

Leveraging Product Pitch Deck Simulations to Foster Professional English Presentation Skills: A Project-Based Learning Inquiry

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INTRODUCTION

- Proficient English presentation abilities are crucial for economics students, especially in preparation for pursuing professional careers within global markets. Many students in countries that do not speak English sometimes encounter difficulties comprehending language in business and professional settings, especially with confident and successful presentation in English. This problem is sometimes ascribed to conventional language teaching techniques that typically provide insufficient possibilities for practical application.
- Research indicates that PBL markedly improves students' speaking performance, with average scores rising from 58.23 to 67.65 post-implementation" (Nurrahma et al., 2023; Yulian & Yuniarti, 2018). PBL promotes active participation and cultivates motivation, autonomy, and critical thinking, which are vital for language development and the acquisition of soft skills" (Sukerti, 2019). Project-Based Learning (PBL), especially via product pitch deck simulations, presents a novel method to tackle these challenges, allowing students to acquire practical communication skills while improving their academic performance.
- Many economics students face persistent challenges in delivering professional English presentations due to limited exposure to practical language use in real business contexts. Traditional instructional methods often emphasize grammar and memorization, which are insufficient for developing communicative competence and confidence. There is a growing demand for instructional methods that integrate real-world tasks and active learning environments, especially in ESP (English for Specific Purposes) courses. PBL, particularly through simulation-based tasks like product pitch decks, offers an effective solution by engaging learners in meaningful, outcome-driven communication.

Problem Statement

Economics students often lack practical opportunities to develop English presentation skills. Traditional instruction focuses on grammar and memorization, limiting fluency, coherence, and confidence needed for professional communication.

Purpose of Study

This study investigates the effect of a one-time product pitch deck simulation on students' English presentation skills—specifically fluency, coherence, and vocabulary use—while exploring their perceptions of the experience.

Significance of the Study

The research offers a practical, simulation-based strategy to enhance presentation competence. It emphasizes the value of real-world tasks in supporting language proficiency and soft skills essential for global employability.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Project-Based Learning and SimulationsProject-Based Learning (PBL) offers students authentic contexts to apply their language skills, and simulations like product pitch decks provide opportunities to practice communication in realistic scenarios (Beckett & Slater, 2005).

Simulation Benefits"Kanner (2007) asserts that simulation activities facilitate the application of theoretical information, enhance critical thinking, and provide as a respite from conventional learning tasks, such as reading."

Skill Development through PBL"Nurrahma et al. (2023) highlight the effectiveness of simulations in PBL, particularly product pitch decks, as they enable students to apply theoretical concepts while enhancing their language skills."

Student Engagement"Yulian & Yuniarti (2018) further support the effectiveness of PBL, reporting that students enjoy interactive, engaging methods like simulations and perceive them as beneficial in enhancing their English language proficiency."

ChallengesHowever, "several problems, including time limitations and student preparedness, have been documented in the implementation of PBL" (Sofiriyah et al., 2024).

English Presentation SkillsEffective English presentation skills require fluency, coherence, vocabulary, and confidence (Goh & Burns, 2012). "Derwing et al. (2002) and Poonpon (2017) highlight that single-session interventions, especially focused simulation activities, can yield significant short-term improvements in students' fluency, vocabulary use, and confidence, particularly when supported by peer interaction and constructive feedback."

21st Century Competencies"Project-Based Learning enhances linguistic abilities while cultivating 21st-century skills, including critical thinking, creativity, communication, and teamwork" (Muchson, 2023). "Poonpon (2017) demonstrated that project-based learning markedly enhances students' English proficiency in listening, speaking, reading, and writing through engagement in collaborative, problem-solving activities."

Simulation as a Learning StrategySimulations replicate workplace dynamics, allowing students to experience the demands of professional communication in a controlled setting (Liu, 2020; Smith & Jones, 2022). They foster experiential learning where students can apply knowledge in practice, enhancing retention and engagement (Kanner, 2007).

Short-Term Interventions and Speaking GainsResearch supports that even brief, focused simulations can produce immediate, measurable gains in speaking skills, especially when supported by peer interaction (Derwing et al., 2002; Poonpon, 2017).

Soft Skills and EmployabilityBeyond linguistic gains, simulations promote 21st-century skills such as problem-solving, critical thinking, creativity, and teamwork (Muchson, 2023; Hasan et al., 2023). These are essential for preparing students for global employability, especially in economics and business fields.

METHOD

Design & Participants

Descriptive qualitative design with 15 economics students enrolled in an English for Business class at Bosowa University.

Procedure

Students developed and presented product pitch decks through guided stages: brainstorming, researching, designing, and presenting. Activities simulated real-world business contexts.

Data Collection & Analysis

Semi-structured interviews explored students' experiences and perceptions. Data were transcribed and analyzed using Braun and Clarke's (2006) six-phase thematic approach.

FINDING AND DISCUSSION (CONTINUED)

Effectiveness of Product Pitch Deck Simulation on Presentation Skills

Fluency Development

Students showed smoother delivery and reduced hesitation. The simulation encouraged spontaneous language use, helping them speak more naturally and confidently.

Improved Coherence and Structure

The pitch deck format guided students to organize their presentations logically, resulting in clearer transitions and a more professional flow of ideas.

Vocabulary and Language Precision

Students expanded their business vocabulary and demonstrated better grammatical control. They were able to express complex ideas using more accurate and varied terminology.

Boost in Presentation Confidence

The supportive setting and opportunity to rehearse helped reduce anxiety. Students gained assurance in speaking English publicly, especially in academic or semi-professional contexts.

Overall Communication Competence

The simulation fostered key presentation skills beyond language, such as persuasive delivery, clarity, and professionalism—critical for workplace readiness.

FINDING AND DISCUSSION (CONTINUED)

Student Perceptions and Reflections

- Students viewed the pitch deck simulation as an engaging, hands-on activity that enhanced their learning experience beyond traditional classroom tasks.
- They recognized the task's relevance to real-world business communication, appreciating the opportunity to practice professional English in a meaningful context.
- The activity supported the practical application of language skills, helping students transition from passive memorization to active language use.

Collaborative Learning Experience

- Working in groups provided a supportive environment for peer learning, where students could receive constructive feedback and improve through repeated practice.
- The structured group interaction helped refine their message delivery, improve teamwork, and enhance interpersonal communication.

FINDING AND DISCUSSION (CONTINUED)

Task Challenges

- Some students struggled with vocabulary selection and structuring complex ideas under time constraints.
- Balancing technical content with accessible language was noted as a learning curve.

Overcoming Difficulties

- Despite initial challenges, most students recognized these obstacles as part of the learning process.
- Through guided feedback and reflection, students reported growth in their strategic communication abilities.

Impact Summary

- The simulation fostered not only language improvement but also soft skills development.
- Students showed heightened awareness of audience, purpose, and message clarity.

Overall Insight

- Integrating simulations into language learning helps bridge academic theory with real-world application.
- PBL simulations like pitch decks empower learners with both linguistic proficiency and confidence in professional expression.

CONCLUSION

- This study concludes that **Project-Based Learning (PBL)** through **product pitch deck simulations** significantly enhances students' English presentation competencies.

- Students demonstrated clear improvements in **fluency, coherence, vocabulary use, and confidence** after participating in a single simulation session.

- The simulation provided an effective, practical learning experience that bridged the gap between **theoretical knowledge and real-world application**, especially within professional business contexts.

The findings support the integration of **simulation-based PBL** into English for Business or ESP courses as a strategic approach to foster both **language proficiency** and **21st-century soft skills** such as collaboration, communication, and critical thinking.

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THANK YOU!