

The implementation of Project Work in the Teaching of English Language at Algerian Middle Schools. Myth or Reality?

تنفيذ المشروع في تدريس اللغة الإنجليزية في الطور المتوسط في المدرسة الجزائرية. خيال أم حقيقة؟

Mise en œuvre du Projet dans l'Enseignement de la Langue Anglaise au Cycle Moyen dans l'École Algérienne. Mythe ou Réalité ?

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Introduction

Project work was introduced into the teaching of English as a foreign language at Algerian Middle School (MS) as part of the implementation of the Competency-based Approach following the 2002 education reform. It is clearly stated in the curriculum, that this teaching method aims to enable learners to work in groups, conduct research and gather information, interact effectively, solve problems, and improve their social skills. (MS1, 2002, Support Documents). This vision goes hand in hand with Competency-based Approach (CBA) principles which stress the importance of training learners to apply what they learn in the classroom in real-world scenarios. The purpose of this paper is thus to examine Algerian MS English language teachers' attitudes toward project work practice as an element of the teaching of English as a Foreign Language (EFL), as well as to investigate why project work is frequently neglected by teachers.

This study is necessary because project work “has a positive impact on student attitude and helps learners feel comfortable while working for a long period of time. The topic is challenging but not too difficult, allowing for imaginative and creative thinking” (Guo, 2006, p. 146). Aside from that, teachers' decisions about project work as a learners' activity should be encouraged, as the data gathered for this study demonstrates the weak aspect of such activity in the teaching practices of EFL at Middle School.

1. Theoretical and methodological framework

1.1. Theoretical Background

By definition, the term “Project” refers to any planned idea, activity, or effort in any sphere of life that, in the end, leads to a successful outcome, provided

that it has been properly thought out and created in advance, leaving no space for failure. In other words, Project Work (PW) in education is an activity that is undertaken by children about a theme of their interest to learn something (Fedoul, 2018). According to Beckett (2005), project work is a long-term activity that entails a variety of individual or collaborative tasks, such as developing a research plan and questions and carrying out the plan through empirical or document research, which includes gathering, analyzing, and reporting data orally and/or in writing and competencies, such as intellectual, academic, social, and language-related skills. Brinton, Snow, & Weshe, (1989), believe that by integrating project work into language learning classrooms, educators can create a lively learning environment that involves active learners' participation, develop their higher-level critical thinking skills, and give them responsibility for their learning. In the same respect, Haines (1989), describes a project as a learning experience that aims to provide learners with knowledge from different areas of learning.

Project work is an approach that can be used in a variety of subjects. Learners collaborate in groups as democratic partners, with the teacher serving as a guide rather than a source of all answers (Legutke, Thomas 1993: 158-160). Between the process and the product, there is a delicate balance. It does not, however, exclude the teacher from taking part. He or she can participate in a variety of sub-tasks, but he or she is also a natural project participant.

The Project integration in The Competency-based Approach teaching method emphasizes what learners can do with language to accomplish various goals (Tudor I., 2013). Indeed, a performance-based outline of language activities that leads to demonstrating mastery of language connected with certain skills that are important for persons to function successfully in the society in which they live is classified as a project-based teaching technique (Grognet & Grandall, 1982 :3). Furthermore, because it is learner-centered, project learning is investigative in character (Auerbach E. R., 1986: 431).

1.2. Research Questions and aims of the study

The current paper seeks to provide answers to two major questions:

1. How do Algerian EFL teachers perceive the integration of Project work in the MS Curriculum?
2. Why do some teachers avoid assigning projects to their learners?

Thus, the study attempts to:

- Explore the knowledge of EFL teachers have regarding the project work concept.

- Find out the reasons behind teachers' reluctance to assigning projects to their learners.

1.3. Methodology and Participants Profile

To investigate the topic, Classroom Observation as well as a Questionnaire comprising seventeen questions were used as tools to gather data.

Classroom observations took place during 2019- 2020 academic year. I chose to report the results of five MS3 and MS4 classes observations because learners at this stage are expected to have a certain level of English language proficiency.

The researcher developed a checklist of indicators that could aid in evaluating learners' performance, the products and the process by which the learners obtained them. Focus was on determining to what extent teachers attempted to develop learners' critical thinking through the nature of information gathered to complete their project, then determining to what extent they collaborated in the creation of the projects, and finally determining the role of teachers in fostering learners' autonomy (see appendix).

Additionally, eighteen Middle School teachers from various schools of the city of Tlemcen were sent by personal e-mails a questionnaire comprising seventeen questions. The tool included closed-ended and open-ended questions that focused on various aspects of project activity. The data obtained helped the researcher to find the most relevant responses, some of which are discussed in depth in this article.

Eighteen English language teachers from five Middle Schools in the city of Tlemcen have participated in this study ($n = 18$). Despite the fact that gender is irrelevant in such inquiries, the majority (63 %) are female. Experience criterion is necessary for this kind of investigation because it demonstrates teachers' growth and advancement in terms of EFL teaching methods. Our informants' experience ranges from 5 to 20 years. All participants teach MS classes at various levels, with a substantial share (70 %) who are in charge of MS4 classes. We are particularly interested in knowing if our informants are trained. Actually, most of them hold university degrees in the English language.

2. Data Analysis

In terms of classroom observations, data were analyzed by interpreting the outcomes of each indicator on the checklist obtained in each class. As far as the questionnaire, data were analyzed with the use of IBM SPSS data editor version 22, with a special focus on the item of frequency. The first section of the questionnaire aims to get a broad understanding of teachers' views about

the inclusion of project work into the curriculum, and the second assesses the teachers' classroom project work practices.

2.1. Classroom Observations

The checklist was extremely useful during the observations phase. The researcher chose twelve indicators that focus on specific areas to better understand teachers' attitudes toward project work.

First, it should be noted that the five teachers have assigned projects works to their classes and these correspond to the topics suggested in textbooks. In other words, the learners in five classes were not given the opportunity to choose topics that roused their interest (ind.2). This factor is likely to have an impact on learners' engagement. It was discovered that the pupils' works, except 3MS2 pupils, were genuine copies downloaded from the internet (ind.3). Moreover, most groups and pairs have not given the slightest try of reformulating the initial productions. This fact had a significant impact on learners' ability to analyze information gathered. Discussions with the teachers revealed that most of them were torn between whether to mark or reject these so-called projects because they were pure plagiarized duplicates. Only one teacher offered his class (3MS2) the opportunity to present their works in front of their classmates (ind.5). Observations have also shown that the aesthetic component of the projects was appealing when it came to works displays. The learners in three classes, 4MS2, 3MS1 and 3MS2 did not demonstrate any aspect of curiosity or creativity through their works. Indeed, most of the learners plucked similar works from the web(ind.7). In addition, the vast majority of learners were unable to reflect on the content of their claimed works during oral presentations. Instead, they handled ready-made copies in written format. This aspect is in total contradiction with the concept of project work as a critical component in developing learners' critical thinking, autonomy and interaction competence booster. Four teachers out of five collected students' work and assigned collective grades for the members of each group or pair, while the 3MS2 teacher provided feedback after the students' performance (ind.10). Classroom observations revealed that project work presentation sessions appeared to be occasions for disruption rather than learning opportunities (ind.11). Furthermore, the language items, social skills, and core values from previous teaching sequences were not reinvested, specifically by 4MS1, 4MS2, and 3MS1 pupils (ind.12), implying that they may be unable to apply these items in realistic situations in the future (see appendix).

2.2. Questionnaire

2.2.1. Section one

The first section of the questionnaire tackles knowledge EFL teachers have about project work activity.

- **Familiarity with project work activity:** Responses to Q1 demonstrate that the 18 respondents have an idea about what the project work activity is. This attitude implies that participants are aware that within such an approach, pupils work in groups, in pairs or individually to realize projects. Thus, learners become more responsible for their learning by reducing the teacher’s over-presence and decreasing theirs. In other words, they design the classroom activities in such a way to meet learners’ needs and interests and encourage them to be cooperative in searching for necessary information. See Fig.1.

Q1. Are you familiar with Project work activity?

Figure N° 1. Teachers’ acquaintance with PW

N =18		Frequency	Valid percentage
Option	Yes	18	100,0

Dahache, 2020

- **Participants’ attitudes toward project work integration in EFL curriculum:** Reacting to all participants believe that working on a project is a sensible move. Their complete agreement on integrating PW into EFL at Middle School indicates that they are ready to put it into practice. However, some teachers added comments expressing the desire to see the PW teaching procedure reconsidered. The figure below figures out the teachers’ attitude towards Project work in class.

Q2. Do you believe that project work integration into the curriculum is a wise decision?

Figure N° 2. Teachers’ attitudes towards PW

N =18		Frequency	Valid percentage
Option	Yes	18	100,0

Dahache, 2020

Q3. If your answer to Q1 is “no”, can you explain why in a few words?

- **Understanding teachers’ negative attitude toward project work:** Third question aims to depict teachers’ negative reactions regarding PW. They noted in their comments that project work needs to be updated to cement its significance by encouraging children to deal with

it even if it is not graded. Indeed, they insist on the fact that project work should bridge between school and real life. It provides personal and social responsibility with planning, critical thinking, reasoning, and creativity. The following teacher's comment explains why PW should reflect learners' creativity: "It's a 100 % Google's work, most of them don't really do the research by themselves and they give the work back to the teacher without even knowing what is written inside".

- **Teachers' awareness about the objectives of project work:** Question four of the questionnaire aims to check teachers' awareness of the objectives of project work in language teaching. The responses brought evidence on how important to get the learners familiar with such an activity. Beyond training them to master the four skills, project work offers EFL learners' opportunities to develop autonomy, creativity and collaboration. Genuinely, seven teachers, i.e., (38.9 %) of the respondents believe that project work enhances creativity while 5 others favor developing the speaking skill (28 %) and autonomy (22 %). Surprisingly, two teachers only think that PW enhances collaboration.

Q4. What skills do you think should be targeted by project work in the teaching of EFL at Middle School ?

Figure N° 3. Teachers' preferences towards language skills

N =18		Frequency	Valid percentage
Options	Speaking	5	28
	Autonomy	4	22
	Creativity	7	38,9
	Collaboration	2	11,1
	Total	18	100,0

Dahache, 2020

2.2.2. Section two

This section is meant to explore teachers' practices in the classroom to find out the reasons behind their reluctance to assigning projects to learners.

- **The Frequency of project work assignment:** The purpose of this question is to seek if teachers understand the relevance of assigning project works to their pupils. Indeed, the frequency of its assignment justifies the teachers' engagement in developing CBA principles such as learners' autonomy. The responses meet the curriculum requirements (Accompanying Document, MEN, 2011), stating that PW should be tackled at the end of each sequence (83.3 %). Moreover, two teachers only, i.e., (11.1 %) postpone PW till the end of each term, while only one teacher skips PW activity.

Q5. How often do you assign Project Works to your learners?

Figure N° 4. Project frequency assignment

N =18		Frequency	Valid percentage
Options	At the end of each term	2	11,1
	At the end of a sequence	15	83,3
	Rarely	1	5,6
	Total	18	100,0

Dahache, 2020

- Selection of project works topics:** The topics assigned to the pupils should correspond to the syllabus’s substance. Q6 thus looks for a connection between PW and the classroom activities of the teachers. The majority (83.3 %) use curriculum orientations, whereas a small percentage (11.1 %), 2 teachers, create their own subjects. On the other hand, learners’ interests are ignored because only one teacher (5.6 %) promotes learners’ topic selection. The following figure illustrates the tendency.

Q6. Project works topics are

Figure N° 5. Projects selection

N =18		Frequency	Valid percentage
Options	Teacher’s topics	2	11,1
	Textbooks topics	15	83,3
	Learners’ choice	1	5,6
	Total	18	100,0

Dahache, 2020

- Reasons behind teachers’ reluctance to assign project works:** To understand the reasons behind some teachers’ reluctance to assigning project work to their learners; the researcher suggested four hypotheses in: time-consuming, source of noise, program completion, and too demanding for the learners. Half of the responses support passing the project work to save time when it comes to finishing the syllabus. The remaining half is as important since it expresses instructors’ desire to gain time (44.4 %), while 5.6 % claim that project work is often a source of disruption particularly in large classes, which explains why it should be avoided. However, the difficulty of project work for learners does not appear as the reason why teachers often skip it.

Q7. Which of the following may cause you to avoid assigning project work to your classes?

Figure N° 6. Possible projet failure causes

N =18		Frequency	Valid percentage
Options	Time-consuming	8	44,4
	Program completion	9	50,0
	Source of noise	1	5,6
	Total	18	100,0

Dahache, 2020

- **Benefits of project works:** At its most basic level, project work integration aims to improve competencies, including communicative competence is meant to gauge teachers' awareness of the significance to foster students' speaking performance in social situations such as oral argumentation, and interaction. One of the primary targets of the teachers, according to 55.6 % of informants, is presenting students' work in front of an audience and being able to defend their ideas. On the other hand, 8 teachers, i.e., (22.2 %) declare that the project as a product, as well as the process by which it is acquired, are as important.

Q8: What, in your view, is the most important aspect of project work?

Figure N° 7. Project works benefits

N =18		Frequency	Valid percentage
Options	The final product	4	22,2
	The preparation process	4	22,2
	Oral presentation	10	55,6

Dahache, 2020

- The quality of learners' projects productions : The teachers' recognition of the value of learners' creativity is evidenced by 11 teachers, i.e., (61.1 %) of participants. Furthermore, 27.8 % of them claim that projects are typically learners' works, meanwhile, two teachers (11.1 %) deplore that learners' projects are often ready-made works downloaded from the internet. The Following figure illustrates the tendency.

Q9. How would you describe your students' final project works?

Figure N°8. Project works description

N =18		Frequency	Valid Percentage
Options	Plagiarized	2	11,1
	Learner's creation	11	61,1
	Handwritten copies	5	27,8
	Total	18	100,0

Dahache,2020

- **Impact of PW on learners' competencies:** Participants are asked to evaluate the influence of Project work on their learners' competencies to get a full picture of PW value in teachers' eyes. The ability to gather information has gained 61.1 % of the total number of participants, among the four alternatives suggested. In the meantime, collaborative learning and the sense of competitiveness both received 16.7 % for each of the stakeholders' views. Surprisingly, the speaking skill scored only 5.6 %. These perspectives reinforce the curriculum's objectives from integrating PW in the teaching of EFL aiming at raising both learners' sense of competition and curiosity, yet it is far from being favorable for learners' speaking skill development.

Q10. What impact has project work had on your learners?

Figure N° 9. Impact of PW on learners

N =18		Frequency	Valid Percentage
Options	Sense of competition	3	16,7
	Gathering information	11	61,1
	Collaborative learning	3	16,7
	Speaking skill	1	5,6
	Total	18	100,0

Dahache, 2020

- **Fostering collaborative learning:** Literature about project work insists on the effectiveness of project-based learning as a way to get pupils to learn through teamwork. To check evidence, Q11 aims to demonstrate that teachers are sensitive to creating environments for collaborative learning through appropriate strategies, such as working in pairs or groups. Our informants' responses are noteworthy. Individual project work accounts for (5.6 %) of the total, while group and pair work account for (61,1 %) and (33.3 %) correspondingly. This scope illustrates EFL teachers' sensitivity to creating collaborative learning conditions. See the table below.

Q11. What method do you suggest for your learners to complete their project work?

Figure N° 10. Efficient method for completing PW

N =18		Frequency	Valid percentage
Options	Group work	11	61,1
	Pair work	6	33,3
	Individually	1	5,6
	Total	18	100,0

Dahache, 2020

- **Learners' motivation:** Teachers employ various motivational factors such as contests, grades, or any other motive to drive students to complete their projects. According to statistics, half of teachers' responses to motivate learners by evaluating their efforts. Nine teachers, (50 %), tend to use grades most of the time, in addition to using any type of competition (44.4 %) in the classroom in which the finest works are rated. One teacher, (5.6 %), only uses gifts to motivate her pupils to do their projects. The following figure reflects the tendency.

Q12. What strategy do you use to inspire your learners to complete project work?

Figure N° 11. Teachers' strategies for learners PW completion

N =18		Frequency	Valid Percentage
Options	Competition	8	44,4
	Continuous assessment	9	50,0
	Gifts	1	5,6
	Total	18	100,0

Dahache,2020

- Teachers' views on learners' final products: Some teachers have previously stated that their students copy and paste ready-made works from the internet. This aspect is in total contradiction with the spirit of project work underlined in the MS curriculum. Consequently, teachers are faced with the dilemma of whether or not to correct a piece of work that is not their pupils' original work. The statistics derived from answers to Q13 are broadly consistent with this reality, since 83.3 % of participants' responses reflect the indicated opinion. To our surprise, the teachers' guidance (16.7 %) does not appear to be a reliable source for gathering information. See the figure below.

Q13. What sources do your pupils use to complete their project work?

Figure N° 12, Teachers' view on learners PW

N =18		Frequency	Valid percentage
Options	The internet	15	83,3
	Teacher guidance	3	16,7
	Total	18	100,0

Dahache, 2020

- Learners' critical thinking development: Learners usually express their difficulties in generating their projects through requests for assistance. Thus, EFL teachers are more challenged than ever to engage learners' initiative rather than just delivering knowledge. Responses to Q14 of the study go hand in hand with this new challenge since 16 teachers support their pupils in their learning process and only 2 of them admit that their learners do not ask for assistance. See figure below

Q14. Do your pupils consult you for guidance during the project preparation process?

Figure N° 13, Teachers' assistance

N =18		Frequency	Valid percentage
Options	Yes	16	88,9
	No	2	11,1
	Total	18	100,0

Dahache, 2020

- Obstacles affecting learners' projects work quality: Question number 15 aims to draw attention to the challenges that have an impact on learners' project quality. Results show that the most common difficulties learners face in preparing projects are inability to analyse information collected and present it in English, (44.4 % for each), with roughly 11.1 % believing that learners are unable to present their collected information into personal written pieces (see the figure below).

Q15. What obstacles do your pupils face while preparing project work?

Figures N° 14. Learners' obstacles

N =18		Frequency	Valid percentage
Options	Gathering information	8	44,4
	Summarizing information	8	44,4
	Writing texts	2	11,1
	Total	18	100,0

Dahache,2020

- Learners' creativity development: To assess teachers' approval of learners' final products, they are asked to express their attitudes in a scale of 1 to 5. Despite the majority of participants' positive reaction toward incorporating student work into the curriculum in a previous question (see Q2), a significant number of them are still reluctant to do so because they are not completely satisfied with the process followed by their learners. Consequently, they proposed a series of ideas that are likely to improve project work activity.

Q16. Which of formats do you recommend for your learners to submit their finalized project work?

Figure N° 15. Teachers' recommandations

N =18		Frequency	Valid percentage
Options	Digital format	3	16,7
	Paper format	15	83,3
	Total	18	100,0

Dahache,2020

- Teacher's expectations of learners' products: Participants are asked to express their satisfaction with learners' projects on a scale of 1 to 5. Ten teachers, i.e, 55.6 %, gave their approval to their students' work on a scale of one to ten, while 38.9 % were dissatisfied. Only one teacher acknowledged any form of satisfaction with the learners' final works. Despite the majority of participants' positive opinions toward incorporating student work into the curriculum (see Q2), a significant number of them avoid doing so because they are unsatisfied with the process the learners went through. They proposed a series of ideas that are likely to improve project work activity.

Q17. How satisfied are you with your learners' project works dealt with so far?

To answer Research Question number 2, participants are asked to express their satisfaction with regards to learners' projects final products. On a scale of one to five, from strongly unsatisfied to strongly satisfied, the majority hit option 3, i.e., (55.6%) to express their approval of their students' work, while 38.9 % were unsatisfied (option 2). Only one teacher, i.e., 5.6 % of them acknowledged of any form of satisfaction with the learners' final works. Despite the majority of participants' positive opinions toward incorporating student work into the curriculum, a significant number of them avoid doing so because they are unsatisfied with the process the learners went through. Instead, they

proposed a series of ideas that are likely to improve project work activity. These ideas are tackled in the up-coming analysis devoted to teachers’ suggestions to improve PW.

Figure N° 16. teachers’ attitudes towards learners’ final project works

N =18		Frequency	Valid Percentage
Scales	2,00	7	38,9
	3,00	10	55,6
	4,00	1	5,6
	Total	18	100,0

Dahache,2020

Q18. Can you kindly add a few comments which might contribute to the usefulness of the findings of this questionnaire?

- Participants’ suggestions for improving PW : The final question is intended to invite suggestions to enrich the study’s findings. The majority of our informants expressed concern about not having enough time to finish the essential instructional sequences throughout the year, prompting them to devote much more time to traditional language classes rather than extracurricular activities such as project work. The following quotation is revealing of teacher’s frustration to achieve effective results through project work due to time constraints: “The program is too long and we don’t find enough time to do the project work as it is needed. I believe the main reason for the failure of project works is condense program which results in lack of time”.

3. Interpretation of the findings

The investigation yielded a number of significant findings for the researcher. In fact, despite the fact that all participants applauded the introduction of project work in the MS curriculum, they find difficulties in putting into practice the project work principles. This tendency is consistent with previous research findings regarding the implementation of PBL at Algerian High Schools (Baghousi, M., & El Ouchdi, I. Z. (2019). Middle school teachers are also susceptible to ignoring project work in class, mentioning time constraints, particularly when it comes to classes with an end-of-year exam, as the main reason. In addition, although cooperative learning has a well-defined theoretical foundation among participants, the strategies used to perform project work are not well adapted to large classes due to the potential noise that may arise. This trend demonstrates that EFL teachers recognize the importance of project work in a suitable structured collaborative learning setting.

Moreover, the analysis has revealed that not only are learners' products most of the time plagiarized; learners are unable to defend their ideas during oral presentations. The following quote from teachers' comments illustrates the point: *"The majority of my learners find difficulties in conducting the projects and presenting them in front of their friends"*. The tendency is in direct opposition to the CBA principle seeking to develop learners' interaction competence.

The majority of the respondents (55.6 %) confirm that they are not satisfied with the projects produced by their learners on the basis that the projects topics are not motivating for their learners. Previous academic works reported similar observation in terms of the quality of project works topics suggested in Textbooks. Our findings reinforce the belief that the projects topics are too difficult and beyond the learners' level and abilities (Fedoul, A, M.(2018).

Besides, it was observed that project work is thought to be at the root of some pupils' misbehavior, given that pupils work in groups or pairs. It is true that teachers get attentive and quiet pupils by avoiding project work, but they also disrupt the cycle that leads to collaborative learning by doing so.

Finally, the participants claim that pupils do not construct their project works, but they copy and paste pre-made copies from the internet. Since learners are evaluated on their accomplishments and projects work is part of learners' continuous evaluations, it is impossible to gauge their levels because the product is actually not their own. Unfortunately, this aspect is utterly at odds with project work spirit aiming at developing learners' critical thinking.

4. Recommendations

The following suggestions are likely to increase instructors' abilities to better implement project work in the teaching of the English language at Middle Schools in Algeria.

- Necessity of effective pre-service teacher training: Data gathered for this study demonstrated that teachers in Algerian Middle Schools appear unprepared to apply project work concept to the teaching of English as a foreign language. The majority of teachers have graduated from institutions that are not necessarily specialized in pre-service teacher education what justifies their ignorance of project work objectives. According to Darling-Hammond et al. (2005), teachers must be prepared for their professions, and that the quality of their training impacts the quality of their instruction and, inevitably, the achievement of their learners (cf.; American Association of Colleges for Teacher

Education, 2009). It is therefore strongly advised that teachers receive training in this field.

- Necessity of good continuing teacher development: While teacher education institutions can assist instructors in preparing for a range of scenarios, they cannot adequately prepare them for all of them. Furthermore, changes in the curricula contents, teaching methods, learner profiles, working conditions, and other factors produce new demands in terms of skills and knowledge that were not addressed during the teacher education phase. That's why teachers must continually update and continuously improve their teaching skills.
- The necessity to review PW topics suggested in textbooks: Projects topics included in MS textbooks are either too demanding for the learner or require too much time. We propose that textbooks provide learners with the opportunity to select themselves topics that are relevant to their interests and incorporate numerous paralinguistic cues such as gestures, body language, facial expressions, and so on. Because of the type of language that these subjects target, PW would be less linguistically and cognitively difficult for low-level learners. It would also be more engaging and motivational because basic exercises assist pupils in learning the types of language they will need outside of the classroom.

Conclusion

It is worth mentioning that the present study is exploratory in nature. It is limited to the analysis of Middle School teachers and learners. To limit the scope of the research, the investigation involved only five Middle schools in Tlemcen city.

The findings revealed that the implementation of project work into the EFL curriculum at Algerian Middle School is still a long way distant. Actually, teachers find difficulties in putting into practice project work principles. Despite the fact that participants approved project work as a provider of input (Stoller,2006), they justified their reluctance on the ground that it is necessary to teach learners the basics of the language before requiring them to do projects. It appeared also that project work ineffectiveness can be attributed to a lack of teachers' awareness of the importance of PW in promoting learners' autonomy, critical thinking, and collaborative learning. Indeed, the process by which this should be accomplished should be reconsidered. Moreover, teachers' resistance to assigning PW to pupils is justified by their fear of failing to complete the syllabus, thus feeling responsible for the learners' failure in official exams. Con-

sequently, the rush to cover all of the instructional units explains the decision to sacrifice PW.

To conclude, one may say that as long as learners are not strongly motivated to engage in the considerable creative invention by producing their own pieces instead of downloading full works from the internet, and teachers continue to accept these so-called pupils' project works, it is undeniably true that the implementation of project work in the teaching of EFL at Algerian Middle School is a myth.

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Abstract

The purpose of this article is to raise English Language teachers' awareness of the importance of project work in the development of learners' real-life skills. In theory, Algeria has adopted the Competency-Based Approach to assist learners in acquiring the competencies needed to deal with real-world circumstances. In practice, however, numerous studies have demonstrated that teachers struggle to implement the concepts of this new approach, particularly the integration of project work as a means of developing learners' autonomy and critical thinking. Five classroom observations of pupils' project work oral presentations besides to a questionnaire sent during the academic year 2019/2020 to eighteen EFL Middle School teachers in the city of Tlemcen were used as tools of investigation. The findings revealed that while the

majority of participants are in favor of introducing project work in their plans, some are reluctant to assign it to their pupils on the pretext that it is time-consuming and too demanding for them.

Keywords

CBA, Project work, Learner Centeredness, Reluctance. Implementation

مستخلص

الهدف من هذه المقالة هو توعية اللغة الإنجليزية كلغة أجنبية بأهمية المشروع في تنمية مهارات الحياة اليومية للمتعلمين. من الناحية النظرية، تبنت الجزائر النهج القائم على الكفاءة لمساعدة التلاميذ على اكتساب المهارات اللازمة للتعامل مع مواقف الحياة الواقعية. لكن في الممارسة العملية، أظهرت العديد من الدراسات أن المعلمين يواجهون صعوبات في تنفيذ مفاهيم هذا النهج الجديد، وخاصة دمج المشروع كوسيلة لتطوير استقلالية المتعلمين والتفكير النقدي. لإيجاد الأدلة، استخدم الباحث استبياناً تم إرساله إلى ثمانية عشر مدرساً للغة الإنجليزية في الطور المتوسط بالإضافة إلى ملاحظة العروض الشفوية لمشاريع التلاميذ في القسم. كشفت النتائج أنه على الرغم من أن غالبية المشاركين يؤيدون ادراج المشروع في دروسهم، إلا أن البعض يتردد في فرضه على طلابهم على أساس أنه يتطلب الكثير من الوقت وفوق طاقتهم.

كلمات مفتاحية

الكلمات المفتاحية: التدريس بالكفاءات، المشروع، التردد، التطبيق.

Résumé

Le but de cet article est de sensibiliser les enseignants d'anglais comme langue étrangère sur l'importance du projet dans le développement des compétences de la vie de tous les jours des apprenants. En théorie, l'Algérie a adopté l'Approche par Compétences pour aider les élèves à acquérir les compétences nécessaires pour faire face aux situations réelles. En pratique, cependant, de nombreuses études ont démontré que les enseignants peinent à mettre en œuvre les concepts de cette nouvelle approche, notamment l'intégration du projet comme moyen de développer l'autonomie et l'esprit critique des apprenants. Des observations en classe des présentations orales des travaux de projets des élèves plus un questionnaire envoyé à dix-huit professeurs d'anglais du cycle moyen ont été utilisés comme outils d'investigation. Les résultats ont révélé que même si la majorité des participants sont favorables à l'insertion du projet dans leurs leçons, certains préfèrent ne pas le soumettre à leurs élèves sous prétexte qu'il nécessite beaucoup de temps est trop exigeant pour eux.

Mots-clés

application ,réticence ,Projet Le ,Compétence Par Approche

Appendices

Appendix1. Classroom Observation Checklist Results

Indicators		Classes									
		4MS1		4MS2		4MS3		3MS1		3MS2	
		Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes	No
1	The projects correspond to the textbook's proposed topics.	✓		✓		✓		✓		✓	
2	The topics are chosen by the learners.		✓		✓		✓		✓		✓
3	The projects are pre-made duplicates plucked from the web?	✓		✓		✓		✓			✓
4	The projects are completed in groups or pairs.	✓		✓		✓		✓		✓	
5	The projects are presented to an audience.		✓		✓		✓		✓	✓	
6	The learners made use of different resources.		✓		✓		✓		✓		✓
7	The learners demonstrated creativity		✓		✓		✓		✓		✓
8	The projects are in written format	✓		✓		✓		✓		✓	
9	The projects are in digital format		✓		✓		✓		✓		✓
10	The teachers marked the projects.	✓		✓		✓		✓			✓
11	The class was noisy during presentations.	✓		✓		✓		✓		✓	
12	The presentations reflected learners' acquisitions.		✓		✓	✓			✓	✓	

Appendix 2

- Questionnaire

Project work. Teachers' Questionnaire

This questionnaire is part of a scientific article which aims at investigating teachers' attitudes towards the integration of project work and its effectiveness in the teaching of English as a foreign language for the Algerian learners at Middle School. Your answers to the questions and your opinions as a practitioner in the field will be valuable in shedding light on the issue that my article addresses. You are kindly requested to tick off the appropriate box (es) or supply your own answers where necessary. I greatly appreciate your collaboration.

- Teachers' profile

A/ Teachers' profile		
Gender	Male	<input type="checkbox"/>
	Female	<input type="checkbox"/>
Experience in teaching	1 to 5 years	<input type="checkbox"/>
	5 to 10 years	<input type="checkbox"/>
	10 to 20 years	<input type="checkbox"/>
	More than 20 years	<input type="checkbox"/>
	Which levels are you teaching?	<input type="checkbox"/>
	MS1	<input type="checkbox"/>
	MS2	<input type="checkbox"/>
	MS3	<input type="checkbox"/>
	MS4	<input type="checkbox"/>
Degree	License degree in the English language	<input type="checkbox"/>
	Faculty graduate	<input type="checkbox"/>
	Pre-service teacher training College (ENS) graduate	<input type="checkbox"/>

B/ Questions	
<u>Section One:</u> Teachers ‘Attitudes toward Project Work	
Q1. Are you familiar with Project work activity?	
Q2. Do you believe that incorporating project work into the teaching of EFL at the middle school level is a wise decision?	Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/>

Q3. If your answer to Q1 is “no”, can you explain why in a few words?

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.....

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Q4. What skills do you think should be targeted by project work in the teaching of EFL at the Middle School level? (You may tick off more than 1 option).	
Writing Speaking	<input type="checkbox"/>
Autonomy Creativity	<input type="checkbox"/>
Collaboration	<input type="checkbox"/>
Q5. How often do you assign project works to your learners?	
At the end of each term	<input type="checkbox"/>
At the end of each sequence	<input type="checkbox"/>
Rarely	<input type="checkbox"/>
Never	<input type="checkbox"/>

Q6. The project works topics you assign to your learners are	
Topics designed by the teacher	<input type="checkbox"/>
At the end of each sequence	<input type="checkbox"/>
Topics chosen by the learners	<input type="checkbox"/>
Q7. Which of the following may cause you to avoid assigning project work to your classes?	
Time-consuming	<input type="checkbox"/>
To save time to finish the program	<input type="checkbox"/>
Source of noise in the classroom	<input type="checkbox"/>
Too demanding for the learners	<input type="checkbox"/>
Section Two : Assessment	<input type="checkbox"/>
Q8: What, in your view, is the most important aspect of project work?	
The final product	<input type="checkbox"/>
The preparation process	<input type="checkbox"/>
The presentation in front of an audience	<input type="checkbox"/>

Q9. How would you describe your students' final project works?	
Learners Copied and pasted copies	<input type="checkbox"/>
Created copies downloaded copies	<input type="checkbox"/>
Learners' handwritten copies	<input type="checkbox"/>
Q10: What impact has project work had on your learners? (You can tick off more than 1 option)	
Raised their sense of competition	<input type="checkbox"/>
Ability to gather information	<input type="checkbox"/>
Collaborative learning	<input type="checkbox"/>
Improved their writing skill	<input type="checkbox"/>
Improved their speaking	<input type="checkbox"/>
Improved their speaking	<input type="checkbox"/>
None of these	<input type="checkbox"/>
Q11. What method do you suggest for your learners to complete their project work?	
Group work	<input type="checkbox"/>
Pair work	<input type="checkbox"/>
Individually	<input type="checkbox"/>

Q12: What sources do your pupils use to complete their project work?	
The internet	<input type="checkbox"/>
The school library	<input type="checkbox"/>
They buy it from cybercafé	<input type="checkbox"/>
Their teacher guidance	<input type="checkbox"/>
Other	
Q13. Do your pupils consult you for guidance during the preparation process?	Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/>
Q14. What obstacles do your pupils face while preparing project work? (You can check more than one option.)	
Unable to find the required information	<input type="checkbox"/>
Unable to summarize and analyze the information gathered	<input type="checkbox"/>
Unable to report their findings and write the texts in English	<input type="checkbox"/>
Unable to present their work in front of an audience	<input type="checkbox"/>
Q15. Which formats do you recommend for your learners to submit their finalized project work?	<input type="checkbox"/>
Digital format	<input type="checkbox"/>
Paper format	<input type="checkbox"/>
Q16. How satisfied are you with your learners' project works dealt with so far? 1 2 3 4 5 Strongly unsatisfied <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> strongly satisfied	
Q17- Can you kindly add a few comments which might contribute to the usefulness of the findings of this questionnaire? *	

Thank you for your contribution