimed that "training students to use language is one of the main problems in language teaching" (p.4) using language effectively poses a significant challenge and it could be guided and improved through good instructions and practice.

Teaching speaking is the process of instructing and guiding learners to develop their ability to communicate and acquire the necessary skills. It involves a combination of learners' and teachers' efforts and classroom activities, Huges (2003) stated that "the objective of teaching spoken language is the development of the ability to interact successfully and this involves comprehension as well as production" (p.113) and Florez (1991) confirmed that "speaking and listening are the most often used skills inside the classroom" (p.1) Comprehension and production as well as listening and speaking are closely interconnected in

English language teaching (ELT) It is essential to help learners understand and actively listen to spoken language, so they can grasp the meaning of different contexts, as this process involves recognizing sounds and words and interpreting the intended message. At the same time, they develop the production ability and expression of thoughts in the appropriate way, as they encounter new words in their natural context and enhance their vocabulary.

ESP teaching is based on acquiring vocabulary related to the field of study, but according to Belcher (2009): "English for specific purposes refers to English language teaching (ELT) which is developed to meet the learners' needs in a particular field" It involves tailoring language instructions to meet their needs and goals. This concept is called needs analysis (NA), and it commonly refers to the processes involved in gathering information about learners' needs. It is the first step in curriculum development as it serves as the basic development of teaching materials and learning activities as Brown (1995) defines it as "the systematic collection and analysis of all subjective and objective information necessary to define and validate defensible curriculum purposes that satisfy the language learned requirements" (p.36) In the case of speaking, assessing learners' speaking proficiency levels is important by conducting tests or interviews that help to identify individual strengths and weaknesses, thus this will promote their autonomy and encourage them to actively engage in the process, lead them to take some responsibility and be aware of their goals in a supportive and motivating environment.

Teaching speaking to English for specific purposes necessitates a tailored approach which will help learners in many aspects not only in education rather it empowers their communication and prepares them for future careers.

#### **1.2.4. Purpose of speaking**

Speaking serves various purposes that goes beyond communication, According to Basturkmen (2002) "Speaking turns serving this purpose tend to be long and

involve some prior organization of content and linguistic devices to signal either the organization or the type of information that will be given” (p, 26) it is used in a wide range of functions in daily life, social interaction and professional settings

Interpersonal and transactional usages have been argued by Brown and Yule (1983, p.3) and Kingen (2000, p.218) according to them speaking helps to fulfill the following twelve functions

- 1) **Personal expressing:** expressing feelings, point of view, opinions, beliefs, and sharing ideas.
- 2) **Descriptive:** giving a description of something or someone, real or imagined
- 3) **Narrative:** creating and *telling stories or chronologically sequenced events.*
- 4) **Instructive:** giving instructions and guidance or providing directions designed to produce an outcome.
- 5) **Questioning:** asking appropriate questions to obtain the needed information.
- 6) **Comparative:** make a comparison of two or more objects, opinions or people to make judgments about them.
- 7) **Imaginative:** describing and expressing mental images of something.
- 8) **Predictive:** predicting possible future events.
- 9) **Interpretative:** exploring meanings considering inferences and generating hypothetical deductions.
- 10) **Persuasive:** changing others' opinions, attitudes, or points of view, or influencing the behavior of others.
- 11) **Explanatory:** explaining, clarifying, and supporting ideas and opinions.
- 12) **Informative:** sharing information with others.

### 1.2.5. Speaking skill components

Mastering the art of speaking involves more than just pronouncing words but acquire a combination of several key components that work together to convey messages convincingly. These components include language comprehension, fluency, pronunciation, grammar and vocabulary according to Harris (1974)

- 1) **Fluency:** fluency in speaking considered as the ability to produce utterance easily and smoothly which can be understood by the listener. Byrne (1986) defined fluency as the ability to express oneself intelligibly, reasonably, accurately and without too much hesitation (p9-10) It is the flow with which sounds syllables, words are connected together, It is not just about speaking quickly but about having a balance between naturalness and clarity, fluent speaker can deliver their thoughts in a nature clear manner without unnecessary pauses or hesitations and maintain a natural rhythm which makes the listener understand and follow the speech
- 2) **Comprehension:** comprehension is an important factor in speaking, according to Hornby (1995) it's the power of understanding language in a written or spoken form (p.235) Comprehension can be defined as the ability to understand and grasp the meaning of spoken language effectively and to process information and make connections between different parts of discourse
- 3) **Pronunciation:** having a good pronunciation is the aim of many language learners. It's refers to the ability to articulate sounds, words, phrases in a way that's aligned with the standard pronunciation of the language being spoken. Thornbury (2005) defined it as « the students ability to produce comprehensible utterance to fulfill the task requirement » he emphasized the practical aspect of pronunciation and that's not about producing sounds perfectly or imitating native accent, instead it's the act of producing meaningful and correct sounds to be understood by others

when learners can produce comprehensible utterance, they can convey their intended message, therefore incorrect one can lead to confusion or frustration

- 4) **Grammar:** Yule (1994) states that grammar "is a form of internal linguistic knowledge which operates in the production and recognition of appropriately structured expression in that language" (p.301) it is a set of rules and principles that regulate the structure of language items and how expressions are combined to form a meaningful spoken language. It has a significant influence on speaking in shaping clarity and coherence when words are put together.
- 5) **Vocabulary:** vocabulary is the foundation of speech as it serves as the blocks of thoughts and ideas. In speaking, it refers specifically to the set of words and phrases that a person uses and is able to recall and utilize when communicating in any language. Having strong vocabulary is important for effective communication as it allows students to express themselves and their thoughts

#### **1.2.6. Types of speaking performance**

There are five main types of speaking performance, they are defined by Brown (2004:141-142) as follows

- 1) **Imitative:** it refers to the practice or the ability to reproducing or mimicking a speech patterns, pronunciation and intonation, it involves listening and the student is simply attempting to repeat what was said to in a way that is understandable. This technique is commonly used to help students improve specific features separately.
- 2) **Intensive:** Intensive speaking goes one step beyond imitative and covers any speaking performance that develop some phonological or grammatical components language in a highly control context. Dialogue and phrase completion, reading aloud, directed response tasks, and picture-cued activities are examples of intense assessment tasks.

- 3) **Extensive:** It typically refers to the practice of speaking in a more extended manner on a particular topic or subject. It often involves expressing one's thoughts, opinions, or ideas *and it is some sort of monologue and oral production that includes speeches, oral presentation, and storytelling.* It involves a great deal of preparation and is not typically improvisational communication
- 4) **Responsive:** It is an interaction and a form of responding. This type of response does not include any kind of information exchange. Consequently, it does not extend to brief discussions, conventional greeting and small chat, simple requests and remarks
- 5) **Interactive:** It the act of engaging in a conversation or dialogue with others in a way that involves back-and-forth communication. It involves actively participating, responding, and exchanging ideas, information, or opinions with one or more individuals in a dynamic and engaging manner. The distinctions between interactive and responsive speaking include the duration and complexity of the engagement, which may encompass numerous exchanges and participant. It can take two forms Transactional and Interpersonal

### **1.2.7. Factors affecting oral performance**

Speaking skill is often considered one of the most challenging language skills to develop, and learners commonly encounter various difficulties while trying to improve their speaking abilities. Students' speaking performance can be affected by many factors and it can be divided into external and internal

#### **1.2.7.1. External factors**

- 1) **Performance conditions:** Nation & Newton (2009) believe that performance conditions can affect speaking performance; they play a significant role in creating the environment, in which an individual delivers an oral speech. Those condition include time pressure where speaking requires a real-time, without editing or revising which will lead

to pauses and hesitation, the level of audience engagement that would control the speaker's motivation and confidence, in addition to good planning and physical environment.

- 2) **Learning environment:** Minghe and Yuan (2013) states that "another external element that impacts students' spoken English is the lack of a proper language learning environment"(p: 29) the learning environment plays a crucial role; it directly impacts how learners develop, practice, and improve their oral communication skills. When students find the environment stimulating and enjoyable, they are more likely to practice speaking, ask questions, and engage in discussions, while providing learners with equal opportunities to participate allows them to improve their speaking skills where in some classes not all the students will have chance

#### **1.2.7.2. Internal factors**

Internal factors refer to personal attributes and characteristics that originate within an individual; it includes learners' language abilities as well as physiological factors

- 1) **Mother tongue language use:** sharing the same mother tongue between classmates will incite them to it instead of the foreign language, and using it while learning speaking English can negatively affect the oral performance. Many researchers addressed that is natural process because they do not master the second language and they need to express their ideas; different languages have distinct grammar rules, sentence structures and specific pronunciation learner, so most learners use their mother tongue as a safe area when they lack confidence in their speaking abilities.

2) **Psychology**: the psychological landscape of an individual, including how they think, feel and behave while speaking, significantly shapes their oral performance and speaking abilities. Anxiety, lack of motivation, considered as some of those factors

Anxiety can significantly impact oral performance by creating a range of cognitive, emotional, and physiological responses that interfere with effective communication. It makes it challenging for individuals to recall key information they want to share and finding the right words to maintain a coherent flow, in addition, it causes physiological responses such as increased heart rate, trembling, and shortness of breath and this can make the speaker appear less confident and reduce the clarity of their message.

Çolak (2008, p.31) states that several studies of SLA consider motivation as one of the main factors which affects the success of the language learner, when individuals lack motivation, they lack the confidence needed to communicate effectively because fear of making mistakes and have limited audience connection.

## **Conclusion**

Briefly to conclude, speaking is an important skill in the learning process, and how it influences many aspects of life, academic and social. This section explored the significance of speaking skills within the context of English for Specific Purposes education; it highlighted the meaning of this term, its components, elements and types, and at the end, it provides some factors that affect the oral performance

# **Chapter Two: Fieldwork and Data Collection**

## **Chapter Two: Fieldwork and data collection**

### **Introduction**

2.8. Population and Sampling

2.9. Research Methodology

2.10. Research Tools

2.11. Students' questionnaire

2.11.1. Description of the questionnaire

2.11.2. Data Analysis and interpretation of the questionnaire

2.12. Discussions of the findings

2.13. Limitation of the study

2.14. General recommendation

### **Conclusion**

## **2. Chapter Two:**

### **Introduction**

In this chapter, we present, analyse, and discuss the findings of the investigation we carried out on second-year economic sciences student's opinions about the role of PBL in enhancing learners' speaking skills, in an attempt to answer our research questions. Additionally, the current chapter describes the methodological approach that was used, beginning with a description of the sample, the questionnaire of students. Finally, an overall analysis and discussion of these data

#### **2.1. Population and Sampling**

The goal of this study is to determine how essential and effective the PBL implementation in empowering ESP students speaking skill, the population was randomly selected 40 students that study second year economic sciences at Mohamed Boudiaf university, Msila, Algeria

#### **2.2. Research Methodology**

One of the most important stages in conducting a research study is selecting a research method. The current work adopted a descriptive study that employs a quantitative method which seems to be the appropriate one that helps in achieving the objectives of the study

#### **2.3. Research Tools**

This study used one data collection tool, a questionnaire because it is easier to use and more appropriate in our case, Students feel more secured and are able to express their attitudes and points of view about the topic freely. It was sent online to a group to second year students

#### **2.4. Students' questionnaire**

##### **2.4.1. Description of the questionnaire**

The purpose of the learners' questionnaire was to investigate their attitudes toward implementing PBL and its role in empowering their speaking skill, and their capacity to engage in it. This questionnaire is made up of seventeen (17) questions that are rationally organized and divided into three sections. They are Closed-ended, that demand students to pick the appropriate response "agree/disagree"

The first section comprises of three questions on personal information.

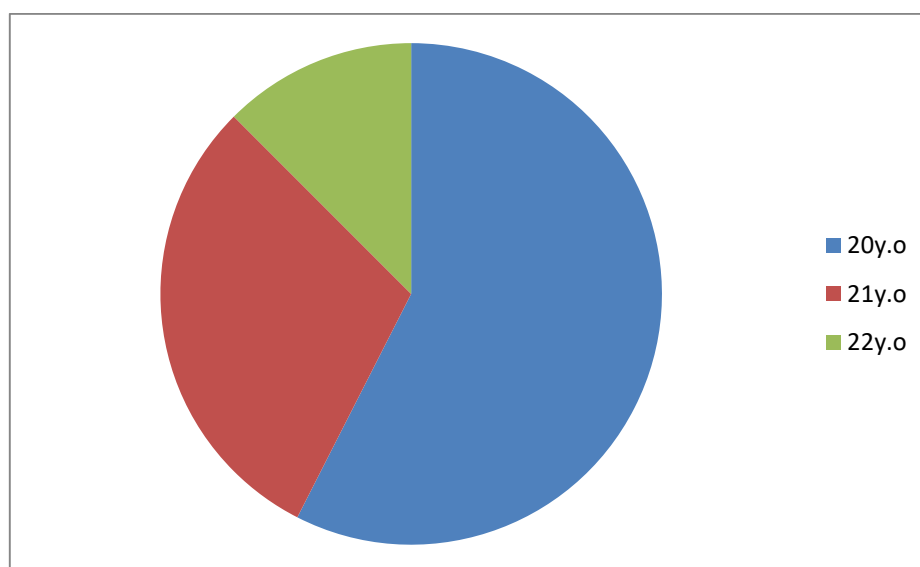
The second section, consisting of five questions, is a about students' English speaking skill and practice in the classroom

The third one is made up of nine questions and explores the effectiveness of implementing PBL in ESP classroom and the students attitude toward it

#### **2.4.2. Data Analysis and interpretation of the questionnaire**

- **Section One: personal information**

- 1) **Age**

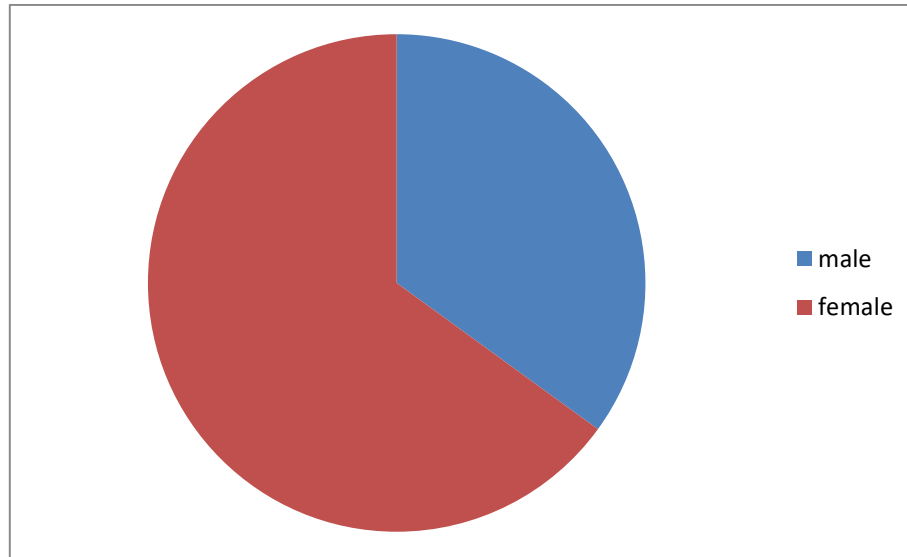


**Figure 02: students' age**

The question sought to analyse the composition of our population, focusing on age distribution of students, which falls within the range of 20 years old to 22

years old. The data is shown that the majority (57.5 %) of students categorized as being 20 years old.

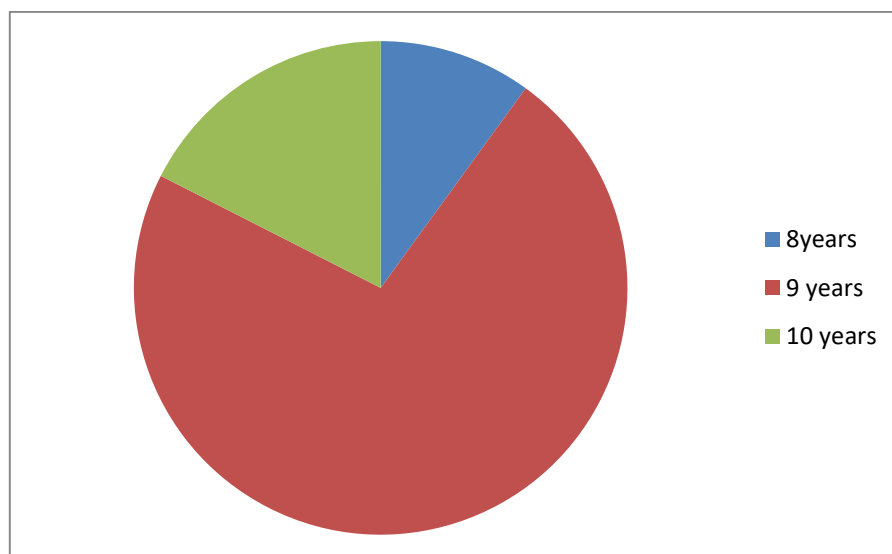
## 2) Gender Distribution



**Figure 03: Gender Distribution**

According to the chart, females outnumber males in our sample, 65% of the sample are female students while male students represent only 35 %, this disparity in the gender distribution can be attributed to various factors such as demographic factors, sociocultural factors and the fields of study choice.

## 3) Duration of English language study



### Figure 04: Duration of English language study

The majority of students (73%) have been studying English for 9 years as a foreign language, since in Algeria, English is taught from the first year of middle school.

- **Section Two :**

#### 4) I enjoy speaking English

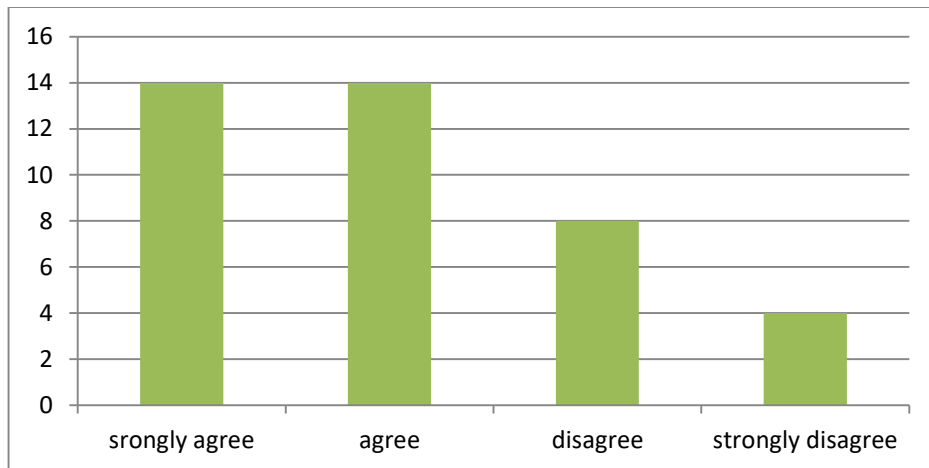
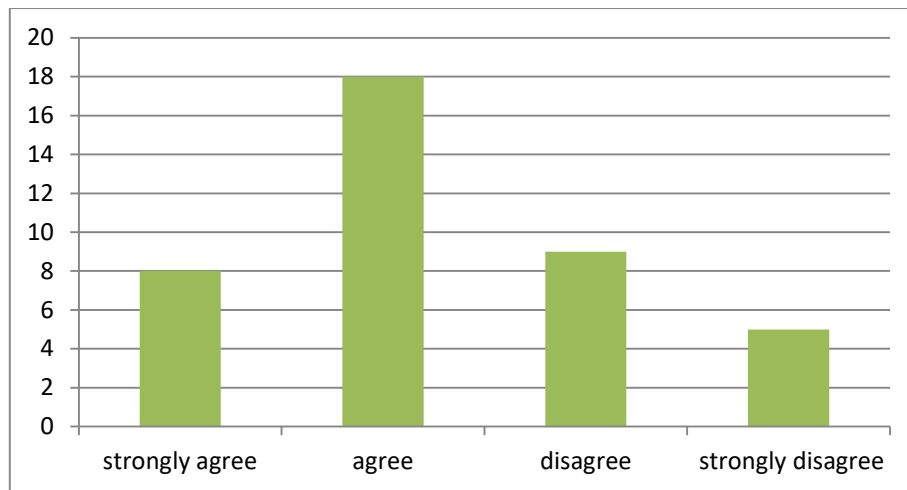


Figure 05: attitude toward speaking English

Most of students choose "strongly agree" and "agree" category with 14 students of each one. That indicates they enjoy speaking English and have a positive attitude, so English is a preferred language for communication. There are students who have negative responses; this could be due to several reasons like lack of confidence.

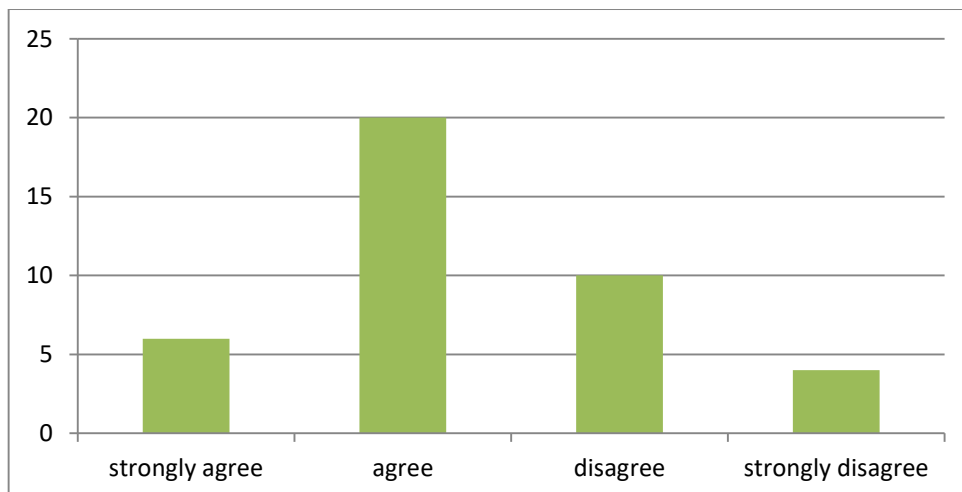
#### 5) I consider speaking as a difficult skill



**Figure 06: speaking difficulty**

The data shown in figure 06 indicates that out of 40 students, 18 of them consider English a difficult skill (45 %) while 9 students do not find difficulty when speaking English and consider it not challenging; this can be referred to the individuals' abilities and their level

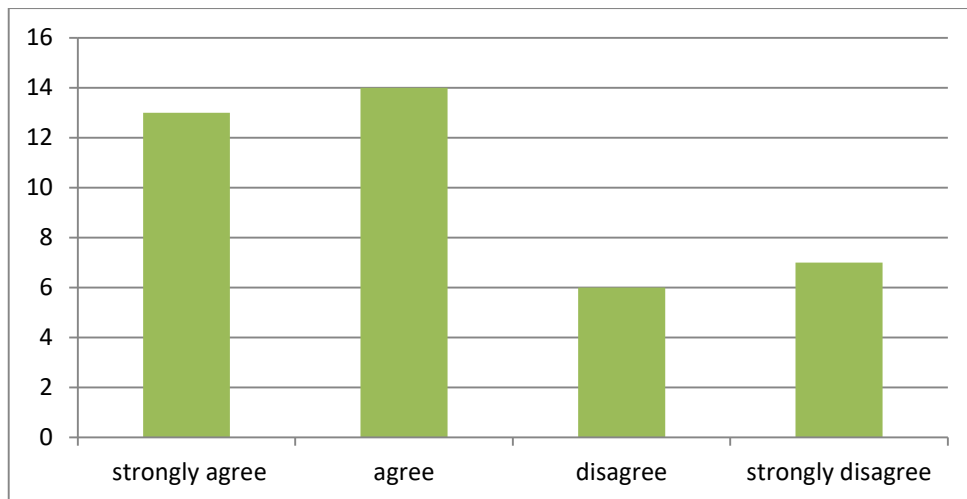
**6) I enjoy engaging in speaking activities related to economy field**



**Figure 07: engaging in speaking activities**

As it is seen in the graph, most students enjoy engaging in speaking activities where 20 of them respond with "agree" 6 with "strongly agree" while other do not engage

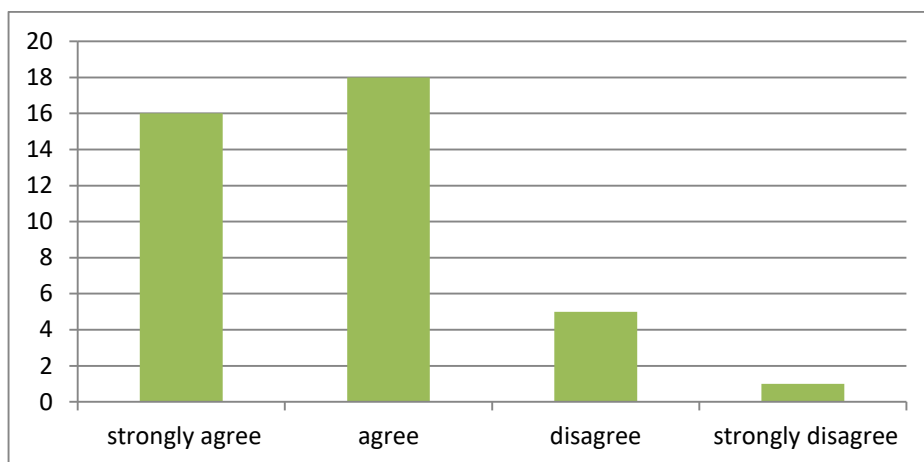
**7) I feel more responsible to develop my speaking**



**Figure 08: students' responsibility to develop speaking**

The groups of students seems to be aware of the importance of developing speaking skill, 27 students feel responsible to develop this skill, in the other hand 13 disagree on the statement, they may prioritize other skills

**8) I face some challenges when speaking in class**

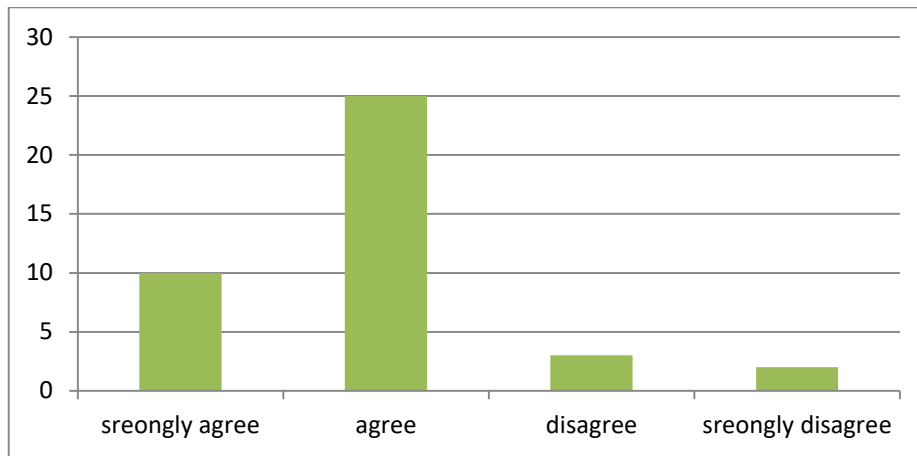


**Figure 09: challenges in class speaking**

The noticeable thing in this graph is the student who strongly disagree on this question are almost non-existent, which indicate that all students face challenges and difficulties in class speaking. Moreover, 18 students are in "agree" category and 16 in "strongly agree"

- **Section Three :**

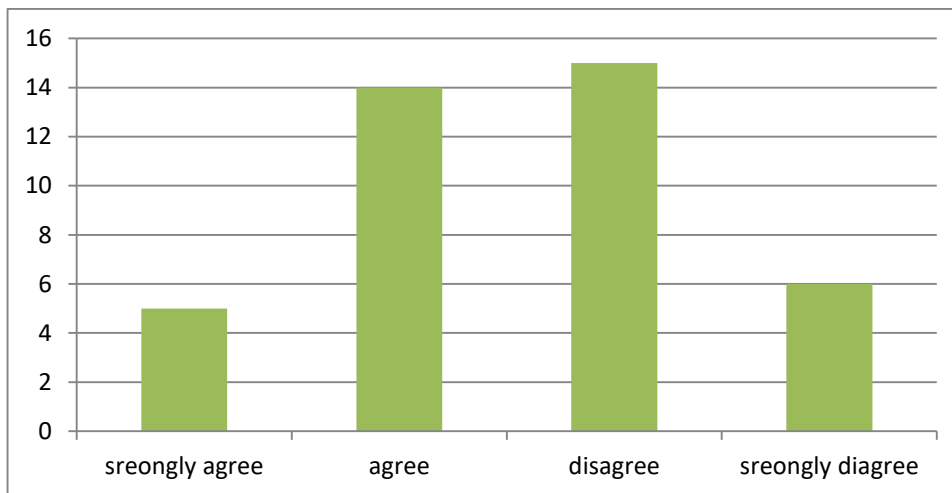
**9) The PBL environment is enjoyable and exciting**



**Figure 10: students' attitude toward PBL environment**

The data shown in figure 10 represents that the majority of students enjoy the PBL environment and feel excited to be in (35 students out of 40), where only 5 students have negative attitude about it.

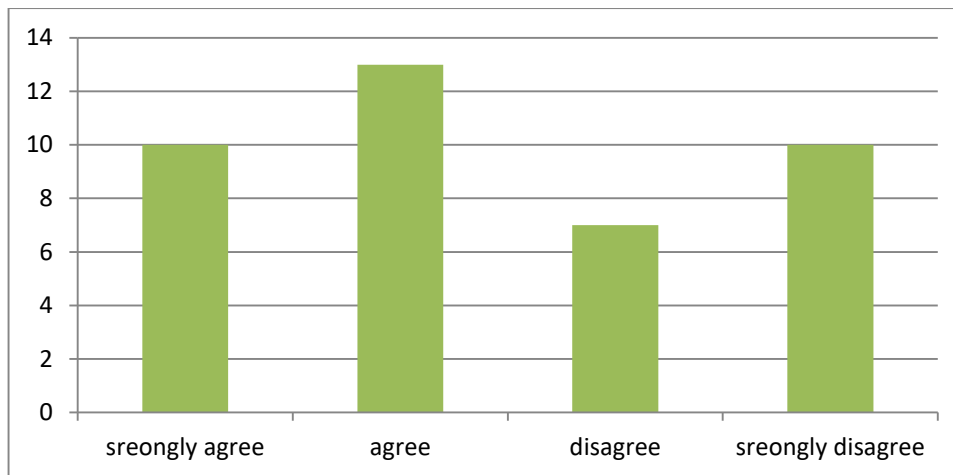
**10) I feel nervous when attending PBL classes**



**Figure 11: indicating anxiety when attending PBL classes**

The figure 11 demonstrates a diversity of feelings among students regarding anxiety in PBL class; where 15 students respond with "agree " they feel nervous when attending PBL class and 13 other with disagree"

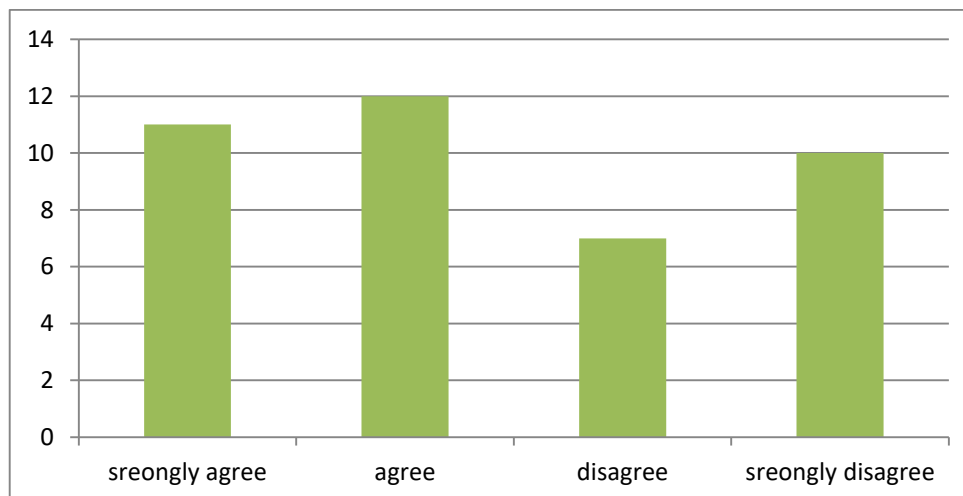
**11) PBL improved my oral performance**



**Figure 12: Improving oral performance**

The graph shows that students improved their oral performance through PBL, where 13 of them agree and 10 others strongly agree with the role of PBL, moreover, 10 of them strongly disagree

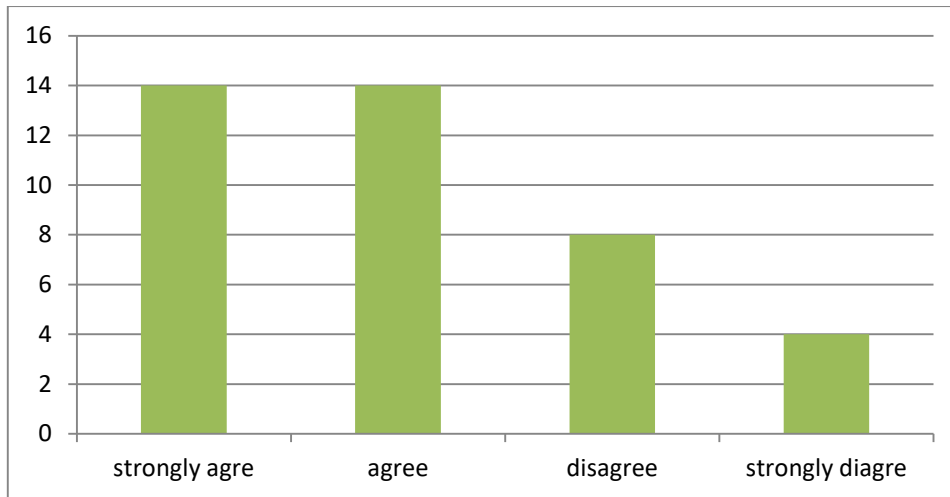
**12) PBL was helpful to broaden my vocabulary and pronunciation**



**Figure 13: Improving vocabulary and pronunciation through PBL**

The graph indicates that students' responses differ, 12 students agree and 11 strongly agree with the role PBL in improving vocabulary and pronunciation, while 10 others strongly disagree

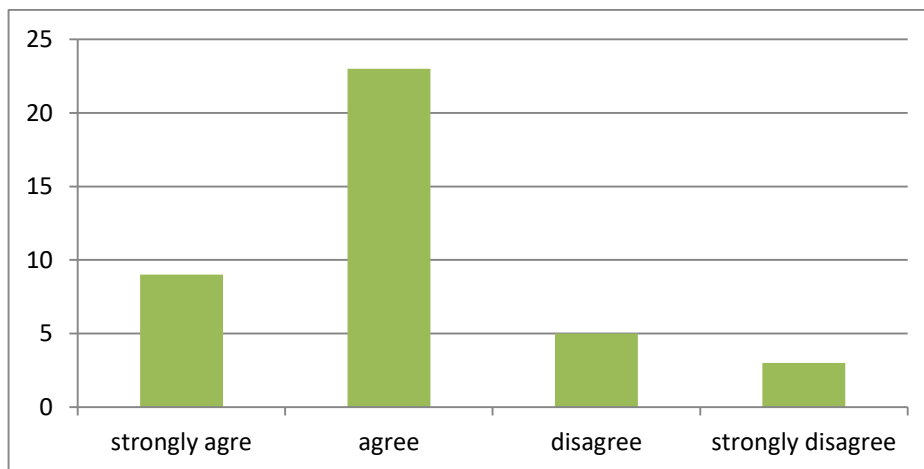
**13) PBL encouraged me to use English in my daily life**



**Figure 14: using English in daily life**

According to the graph, students are encouraged to use English, 28 of them have responded positively with "agree" and "strongly agree" while only 8 disagree

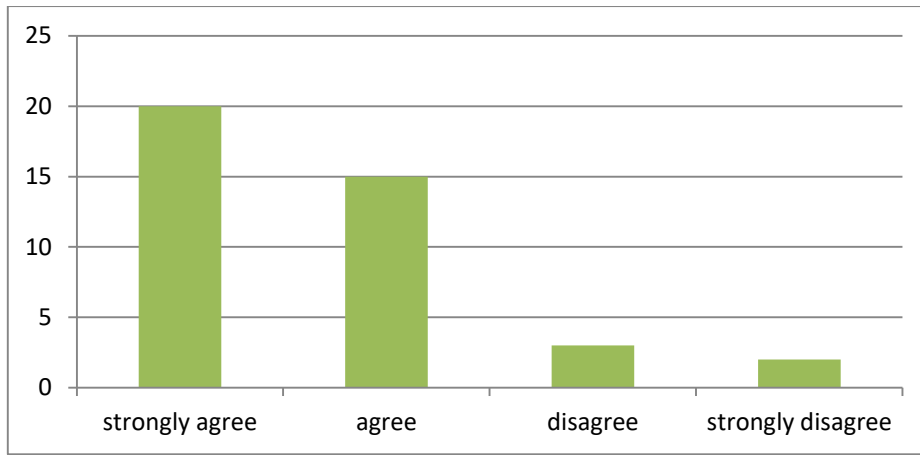
**14) Regular listening to classmates' helped me to improve my listening and comprehension skills**



**Figure 15: Improving listening and comprehension skills**

As it is seen in the graph, most students respond to the category of agree, with number of 23 students out of 40, and 9 strongly agree that they improve their listening; while 8 students are not with and disagree

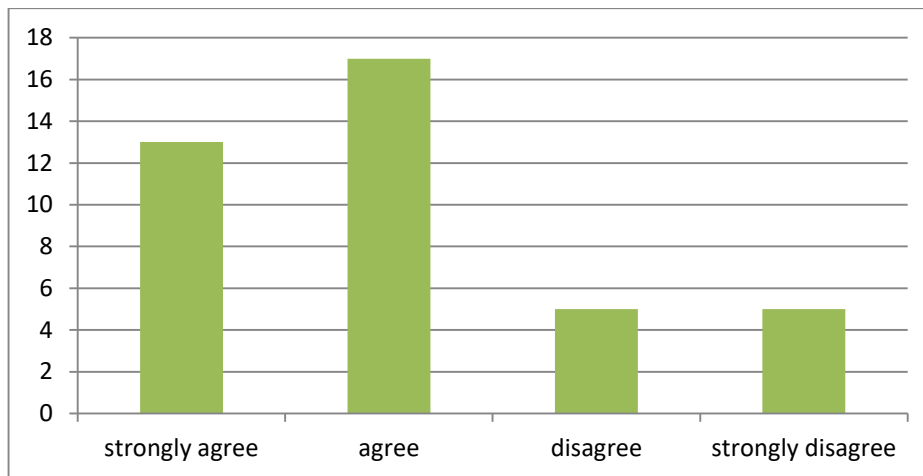
**15) I become more confident to speak in oral class**



**Figure 16: students' confidence in oral class**

As it is shown by the graph, a significant number of students (20) strongly agree and (15)...that they become confident when speaking in oral class. However, a small number (5) do not agree on that

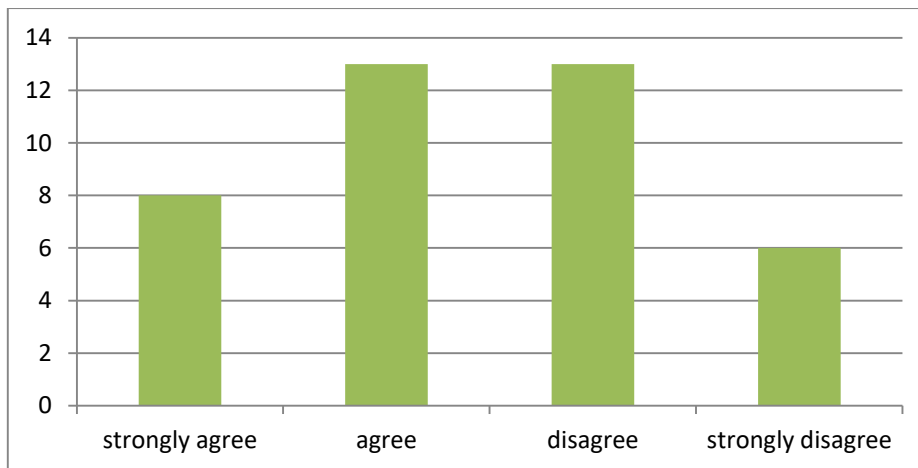
**16) PBL promoted teamwork and collaboration inside and outside the classroom**



**Figure 17: teamwork and collaboration promotion**

As it can be seen from the graph, PBL helps many students to promote their teamwork and collaboration both inside and outside classroom, where 17 students agree and 13 others strongly agree with the statement

**17) After experiencing PBL, improving my oral performance becomes more important than getting a high score**



**Figure 18: Importance of Improving Oral Performance rather than High Scores**

According to the graph, equal numbers of students have responded with "agree" and "disagree" (13 students for each) this balanced response signifies a division regarding their perception on the importance of oral performance compared to high scores

## **2.5. Discussions of the findings**

The students' questionnaire that was employed for the sake of answering the research question has shown different views about their opinion on the effectiveness of PBL method in enhancing their speaking skills. From the obtained results, we state that: the majority of second year students are open to the idea of including PBL method within their educational environment; due to its positive impact on their learning and their language skills development.

The findings of this study resonate with several previous research findings in the field of education and language learning. Our research aligns with the observations of many researchers who have explored the impact of PBL in enhancing students' language skills, particularly speaking skill.

Students clearly indicated their positive attitudes towards integrating the PBL approach in their learning process, and that reflects on their motivation in attending English class, their engagement, and the positive answers we received

throughout the questionnaire; for instant, Thomas (2016) found that students exposed to PBL methods were more motivated to participate and they confirmed the idea that PBL positively affects their attitude. From the students' point of view, the PBL instruction provided them with an opportunity to practice their English speaking, most of students stated that they are excited about and enjoy the PBL environment, so they improve their oral performance, vocabulary related to economy field, and pronunciation; research by Chen and Wang (2019) found that students engaged in PBL tend to acquire and retain field specific vocabulary more effectively and to improve pronunciation due to the regular practice and interaction that this method requires. In addition, it built a sense of confidence and collaboration.

Furthermore, significant number of students have considered 'speaking' as a difficult skill and face some challenges. Therefore, the attempt to improve the speaking ability is the goal of most of the participants. Thus, they enjoy engaging in speaking activities related to their field and feel responsible and aware of the importance of developing this skill within ESP context since it will help them not only in studying and academic career, but in their future careers also.

## **2.6. Limitation of the study**

As a novice researcher, the current study encountered several challenges, the questionnaire is created for economic sciences students and it was supposed to be printed and submitted to them, then it was sent online via "Google forms" because the end of the academic year. For the same reason, no classroom observation and evaluation are done. Finally, resources related to ESP context were unavailable.

## **2.7. General recommendation**

The analysis and discussion of the research findings, the following recommendations are worthily stated:

- Teachers should be themselves engaged in implementing PBL and cope with modern teaching methods and strategies that fit the 21<sup>st</sup> century students' needs and interests.
- Teachers should be aware of the factors that may affect their students' engagement.
- The PBL approach is strongly recommended for teaching speaking to ESP students of different levels taking into consideration their age, linguistic proficiency levels, needs, and interests.
- PBL as a student-centered instructional approach, students have to recognize the importance of being engaged and its benefits on their learning achievement and the development
- The time of English session should be increased, so students would be offered enough opportunities to practice speaking.
- The number of students in class should be minimized.

### **Conclusion**

Basically, the present chapter is an attempt to discuss the fieldwork of the present research study. One data collection tool was employed, which is students' questionnaire. The analysis of data have provided answers to the research questions that were asked at the beginning of the current research, students have agreed on the effectiveness of Project-Based Learning in improving speaking skills. Another point to be concluded is that implementation of PBL in class has improved students' self-confidence, engagement and collaboration, as it requires teachers to act different roles and apply new techniques to motivate the learning environment. As a result, some recommendations were put forward for better educational process.

## **General Conclusion**

Project-based learning is an instructional approach that has the potential to change teacher practice and student learning. This dissertation has provided significant insights into the impact of project-based learning on the development of (ESP) students' speaking skills. Through an extensive review of literature, data collection, and analysis, it is evident that project-based learning can be a powerful pedagogical approach to ESP students in improving their speaking abilities.

The purpose of this study was to gather data from the perceptions of 2nd year students at the Department of Economic Sciences, at Mohamed Boudiaf University, Msila, and to provide information about the use of PBL approach in ESP context

In order to achieve the objectives and to answer the research questions, a descriptive quantitative method was employed, using an open-ended questionnaire that has been administered to 40 economic sciences students. In this sense, data obtained from this questionnaire were carefully analyzed and presented.

The findings obtained from the research instrument indicated that the PBL approach implementation has a significant impact on improving second year students' speaking skills, where they have a positive attitude toward it. Therefore, the intensive practice inside and outside the classroom effectively contributed to enhancing students' oral proficiency.

In the light of the findings, some recommendations were suggested to facilitate the adoption of PBL for both teachers and students.

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## Appendix: student's questionnaire

PEOPLE'S DEMOCRATIC REPUBLIC OF ALGERIA  
MINISTRY OF HIGHER EDUCATION AND SCIENTIFIC RESEARCH  
UNIVERSITY OF MOHAMED BOUDIAF - M'SILA



Dear Participant,

Thank you for participating in this research study. Your feedback is invaluable in helping us understand the effectiveness of project-based instruction on improving your speaking skills in English for Specific Purposes (ESP). Please answer the following questions honestly and to the best of your ability. Your responses will remain confidential.

### Section 01:

- 1) Age: .....
- 2) Gender : male  female
- 3) How long have you been studying English? .....

### Section 02:

- 4) I enjoyspeaking English  
Strongly agree  Agree  Disagree  Strongly disagree
- 5) I consider speaking as a difficult skill  
Strongly agree  Agree  Disagree  Strongly disagree
- 6) I enjoy engaging in speaking activities related to economy field  
Strongly agree  Agree  Disagree  Strongly disagree
- 7) I feel more responsible to develop my speaking  
Strongly agree  Agree  Disagree  Strongly disagree
- 8) I face some challenges when speaking in class

Strongly agree  Agree  Disagree  Strongly disagree

**Section 03:**

**9) The PBL environment is enjoyable and exciting**

Strongly agree  Agree  Disagree  Strongly disagree

**10) I feel nervous when attending PBL classes**

Strongly agree  Agree  Disagree  Strongly disagree

**11) PBL improved my oral performance**

Strongly agree  Agree  Disagree  Strongly disagree

**12) PBL was helpful to broaden my vocabulary and pronunciation**

Strongly agree  Agree  Disagree  Strongly disagree

**13) PBL encouraged me to use English in my daily life**

Strongly agree  Agree  Disagree  Strongly disagree

**14) Regular listening to classmates' helped me to improve my listening and comprehension skills**

Strongly agree  Agree  Disagree  Strongly disagree

**15) I become more confident to speak in oral class**

Strongly agree  Agree  Disagree  Strongly disagree

**16) PBL promoted teamwork and collaboration inside and outside the classroom**

Strongly agree  Agree  Disagree  Strongly disagree

**17) After experiencing PBL, improving my oral performance becomes more important than getting a high score**

Strongly agree  Agree  Disagree  Strongly disagree

Thank you .

## الملخص

يعد تطوير مهارات التكلم لدى الطلبة الذين يدرسون اللغة الإنجليزية لأغراض تخصصية أمرًا مهمًا في عمليتي التدريس و التعلم، وبالتالي يتعين على المعلمين تبني تقنيات و استراتيجيات جديدة. الهدف من هذه الدراسة هو استكشاف آثار التعلم القائم على المشاريع في تعزيز مهارات الطلاب في التحدث باللغة الانجليزية، من خلال إجراء دراسة استقصائية على طلاب السنة الثانية بقسم العلوم الاقتصادية بجامعة محمد بوضياف بولاية المسيلة - الجزائر. و قد افترضنا أن التعليم القائم على المشاريع المخطط له جيدا هو طريقة تدريس فعالة لتطوير مهارة التحدث لدى الطلبة، علاوة على ذلك، أظهر الطلاب مواقف إيجابية تجاه تنفيذ طريقة التعلم هاته و لاختبار فرضيات هذا البحث وتحقيق أهداف البحث، تم استخدام استبيان وصفي كمي لطلبة السنة الثانية تخصص العلوم الاقتصادية، وتم إرساله إلكترونياً إلى 40 طالبًا. نتيجة لذلك، أظهرت النتائج الرئيسية بوضوح أن التعلم القائم على المشاريع يعتبر أداة فعالة لتحسين مهارات التحدث لدى طلبة اللغة الإنجليزية لأغراض تخصصية، إلى جانب مواقفهم ومشاركتهم وتفكيرهم النقدي والثقة بالنفس والتعلم الفعال، حيث يبحث الطلبة في قضايا واقعية بطريقة تعاونية، إضافة إلى اجتياز بعض التحديات التي يواجهها الطلاب والمعلمون في بيئة التعلم القائم على المشاريع

**الكلمات المفتاحية:** التعلم القائم على المشاريع, مهارة التحدث، اللغة الإنجليزية لأغراض محددة, البيئة التعاونية