Examining The Effect of Using The A1-A2 Project-Based Learning Method in Teaching Turkish to Foreigners on Success

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Abstract

The study aims to examine the contribution of project-based learning methods to the success of teaching Turkish to foreigners. In a government-run school in Kazakhstan, a test group (25) and a control group (25) were formed with 50 students at the A1-A2 level in Turkish classes in grades 7-8. Nineteen questions were prepared, and the two groups were instructed to discuss and prioritize the environmental problems related to the topic of "our home" in Turkish class. One group used the traditional method of explaining the topic while the other group used the project-based learning method. After identifying the most important environmental problems, such as the cold weather conditions in the north of Kazakhstan, the groups brainstormed possible solutions. Then, the students were asked to form groups and conduct research on the problem of homeless people in cold weather. The project-based learning method was utilized throughout the process, and a Kahoot quiz was given to evaluate the students' learning outcomes. The quiz results were compared between the project-based learning and traditional teaching methods in terms of their contribution to vocabulary learning for Turkish as a foreign language at the A1-A2 level in grades 7-8. The percentages of correct answers were compared using quantitative research methods. Additionally, a satisfaction survey was conducted among the students who participated in the project-based learning. The study findings contribute to the understanding of the effectiveness of project-based learning in teaching Turkish to foreigners in Kazakhstan.

Keywords: PBL, project-based learning, learning, teaching Turkish to foreigners, Kazakhstan.

Introduction

According to Aksan, language is "a versatile and highly developed system that allows thoughts, emotions, and desires to be conveyed to others in a society through shared elements and rules of sound and meaning" (1990, p. 11-12). Thanks to this versatile system that varies from society to society, humanity has been able to continue its existence and make its voice heard from the past to the present. All the greatest discoveries and inventions that have opened and closed eras have been able to express themselves through "language". According to Aksan's views, language is a means of expression, a means of conveying what the eye sees, and the ear hears into words, and an effort to establish mutual understanding. The communication and interaction efforts inherent in language have led to the necessity of learning another language due to social needs, wars, education, trade, and religion. Every nation has somehow communicated with another nation. In the globalizing world, language teaching to foreigners has been systematized and new methods have emerged to facilitate language learning. The common goal of these methods should be to make language teaching easier.

1.1. Teaching Turkish as a Foreign Language

As one of the oldest nations with a wide geography and a history of migrations, Turks have been teaching Turkish to foreigners for centuries. The history of works written to teach Turkish to foreigners and to prove its importance goes back a long way. Likewise, *"Dīwān Lughāt al-Turk* opens up the conception of Turkish into Arabic, in terms of its worldview, apprehension of life, and cultural riches; it furthermore opens up Arabic, the language of education, science, philosophy and literature, intoTurkish. (Vefa, 2020, p. 153) In the first half of the 15th century, Ali Şir Nevaî, a poet and linguist of the Chagatai, who opposed the dominance of Arabic and Persian, wrote Muhakematü'l-Lugateyn to show the peculiarities of the Turkish language to the Persians. When the Republic era arrived, the Turkish Language Association (TDK) was established on July 12, 1932, to study Turkish and work for the development of the language. Systematic studies on teaching Turkish to foreigners began with the establishment of Turkish Language Centers (TÖMER). The first one was founded in Ankara University in 1984, and later Turkish Language Centers were established in various universities. In addition to these, another important

government agency involved in teaching Turkish to foreigners is the Turkish Cooperation and Coordination Agency (TİKA). Besides, Turkish language teaching activities continue in many countries abroad, not only in Turkish and Turkology departments at universities but also in secondary schools.

Foreign language teaching methods and various teaching methods have been found and implemented in education for almost centuries. As technology develops, new teaching methods emerge. These methods serve as a guide for language teaching to the teacher. The foreign language teaching methods that have been accepted by the Modern Languages "Division of the Council of Europe and widely used are as follows in order: Grammar-Translation Method, Direct Method, Natural Method, Audio-Lingual Method, Cognitive-Code Method, Communicative Method, Eclectic Method.

These are the other main methods that have gained less popularity in foreign language teaching and are used as alternatives: Suggestopedia Method, Community Language Learning Method, The Silent Way Method, Total Physical Response Method, Audiovisual Method, Task-Based Method, Content-Based Method, and Problem-Based Learning (PBL) Method." (Göçen, 2020, p. 23-48).

1.2. What is Project Based Learning (PBL)?

The project-based learning method was initially developed in the 1950s for use in medical courses. In the Project-Based Learning model developed at McMaster University in Canada, various clinical scenarios were created instead of classical textbook presentations, and medical students were asked to provide solutions to the problems produced in these scenarios. This approach was later developed, standardized, and applied in mathematics, engineering, economics, and other fields outside of medicine (www.ekampus.orav.org.tr). It is an interactive learning model, and the student is actively involved in the learning process. Unlike other methods, universal values can also be emphasized in foreign language teaching with this method. Students learn reading, comprehension, listening, writing, and all language skills together with this approach. The Project-Based Learning Approach is an innovative approach in the teaching-learning process, focusing on general concepts, thoughts, and principles of a discipline (Blumenfeld, Soloway, Marx, Krajcik, Guzdial & Palincsar, 1991) Solving problems that learners may encounter in their lives in cooperation is the basis of this approach.

Instead of a class environment where a lesson is disconnected from other subjects, consists of short practices, and is teacher-centered, we can use a different method that involves long-term learning activities, interdisciplinary connections, learner-centered and integrated with real-world topics. Project-Based Learning offers opportunities for learning by establishing connections between different subjects. Learners define and apply the content of different subject areas realistically and reliably within the production process. These activities take place outside an artificial environment. When a child learns a language, they also reinforce what they have learned by establishing a connection with real-life experiences.

1.3. Goals and Objectives

They can be listed as directly taught objectives or learning outcomes acquired through discovery, defined learning outcomes, achievement findings ensuring significant learning, and finally the evaluation phase can be listed as analyzing and synthesizing someone's writing. Various media sources can be listed as primary and secondary sources as follows; students making various informative syntheses using primary and secondary media sources. The sources are the texts written by students about homelessness, research conducted by children, photos related to the subject, interviews, plans, the research background of the subject, communication, and students' organization. (For example, interpersonal, small group, whole group, panel, roundtable discussion)

1.4. Objectives

We can list the objectives as follows: to provide information about the subject, to convince students to work on it, to establish a connection between the topic and the project, to encourage students to conduct research and form groups. Students will provide documentation through research, interviews, videos, photos, newspaper clippings related to the topic, information contained in this document, planning, creating, organizing and presenting it in a suitable format and purpose. They will evaluate the documents they have created together, analyze, select, participate in a voluntary service or project, and explain their reasons. The selection stage can be listed as follows: students participate in a project or a voluntary service. Students will provide documentation through research, interviews, videos, photos, newspaper clippings related to the topic, information

contained in this document. Other stages can be listed as analyzing, selecting, and participating. Each group will organize a survey and explain the reasons for participating in a voluntary service or project.

1.5. Information, Communication and Skills

Learning skills and technology tools are listed as follows: students interpret and analyze visual data and understand the impact of digital media, such as design, technical and speed rate, on viewers. Students' visual products have a sophisticated range of products. It is important for students to follow methods such as the topic, digital media understanding, and design techniques. Media and design techniques are handled by the Technology Integration Specialist (TIS), who saves finished products from multiple sources. The success of the project will be evidenced by media sources (such as CDRW, DVDR), electronic and printed documents related to the subject, document review, information presentation, and the organization of documents in electronic variants. (nces.ed.gov, 2003).

1.6. Teaching Strategies

Teaching strategies aimed at this goal are determined through a "Things to Know" table. Options for teaching strategies include providing a School Technology Integration Specialist, direct instruction that students can access online, and tutors or students teaching each other. Options depend on the students' skill levels, but online classes, peer education, electronically and printed documents related to the subject, and document reviews are included.

1.7. Thinking and Reasoning Skills

They can be listed as follows; learning skills and technology tools, students collaborate with their peers, experts, and others to contribute to content. They compile, synthesize, produce and disseminate information using technology, and create models and other creative works. Teaching strategies for achieving results include evidence of success, knowledge presentation, and collecting and organizing electronic versions of documents.

1.8. Personal Skills

Personal skills can be listed as follows; the student exhibits ethical behavior, learns to take responsibility and work collaboratively. They become aware of the community and demonstrate citizenship. They participate in public discourse, service learning, and develop a sense of working in groups, increasing their social and communication skills. Group plans, group task journals, and group mass interviews are listed as assessment plans and roles and what can be done.

Table 1

Presentation

Assessments	Short Quizzes	Applying Tests
	Self-Evaluation Presentations	Grades
	Peer Evaluation	Checklists Observations Portfolio Control Lists
	Tests	Concept Maps
Feedback	Survey	Focus Groups and Audience Opinions
	Discussion	Task Management Diagram Group Task Journal Group Activity Journal Individual Activity Journal

	Daily Writing	Other
	Learning Journal	Self-Evaluation Form

1.9. Related Studies

Project-Based Learning (PBL) is one of the most widely used and popular methods today that takes into account the constructivist principles to maximize the role of students in their education and potential strategies. "PBL is simply a learning strategy and is organized around projects" (Thomas, 2000; Larmer, Markham and Ravitz, 2003; Bell, 2010). Students work on unique tasks such as problem or task solving, plan, implement, reflect and evaluate their own learning in PBL methods classrooms, students play an active role in learning. In addition to language teaching, universal values can be included in the questions asked at the beginning of the project and in the activities. Based on real-world issues PBL is built (Blank and Harwell, 1997; Dickinson et al., 1998; Westwood, 2008). PBL also increases the student's desire to learn. According to the Blumenfeld et al. (1991) opinions if the PBL methods successful implementation on the students can increase class motivation atmosfire by completely involving them, also engaging them in the subject.

For many educators, PBL presents a complete contrast to the traditional education they have experienced. Change takes time and rarely happens without concerns and challenges. However, when we consider the educational experience types that we value for our modern learners, it becomes apparent that the traditional "sage on the stage" teaching model falls significantly short. A similar study provided class teacher candidates with examples of project-based learning that could be used in the "Teaching Turkish" course. The projects undertaken also served the purpose of allowing teacher candidates to experience and learn the stages and processes of project-based learning. As a result of the practices, teacher candidates gained preliminary knowledge for producing projects in which the student is entirely active for primary school students. Additionally, it was observed that student-centered lessons are more effective in the learning process, and students produced more creative projects in groups (Demir, 2013, p. 53).

A similar study shows that in PBL research aimed at acquiring 21st century skills, the research findings shows that, "it can be stated that PBL research most commonly provides communication, collaboration, research, academic achievement, productivity, innovation-creativity, motivation,

thinking skills, responsibility, problem solving and attitude development skills" (Uysal, 2021, p. 85).

Attitude is one of the 21st century skills that can be strongly gained through PTÖ. Different studies also support this finding (Guo and Yang, 2012; Kaşarcı, 2013; Hasni et al., 2016). Social loafing can involve lowering the performance standards expected by the group as a whole to maintain friendliness among team members, in addition to inadequate performance by some team members. These authors suggested that because teachers tend to grade only the finished product, the social dynamics of assignments can escape the teacher's attention. In another study, a study was conducted in the first half of the 2014-2015 academic year in a middle school in the Çankaya district of Ankara, in 6th grade Turkish language classes, with two groups consisting of an experimental group (25 students) formed by unbiased allocation and a control group (25 students), and a study was conducted on 19 questions. During the semester, by applying the basic principles of the step-by-step teaching program supported by PBL (project-based learning) method by the researcher were implemented by the Turkish language course of teacher, group of experimental six educational situations prepared. In the control group, Turkish language classes were conducted by a different teacher known for their teaching method during the same instructional period. "At the end of the research, it was found that the experimental group students scored significantly higher on the Turkish Reading Comprehension and Written Expression Skills Test compared to the control group students and wrote more successful compositions" (Karagül, 2018, p. 876).

1.10. The Purpose and Method of the Study

The purpose of the study is to demonstrate the effectiveness of project-based learning in Turkish language instruction for foreign students, by applying this method to a class of 25 students and measuring their success. To achieve this, an experimental group and a control group were created for a predetermined period of time. As result, the learning levels of both groups were measured and compared. Initially, the curriculum gains and additional/advanced gains for all acquisition in the process of creating questions and arriving at answers were specified for Turkish language learners. A predetermined scenario was planned to support the infrastructure of the learning process during the application period (3 weeks, 4 hours). Sequential activities were written as

guidelines for the student to interpret and understand. All actors involved in the learning process were identified and their roles and responsibilities were described based on their level of proficiency. These actors include students, teachers, resource persons, experts, individuals or institutions who would benefit from solving the problem directly or those who have caused the problem. The project begins by asking questions such as "What problems are there in our environment at the B1 level and what can we do to solve them?" Students then brainstorm solutions and explore the impact of their learning on their daily lives. In this study, foreign students were included in a social activity by supporting Turkish language instruction with a PTÖ method. This was intended to increase their interest and motivation in Turkish and to integrate their skills from other areas into language learning. The aim was to move away from classical teaching methods and to instill the behavior of being a part of social life through a project. By treating the project as a foundation element rather than a goal, project-based learning emphasizes the process dimension of learning rather than just the end product and provides a structure that is specific to the learner's desired level of learning (Akkoyunlu, 2002, p. 2). The concept of project-based learning emerges through the association of projects with learning.

1.11. Collection and Analysis of Data

In the study, a test group and a control group of 25 7th and 8th grade students each were formed with pre-determined limitations in terms of location, time, number, and subject. Evaluation was made on 19 questions. In the data collection phase, the subject was first taught to the students. Then, group formation was requested, and the requirements of the project were explained. It was assumed that the students participated fully in the project and applied it actively. The effect of PBL on success was measured using individual evaluation via Kahoot application, followed by group evaluation and finally project evaluation methods. Then, subject questions were asked via Kahoot application to measure the words learned at the end of the project. The data obtained were presented in numerical form based on the percentages of correct and incorrect answers and analyzed. In addition, the correct and incorrect answer percentages of the experimental and control groups were compared based on the data obtained. The results of project-based learning and face-to-face instruction methods were compared in teaching Turkish to foreigners. Finally, the effect of

PBL on success in teaching Turkish to foreigners was practically measured and evaluated using numerical data analysis.

Findings and Interpretations

Project Name: What can be done for homeless people in our city during winter conditions? Project implementation time: 3 weeks, 12 class hours. Project idea: During the *Teaching Turkish to Foreigners* class for 8th grade students, it was suggested to discuss environmental problems outside of the classroom. After talking about local problems, they went outside and discussed what other problems could exist in their surroundings. When asked about the problems caused by Kazakhstan's weather conditions, it was mentioned that in the northern cities of Kazakhstan, the winter season is very harsh, lasting for nine months, and temperatures can drop to minus forty degrees. After students expressed their understanding that people living outside in such weather conditions would also feel very cold, they were asked to think about homeless people in particular and to empathize with them. When they returned to the classroom, they were asked to write a short story or anecdote expressing their feelings and thoughts if they were in the place of a homeless person during such weather conditions.

2.1. Invitation (Introduction)

In the second stage, the teacher invited the director of an organization that helps homeless people in the city to the class to have a discussion about this topic. Using the materials brought by the speaker, a discussion was opened after the students became interested in the topic. The students were asked for their opinions on the topic and were encouraged to volunteer for the mentioned project. The steps of the project can be listed as follows:

● Concept Map: A concept map can be created about the problems in the school.

● Guiding Question: How long can a person survive in the cold winter of this city?

● Questions: Children's ideas about possible questions related to the project can be written in bullet points.

● First, what can be done with the students is written down in the school as bullet points.

● the class is divided into groups.

● the each group is encouraged to come up with an idea and participate in the project.

● Individual assignments are made about what to do for the project.

During the project phase, the teacher should inform and guide the students about the following questions:

How to find sources for a local research study?

How to conduct an interview specifically designed to gather oral information?

How to synthesize research findings into an informative and entertaining narrative suitable for the target audience?

How to use advanced utilities to convert files into different formats?

How to collect interview documents from the media?

How to obtain the sources used in the documents?

2.2. Main Group Products and Major Individual Projects

1. Home design,

2. Virtual home design,

3. Smart home.

2.3. Assessment and Evaluation

The methods used in assessment and evaluation include the use of Kahoot as a measuring tool, group work, critical thinking and problem-solving, written communication, and verbal communication.

Table 2

Match the Product

Prior knowledge	Pre-project knowledge	Knowledge learned during the project
House parts in their own language	Introduction of house parts in Turkish class	Read, write, speak, and explain house parts to their peers.
done	done	done
done	done	done
done	done	done
done	done	done

Table 3

My House First Evaluation

My House			
Test			
Rank	Total Score (points)	Correct Answers	Incorrect Answers
1	14079	16	3
2	13710	16	3
3	12638	15	4

4	11992	14	5
5	11744	14	5
6	11382	13	6
7	11069	13	6
8	10909	14	5
9	10346	13	6
10	10298	12	7
11	9807	14	5
12	9764	13	6
13	9572	12	7
14	9138	11	8
15	8703	13	6
16	7701	10	9
17	7669	10	9
18	7322	9	10
19	2834	4	15
20	850	1	18
21	547	1	18
22	0	0	19

23	0	0	19
24	0	0	19
25	0	0	19
		9.52	9.48
		50.10	49.89

In the first table, the subject was taught to the control group through a lecture method. Then, word teaching was measured through the Kahoot test. As a result, the average correct answer that students responded was 9.52, which means they answered 50% of the questions correctly. The remaining answered incorrectly. The average correct answer of the 19 students who participated in the test was 9.52. The number of students who answered incorrectly is 9.48, which is 49%.

Table 4

My House Last Evaluation

Rank	Total Score (points)	Correct Answers	Incorrect Answers
1	11479	14	5
2	9993	13	6
3	9607	11	8
4	9268	11	8
5	8623	10	9
6	8576	10	9

7	7146	9	10
9	13031	14	5
10	12999	14	5
11	12998	14	5
12	11783	13	6
13	11010	12	7
14	10836	12	7
15	10102	11	8
16	8144	9	10
18	11158	13	6
19	9688	12	7
20	9677	11	8
21	9603	11	8
22	9408	11	8
23	9318	11	8
24	8780	10	9
25	8605	11	8
		11.60	7.39
		61.09	38.90

In the experimental group, the average correct response rate was 11.60, which is 60%, and the average incorrect response rate was 7.39, which is 38%.

Result and Discussions

As a result, the study demonstrated the effectiveness of project-based learning methods in teaching Turkish to foreigners, which have become increasingly popular in science classes. The results indicated that the experimental group had an 11% higher average correct response rate compared to the control group. Thus, it was found that project-based learning methods contribute significantly to success compared to traditional teaching methods.

Project-based learning not only affects reading, listening, comprehension, and writing skills but also emphasizes universal values in the lessons by involving various projects related to the course. Therefore, it is useful for the transfer of beneficial culture in addition to education. The findings obtained from the research demonstrate that the step-by-step teaching program principles supported by PBL (project-based learning) methods applied in teaching Turkish language to improve students' reading comprehension and written expression skills. Other studies examining the impact of the step-by-step teaching program on student achievement Aydoğuş and Ocak, 2011; Gömleksiz and Öner, 2013; Özdemir at al., 2015) have also shown that this approach enhances students' cognitive achievement. Similarly, studies have shown the positive effect of project-based learning method on students' academic achievement (Kaptan and Korkmaz, 2002; Polat and Atıcı, 2010; Deniş and Çeliker, 2012; Karaçallı, 2011; Kaşarcı, 2013). Therefore, it can be seen that the findings obtained in this study coincide with the findings of other scientific studies conducted in this regard.

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