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Project-Based Language Learning (PBLL): A Methodology to Develop English in

Foreign Language Classrooms

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Resumen

La presente síntesis de investigación tiene por objetivo comprender los efectos del Aprendizaje Basado en Proyectos (ABP) en clases de inglés como lengua extranjera. Para lo cual, se explican los fundamentos teóricos, la naturaleza y hallazgos previos de trabajos de investigación del uso de ABP. Veinticinco estudios que aplicaron ABP en clases de inglés como lengua extranjera fueron categorizaron en base a un criterio de inclusión establecido. Todos los estudios se analizaron en profundidad de acuerdo a tres aspectos: las técnicas de ABP más comunes, los efectos de ABP en las habilidades lingüísticas, y los efectos de ABP en las actitudes de los estudiantes. Los resultados del análisis de los estudios mostraron que las técnicas de enseñanza de ABP más comunes fueron las *discusiones entre pares / grupos, la investigación en Internet, la instrucción implícita del maestro, la escritura colaborativa, y la realización de videos*. En segundo lugar, aunque la mayoría de los estudios de investigación se centraron más en las habilidades productivas, se encontró que ABP fomenta el desarrollo de las cuatro habilidades. En tercer lugar, la mayoría de los estudios informaron que ABP influyó positivamente en las actitudes de los estudiantes. Se recomienda más investigación sobre la práctica de ABP para ampliar el conocimiento sobre la aplicación de ABP en contextos específicos de edad o nivel de lenguaje, más alternativas para involucrar técnicas tecnológicas en ABP, importancia de las técnicas de scaffolding en las etapas de proyectos, y efectos detallados de ABP en las destrezas y componentes del idioma inglés.

Palabras clave: ABP. Aprendizaje de idiomas. Proyectos. Aprendizaje activo. Aprendizaje colaborativo. Motivación. EFL. Inglés.

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Abstract

The present research synthesis aims to understand the effects of Project- Based Language Learning (PBLL) on English as Foreign Language classrooms. Additionally, PBLL theoretical foundations, nature and important findings of previous literature are explained. Twenty-five studies that applied PBLL on EFL classrooms were categorized according to some established inclusion criteria. All of the studies were deeply analyzed based on three aspects: most common PBLL techniques, effects of PBLL on language skills, and effects of PBLL on students' attitudes. The results of the analysis firstly showed that the most common PBLL teaching techniques were *peer/group discussions, internet research, implicit teacher instruction, collaborative writing and making videos*. Second, PBLL fostered the development of all four skills although most research studies focused more on productive skills. Third, most studies reported that PBLL influences positively on students' attitudes. Further research on the practice of PBLL is recommended to broaden the knowledge upon the PBLL application in specific language level or age contexts, more alternatives to involve technological techniques in PBLL, importance of scaffolding techniques in project stages, and deeper effects of PBLL in English language skills and components.

Keywords: PBL. Language learning. Projects. Active learning. Collaborative work. Students' motivation. EFL. English.

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Dedication

To my grandpa Santiago

who anxiously looked

forward to my graduation.

I´m sorry papá for the delay!

To Totoro, my friend

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Introduction

Project-Based Language Learning (PBLL) is a hands-on methodology that integrates the learning of a foreign language, content, and other skills such as social, inquiry, and technological skills with the development of projects (Hong, Cheung, Zhang & Jang, 2020). Around the 1970s, PBLL gained popularity in the field of foreign language learning. Since then, PBLL has been used as an alternative to reduce teacher-center instruction, to increase comprehensible input and output in the classrooms, and to boost motivation (Stoller & Alan, 2005; Beckett, Slater & Mohan, 2020).

Thus, this research synthesis aims to analyze the effects of PBLL on English as a foreign language classroom. Therefore, three research questions were established to analyze the most common PBLL teaching techniques, the effects of PBLL on English language skills, and the effects of PBLL on students' attitudes.

This work is divided into 6 chapters. The first chapter includes the description of the research, the background, statement of the problem, rationale, the research questions, and objectives.

The second chapter describes the theoretical framework which includes the theoretical foundations and concepts related to PBLL.

The third chapter consists of the literature review which integrates the relevant findings from past empirical research about the topic

The fourth chapter describes and explains the methodology and the inclusion criteria for selecting the studies.

The fifth chapter contains the analysis of the 25 selected articles in order to answer the research questions.

The sixth chapter covers the conclusions and recommendations for future research.

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CHAPTER I: Description of the Research

1.1 Background

Project- Based Learning (PBL) methodology emerges from the Active Learning Approach. The Constructivist Learning Theories supported by Dewey, Piaget, and Vygotsky are the educational foundations of the Active Learning Approach (Pinter, 2011; Pardjono, 2012). According to Pardjono (2012), the Active Learning Approach has three principles which are: 1) learners build up their knowledge through activities facilitated by the teacher; 2) the function of cognition helps to organize new knowledge, and 3) individual knowledge is constructed by social interaction.

The Project Method emerged during the 20s when William Kilpatrick was motivated by Dewey's learning theory to propose it. This method emphasizes that students learn through the active and practical application of knowledge (Kilpatrick, 1918). At first, it was common to see the use of the Project Method among the medical, economical, and engineering fields at university level. However, nowadays, it is applied in primary, secondary, and other formal contexts to teach many other subjects such as English as a Foreign Language (Boss, 2011).

In the field of foreign language learning and teaching, the Project Method or Project- Based Learning is known as Project-Based Language Learning (PBLL). It appeared around the 70s as a way to foster students' participation, autonomy, collaboration, genuine communication, inquiry skills and critical thinking (Gibbes & Carson, 2013). It is a method that focuses on the development of school projects during the English scheduled class hours. When students work with this methodology, they follow an organized plan that begins with unique, meaningful, and real-based assignments or questions, and ends up with

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a public presentation of results (Blumenfeld, Soloway, Marx, Krajcik, Guzdial, & Palincsar, 1991; Buck Institute of Education, 2020a; Krajcik and Blumenfeld, 2005; Peachey, 2020). Furthermore, PBLL allows students to plan, collaborate and communicate in the target language with their group peers, teacher, and the rest of the students in the class while they work on the projects (Thomas, 2017).

In the same manner, Beckett (2006) states that PBLL has been integrated in different language learning contexts such as Content and Language Integrated Learning (CLIL), English for Specific Purposes (ESP), Computer- Assisted Language Learning (CALL), English as Foreign Language (EFL), and English as a Second Language (ESL). For instance, Thomas (2017) carried out a research study which integrated PBLL and CALL to improve EFL learners´ communication skills. Alcalde (2019) conducted a study that aimed to develop English communicative skills for the Tourism sector through PBLL. The participants of both studies found that this methodology motivated them to be creative and critical thinkers while they work individually and collaboratively with projects using English during the process.

In conclusion, PBLL is an active methodology that consists in the development of projects and organized tasks which motivates learners to use English and to be creative and critical thinkers of their knowledge while they work individually and collaboratively (Thomas, 2017 and Alcalde, 2019). Therefore, the essence of this method involves students in a process where they can inquire, think critically, be creative and establish real communication in English (Kelsen, 2018).

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1.2 Statement of the problem

In the 21st century, people around the world stay connected as never before thanks to technological developments and globalization. In cultural, social, political, and business relations, the English language has become the medium for communication. Therefore, more people try to learn it, and governments from all over the world demand the learning of English as a subject in their national curriculum (García, 2013). However, various difficulties regarding EFL learning have appeared in the foreign language classrooms as they have been reported by various scholars in the field (Coleman, 1989; Farouck, 2016; Watanapokakul, 2016).

One of the biggest challenges in EFL contexts are large classes. The definition of large classes varies among authors, but Anderson (2016) states that above 30 students is a common agreement of a large class. Anyways, large classes may cause problems in the EFL learning process both for teachers and learners. For example, teachers find it difficult to keep discipline, take assistance, explain a topic, develop meaningful activities in the lessons, and assess students individually. Besides, learners may not be able to understand their teachers' instructions, and as well as it is difficult for them to receive enough input and output in the target language (Behroozi & Amoozegar, 2014; Hadi & Arante, 2015; Ahmed, 2018, Altan, 2020).

According to Beckett and Slatter (2005), PBLL can diminish these difficulties through collaborative tasks. Learners work in small groups in which a leader manages the performance of the rest and informs the teacher the needs, problems, and achievements of the group. Thus, students' role is not limited, and the project activities provide them with

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real opportunities to develop language skills. Moreover, teachers have time to guide their students, and focus on specific learners´ doubts (Vaca & Gómez, 2017; Meher, 2018).

Another problematic situation is that many students do not feel motivated to learn English due to the following reasons: 1) Teachers put emphasis only on writing or grammar activities, 2) Teachers use boring class resources, and 3) Students have a lack of intrinsic interest in the subject (Hadi & Arante, 2015; Pinzón, 2014; Ahmed, 2018). However, Putri, Putu and Nitiasih (2018) concluded that students feel engaged when they work with PBLL methodology because they show enthusiasm, confidence and creativity which directly influence their attitude towards English.

Since one or some of these barriers can be present in an EFL classroom, teachers are prevented from carrying on successful lessons. And at the same time, students are not exposed to meaningful and interesting language learning experiences. PBLL methodology, due to its theoretical and practical basis becomes a useful option to solve the aforementioned problems that can be immersed in EFL classrooms (Stoller, 2006).

1.3 Rationale

Project-Based Language Learning has emerged as a possible answer for today's educational needs and EFL problems due to its framework and positive results (Strauss, 2018). Therefore, various scholars throughout the time have studied the influence of PBLL on EFL classrooms. For example, some authors have analyzed the effects of PBLL on EFL learners´ attitude (Yuliani & Lengkanawat, 2017; Duman & Yavuz, 2018; Shin, 2018). All of these authors claimed that with the use of PBLL students developed an intrinsic

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motivation, interest, self- instruction, and self-management   when they planned, developed and presented projects.

Other authors have explored the effects of PBLL on English linguistic skills (Pinzón, 2014; Shafaei & Rahim, 2015; Farouck, 2016; Sirisrimangkorn, 2018; Alotaibi, 2020). They observed that through the use of PBLL, students construct their knowledge by integrating activities that directly influence their linguistic skills and sub-skills (listening, reading, writing, speaking and vocabulary).

On the other hand, Vaca and Gómez (2017) explained that EFL students have opportunities to produce natural conversations with their peers and teachers when they are exposed to the PBLL methodology. So it enhances oral communication which is sometimes neglected in classes.

Although most research about PBLL in EFL learning provides positive feedback about this methodology, Eyring & Beckett (as cited in Beckett, 2002) found that a significant number of the participants did not like to learn English through PBLL because it was time-consuming and they had too much work. The participants expressed that they prefer to learn English directly from teachers and textbooks. Additionally, Harmer (2007a) explained that some students from some contexts may be able to adapt themselves to this methodology because they tend to think that the teacher is the unique responsible for the EFL learning process. So, the author suggests that teachers should gradually involve students in the learning process through PBLL.

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Therefore, it is necessary to carry out this research work in order to understand the effects of the Project-Based Language Learning methodology on English Foreign Language classrooms and contribute to the field with valuable insights about this method.

1.5 Research Questions

- What are the most common teaching techniques in the application of Project-Based Language Learning in EFL classrooms?

- What are the reported effects of the application of Project-Based Language Learning on students´ English language skills?

- What are the effects of the application of Project-Based Language Learning on students´ attitudes towards English?

1.5. Objectives

1.5.1 General Objective

To understand the effects of the Project-Based Language Learning methodology on English Foreign Language classrooms.

1.5.2 Specific objectives

- To determine the most common teaching techniques of Project-Based Language Learning in EFL classrooms.

- To analyze the effects of Project-Based Language Learning on English language skills in FL classrooms.

- To analyze the influence of the Project-Based Language Learning on students' attitudes towards English.

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CHAPTER II: Theoretical Framework

This section reviews the theoretical foundations behind Project-based Language Learning methodology and English learning as a Foreign Language. Hence, this part is divided into 4 parts: 1. PBLL Theoretical foundations, 2. PBLL and English as a Foreign Language, 3. PBLL and English language skills, and 4. PBLL relation with EFL learners' attitudes.

2.1 PBLL Background and Theoretical Foundations

Since the 20s, projects have become a topic of discussion as a possible educational method. At first, William H. Kilpatrick (as cited in Fragoulis, 2009) published an essay that highlighted the importance of the application of The Project Method upon students' motivation, and active learning principles. Subsequently, more researchers and teachers got interested in this method due to its efficacy in guaranteeing students' active participation in various educational contexts, and in equipping learners with fundamental skills for 21st century colleges, jobs, and life (Larmer, Mergendoller & Boss, 2015). Nowadays, this method is known as *Project-Based Learning (PBL)*.

Around the mid-70s, PBL was introduced to second /foreign language learning contexts as a method that provided communicative spaces to produce comprehensible output in the foreign language. Additionally, PBL was considered as an alternative to change from teacher-center to student-centered model (Beckett, Slater & Mohan, 2020). Eventually, PBL modified its name to Project-Based *Language* Learning (PBLL).

The Active Learning Approach has a strong influence on PBLL. Active Learning is a constructivist approach that emphasizes the fact that students build up their understanding

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through activities that involve cognitive processes, high order skills, collaborative work, metacognitive strategies, different didactic resources, and real-life themes (Gogus, 2012; Dewey, 1938). Additionally, students develop self-directed learning while the teacher guides and provides both meaningful learning opportunities and learning strategies (Pardjono, 2002).

2.2 PBLL and the Process of Learning English as a Foreign Language

PBLL is the development of projects which are a series of organized tasks that aim to engage students in the learning of (foreign)language and content (Fried-Booth, 2002; Stoller, 2006). Beckett (1999) explains that students carry out different, group or individual, activities in a project such as planning, collecting empirical or document data, analyzing information, presenting products, and reflecting about the project. Additionally, the foreign language in PBLL is used as a resource to learn more about the language itself, content, and other skills. Moreover, technological tools and authentic settings are essential resources in PBLL to ease the process of learning (Saricaoglu & Geluso, 2020)

Some of the features of PBLL are the following. First, projects are carried out during a thematic unit and require extended periods of time (Franco & Potter, 2018, Buck Institute of Education, 2020b). Second, project themes are based on students' interests or real life issues (Stoller, 2002). Third, project work is collaborative rather than competitive (Stoller, 2002; Franco & Potter, 2018). Fourth, project work supports the authentic integration of language skills (Stoller, 2002; Harmer, 2007b).

Fifth, PBLL focuses on both the process and the product so students have opportunities to receive input and produce output (Fried-Booth, 2002; Stoller, 2006). Sixth,

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PBLL fosters the learning of language skills, content, and other skills such as creative and critical thinking, group management, collaborative skills, inquiry, project management, and digital literacy (Thomas, 2017). Besides, Projects in combination with technology resources such as applications, audio-visual tool, learning platforms, computed-mediated learning, online learning, and social networking sites tend to boost students' motivation, confidence and autonomy (Blumenfeld, et al., 1991; Stoller, 2002; Dressler, Raedler, Dimitrov, Dressler & Krause, 2020; Hong et al., 2020).

Since PBLL is flexible to the needs of learners and planning of teachers, projects are classified in different types (Stoller, 2002; Legutke & Thomas, 2013).

- *Structured*, *semi structured,* and *unstructured projects* refer to the level of autonomy of students to plan the project activities.
- *Research*, *text*, *class correspondence*, *survey*, and *encounter projects* refer to the ways of researching and collecting information
- *Production*, *organizational*, and *performance* projects refer to the way the information is presented.

2.2.1 PBLL stages

Legutke and Thomas (2013, pp. 169-201) developed a six-stage process for developing projects. They are the following.

1. *Opening*: Students socialize with classmates, and teachers introduce the method, technological tools, and content resources. This stage is sometimes omitted in the projects.

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2. *Topic orientation*: Students recall previous knowledge and increase their interest in the project theme. The teacher provides prompts about the general topic like real pictures, questions, invited guests, songs, etc. Based on the prompt, students have to discuss, brainstorm and reflect in groups about the topic.

3. *Research and data collection:* Students plan the required activities and necessary resources to accomplish the project. Likewise, students gather information from written or audiovisual resources, and field research.

4. *Preparation of data presentation:* Students focus on preparing the final presentation of the project by editing drafts, providing peer feedback, rehearsing a performance, creating media aids, and adding details to a physical product.

5. *Presentation:* Students present the results or product to an internal audience such as their classmates, teacher, school community and parents, or to an external audience such as other schools, and community members.

6. *Evaluation:* Learners evaluate their own, teacher, and classmates' performance, methodology, resources, and language improvements or deficiencies. Evaluation is done through group discussions, questionnaires, and reports.

    Fried-Both (2002) and Becket (2006) suggest that evaluation must be done constantly during the development of projects. For instance, they recommended carrying out a short evaluation every week to identify and solve problems at the right time.

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Stoller and Alan (2005) present a 10-step PBLL process which has a similar structure to the aforementioned process. However, the authors include that teachers must plan scaffolding activities before students work autonomously in stages three, four and five. The purpose of scaffolding activities is to provide students with a language, content, technology or learning strategies knowledge before students work autonomously.

2.3 PBLL and English Language skills

Language skills refer to both the receptive skills, listening and reading, and productive skills, speaking and writing. Since PBLL focuses on providing authentic and meaningful communication to students, the four skills are learned in integration (Harmer, 2007b; Nguyen, 2011). Additionally, PBLL provides practice of the four skills through collaborative and inquiry tasks (Kuo, Sutton, Wright & Miller, 2020).

2.3.1 Receptive Skills

Although listening and reading were considered secondary skills during a few decades, both of them have gained importance in the research field, nowadays. In fact, evidence has demonstrated that input, especially comprehensible input, is beneficial for EFL learners. Thus, PBLL is used in language learning settings because it provides opportunities to interchange comprehensible input and output among peers, or with native speakers (Brown, 2001; Beckett et al., 2020)

Listening skills help people to understand oral linguistic data before they produce any kind of language. Listening comprehension in students is analyzed through the mastering of different micro skills such as "bottom-up and top-down processing skills" (Brown, 2001, p.260). Thus, bottom-up skills are related to comprehension of sounds, stress, words, grammatical constructions, and so forth. While top-down listening skills

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focus on general understanding and interpreting texts. Brown (2001) states that interactive listening allows the development of bottom-up and top-down listening skills. PBLL fosters mainly interactive listening since students are involved in activities such as "discussions, debates, conversations, role-plays, and other pair/group work" (Brown, 2001, p.258). Additionally, interactive listening brings together other language skills, for instance speaking skills (Brown, 2001; Nguyen, 2011).

Reading skills help people to understand written linguistic data before they produce output. Likewise, Brown (2001) mentions that reading comprehension is evaluated through the mastering of bottom-up and top-down reading skills. Thus, bottom-up reading skills refer to language signals such as morphemes, words, phrases and sentences; while top-down reading skills denote the meaning and purpose of texts. Brown (2001) states that the combination of both processes, which is called interactive reading, is present in everyday reading actions; subsequently, both processes are important while developing reading skills in a classroom. In PBLL, interactive reading is practiced through the search and selection of appropriate information for the development of the final work (Andriansah, Fitriyani & Fadloeli, 2019). Additionally, Barr and Chinwonno (2016) explain that teachers and peers provide scaffolding about reading strategies in order to guarantee a deeper understanding.

2.3.2 Productive Skills

Speaking skills allow people to produce output in a given language. Regarding speaking skills, EFL learners find four complex factors to master. First, students need to develop linguistic speaking components such as fluency, grammar, vocabulary, pronunciation, stress, and intonation. Second, students have to understand and use other skills such as reading or listening before they produce a text orally. Third, students have to

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know how verbal and non-verbal language varies from one sociocultural context to other ones. Last, students have to overcome anxiety and other negative emotions that come up when they speak in a foreign language (Brown, 2001; Kang, 2002). Kang (2002) states that constant and meaningful interaction causes students to understand and practice the aforementioned speaking factors. Indeed, Dewi (2016) describes that PBLL method provides opportunities for developing the speaking skill. For instance, learners interact with their peers or other social groups when they have to collect, discuss, and analyze information. Likewise, learners can foster their speaking skill when they have to rehearse and present certain information to an audience.

Writing skills allow people to produce output in the English language. Writing requires students to follow common steps such as pre-writing, drafting, revising, and editing (Brown, 2001; Richards & Renandya, 2002). Moreover, some writing components that learners need to develop are mechanics, for example spelling, punctuation, capitalization, accuracy on grammar, a writing style, cohesion, coherence, and clarity (Broughton, Brumfit, Flavell, Hill, & Pincas, 1980). Brown (2001) and Harmer (2007b) explain that students develop writing skills through individual and collaborative writing. Hong et al. (2020) states that PBLL provides students with writing practice when they have to write a review about the final product and its development on the product and process by analyzing ideas, revising, and providing feedback.

2.4 PBLL and EFL students' attitudes

Smith (1971) and Brown (2001) explain that attitudes are groups of learned beliefs and emotions about a thing or situation that end up in a determined behavior. First, attitudes begin in the cognitive component in which individuals recognize and create thoughts about a determined thing or situation. Subsequently, in the affective component, thoughts become

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emotions and feelings by evaluating a situation as good or bad. Finally, in the behavioral component, feelings and emotions are expressed through one's actions.

Smith (1971) and Elyildirim and Ashton (2006) state that students have either positive, negative, or neutral attitudes about English in the classroom, but that (negative attitudes limit the learning of a foreign language. Indeed, teachers should look for strategies or plan situations to transform the negative attitudes into positive ones.

Additionally, Krashen (1982) indicates that students with low motivation and self-esteem, or high anxiety levels are more likely to fail in the acquisition of a second/foreign language. Subsequently, PBLL has proved to be a good method to positively influence students' attitudes towards learning English because it lowers students' anxiety to communicate in English through collaborative work and ongoing comprehensible input among classmates and teachers (Martin, 2020; Saricaoglu & Geluso, 2020). Moreover, Thomas (2017) and Hong et al. (2020) agree that students' motivation and engagement is improved when PBLL activities integrate technology.

Although PBLL supports the emotional development of students, it is not always helpful for everyone. For instance, some learners are not used to working in groups. Therefore, Krajcik and Blumenfeld (2005) state that teachers should assist learners to develop collaborative skills such as "turn-taking, listening, and respect for others' opinions" (p.325).

In this chapter, definitions and theories related to PBLL were covered to understand the following chapters of this research synthesis.

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CHAPTER III: Literature Review

The following section makes a review of the literature about the application and effects of PBLL upon EFL classrooms. Particularly, the selected empirical works were divided into three groups: research with focus on common teaching techniques of the application of PBLL method, studies with emphasis on the effects of PBLL method upon language skills, and investigations that enlighten the effects of PBLL on students' attitudes towards English.

3.1 Common teaching techniques in the application of PBLL in the EFL classroom

From the past literature, it was found that six types of projects were applied in PBLL methodology. Thus, there were encounter projects, text projects, class performance projects, information and research projects, survey projects, and performance – organizational projects (Stoller, 2002; Legutke & Thomas, 2013).

Sa'diyah and Cahyono (2019), and Syarifah and Emiliasari (2019) used text projects to enhance writing skills. The target tasks were to write two argumentative essays on blogs (Sa'diyah & Cahyono, 2019) and to create a narrative story (Syarafah & Emiliasari, 2019). The projects from this category made a flexible use of the six project stages proposed by Legutke and Thomas (2013). For instance, both research studies omitted the opening stage. In the stage of topic orientation, there were two main activities, teachers provided examples and explanations regarding the kind of text and technological tools (Sa'diyah & Cahyono, 2019), and teachers discussed with students to define the target task and theme. In the third stage, namely, research and data collection, students worked more autonomously, so they developed activities in groups of 2 or 3 members, such as planning the task schedule, writing an outline, collecting information, writing, group and teacher

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revising, editing, and designing illustrations. The fourth stage of preparing data presentation was omitted in Sa'diyah and Cahyono (2019). However, in the presentation stage, the students showed their blog to other learners to receive their feedback. While in Syarifah and Emiliasari (2019), students used all of the stories to form a children's book in the fourth stage. Then they presented the final book to primary students. In both studies, participants expressed that collaborative work eased the process of drafting and editing the texts.

Marwan (2015), Shin (2018), and Sapan, Siti Katijan, Zulhaimi, Abdul Hamid, and Ramli (2019) conducted *performance- organizational projects* that involved role plays as target tasks in order to foster communication skills and motivation. The participants in all of the previous studies were university students. Marwan (2015) worked with three different projects in the same study, and in one of them, participants in small groups had to role play a topic related to family, friendship, educational and occupational issues for three weeks. Shin (2018) made the participants perform a virtual international job interview for 3 weeks, and Sapan et al (2019) carried out the project in which the participants role-played the presentation of a new service or product for a company.

In the opening stage, the authors of the three studies did not report any activity. However, in the topic stage, Marwan (2015) used group discussions for selecting a topic from a premade list. Shin (2018) applied teachers' explanations about PBLL, and Sapan et al (2019) did not report any activity. In the research and data collection stage, the authors of the three studies applied techniques such as searching information on the Internet, group discussions, writing and editing scripts, rehearsing, and role playing. In preparing the data presentation stage, Marwan and Shin asked students to record a video of the role play in

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order to reinforce their motivation. Sapan et al. (2019) did not provide information of the activities the participants developed at this stage.

In the presentation stage, Marwan (2015) and Shin (2018) made students develop two video presentations, and Sapan et al (2019) had students perform a live role-play. Finally, at the evaluation stage, only Shin (2018) applied written peer assessment, and group discussions. The results of the three studies demonstrated that the participants expressed that the overall performance projects helped them develop communicative skills. Furthermore, Marwan (2015) and Sapan et al (2019) proved that individual and group rehearsals allowed students to improve different speaking components such as pronunciation, vocabulary, and fluency. Shin (2018) advocated that the technique to video record the role play had positive effects on students' motivation.

Yoshitomi (2012) and Pinzón (2014) worked with *information and research projects*. The target tasks were to research and gather information about specific topics such as speech acts (Yoshitomi, 2012), and solutions for a school problem (Pinzon, 2014). Both authors omitted the opening stage in the project intervention.

Yoshitomi (2012) worked on the project with university students for 15 weeks. In the topic orientation stage, the author employed techniques such as explaining key terms, reading, summarizing, and leading group discussions of articles to introduce speech acts to the students. The author also used videos to provide students with examples of speech acts. In the data collection and analysis stage, Yoshitomi (2012) had students develop a literary review, gather, and examine visual examples from authentic English-speaking TV programs, formulate a research question, write and carry out interviews with English high proficiency Japanese people and native English speakers, analyze the collected data, and

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finally write a report. In the preparing data presentation stage, students created and rehearsed PowerPoint Presentations (PPT) and in the presentation stage they taught speech acts to their class peers. Yoshitomi (2012) finished the intervention with a written self and peer assessment as part of the evaluation stage.

Likewise, Pinzón (2014) worked with middle school students for 6 weeks. In the topic orientation stage, the author conducted group discussions to identify students' problems affecting school. After that, the groups shared the problems with the class. Then students chose one problem from the list which referred to the wasting of fruits by students. In the same way, students suggested finding information and socializing about the importance of fruits for health as a solution for the problem. Thus, in the research and data collection stage, Pinzón (2014) made the participants focus on gathering texts and images from the Internet. In the preparing data presentation stage, the students applied techniques such as the creation and rehearsals of PowerPoint Presentations (PPT). Additionally, Pinzón (2014) asked students to develop flash cards with main vocabulary. In the presentation stage, the participants explained to the whole school community about the importance of fruits. At the end of the project intervention, Pinzón (2014) did not report any activity related to the evaluation stage.

Overall, Yoshitomi (2012) and Pinzón (2014) studies reported positive effects of PBLL. For instance, Yoshitomi (2012) advocated that all four language skills, content domain, collaborative work, and critical thinking were developed through the different stages of the projects Pinzón (2014) expressed that the participants' confidence to talk and recall vocabulary improved autonomous research, information gathering, and presentation rehearsals they carried out in the project.

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In the same manner, Vaca and Gómez (2017) carried out a study in which they applied 3 *survey projects* with middle school Colombian students for 9 weeks. The three target tasks of the projects were to carry out personal information interviews with classmates, school problems surveys with the school community, and community problems interviews with the local citizens. In this study, the opening stage was not reported. In the topic orientation stage, the teacher provided examples and explanations about interviews, shared videos about school problems, and applied a memory game about neighborhood places. In the data collection and analysis stage, students did group discussion, wrote questions for the interviews and surveys, and rehearsed and carried out the interviews and surveys. In the presentation stage, students had to write reports based on the collected data. Finally, they gave oral reports from 2 to 3 minutes to the teacher. In the evaluation stage, there were self-assessment, peer-assessment, and teacher assessment. Participants reported that survey projects allowed them to have real speaking practice and know better their surroundings.

Barr and Chinwonno (2020) conducted an *encounter project* to improve reading skills, and intercultural communication. The target task was to interview people from other countries using English. The opening stage was not reported. In the topic orientation stage, the teacher explained about reading strategies, applied games, and shared video clips related to different cultures. In the data collection and analysis stage, students had to read for comprehension, complete multiple choice questions, and gather data about their selected topic and culture. Then students joined in groups to formulate questions for the interview. In the presentation stage, students shared their experience and results from the

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interview. Participants expressed that the reading activities and the interview gave them confidence to communicate using English.

In another study, Marwan (2015) developed *a class correspondence project* with tertiary Indonesian students. The target task of this project was to write emails to international universities asking for information about their educational offers. The author worked with university students in small groups. Marwan (2015) omitted opening stage activities. In the topic orientation stage, the students were involved in group discussions and web searching to select the university. In the research and data collection stage, students wrote, and edited the email draft based on their teacher's suggestions in groups. Then they sent the email to the chosen university, and finally, every group received a response. In the presentation stage, students presented to their classmates both their emails and the responses. The participants were satisfied with the class correspondence project because it allowed them to communicate with an English-speaking community using alternative mediums such as emailing.

3.2 Effects of PBLL Method upon English Language Skills

The effects of PBLL upon English language skills have received a popular focus in the gathered literature. Thus, this part analyzes the effects of PBLL upon the four main language skills which are listening, reading, speaking and writing.

In EFL contexts, Zhang (2015) and Abu, Noordin, and Razali (2019) identified that students did not develop communicative skills properly due to the inefficacy of teaching methods. As a consequence, both authors carried out research studies to examine the efficacy of PBLL method to enhance principally speaking and listening skills. For example, Zhang (2015) conducted qualitative research with Chinese college students for 10 weeks.

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The author observed that learners could practice their English language skills, especially listening and speaking, through in-class and after- class activities. At the end of the course, students expressed through questionnaires that they perceive improvements in all the English language skills and subskills. Likewise, Abu et al., (2019) explored PBLL through a quasi-experimental research design with Malaysian university students. The study lasted 16 weeks, of which 12 weeks corresponded to the intervention part. Participants were divided in control and experimental groups. The pre- and post- test demonstrated that students from the experimental group had greater improvement in speaking and listening skills after the application of PBLL. This positive result is supported by questionnaires in which students expressed that their oral communication has improved, too.

Barr and Chinwonno (2016), and Yimwilai (2020) acknowledged that learners in Thailand had troubles in developing English reading skills due to the lack of reading habits, and inadequate teaching methods. Thus, the authors conducted mixed-method studies to explore the effects of PBLL on the development of English reading skills of university students.

Barr and Chinwonno (2016) conducted a semi-experimental research study for 14 weeks with tertiary students. This study aimed to foster English reading skills, and Intercultural Communicative Competence through the application of PBLL with intercultural reading materials from English speaking countries, non-English speaking countries, and Thai culture. The comparison between pre-tests and post-tests demonstrated that participants improved in reading, and intercultural communicative skills. These results were confirmed by questionnaire responses which reported positive comments of students about PBLL and the effects on their language skills.

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Yimwilai (2020) confirmed the previous results with a mixed-method study that was conducted with tertiary students. The author used experimental and control groups. After a comparison of the pre-tests and post-tests results between the experimental and control groups, and an analysis of the questionnaires applied to each group, the author found that PBLL enhanced reading skills. Additionally, Yimwilai (2020) demonstrated that PBLL excelled among traditional teaching methods.

Maulany (2013), Vaca and Gómez (2017), Sirisrimarkorn (2018), and Yacoman and Diaz (2019) identified that in EFL contexts, speaking skills were neglected due to the lack of situations where students could use English. Therefore, these scholars conducted studies to explore the efficacy of PBLL in providing opportunities in which English learners would practice their speaking skills. For instance, Sirisrimangkorn (2018) carried out a mixed-method research study with university students. The project consisted in planning, rehearsing, and performing a drama. The author applied pre and post-tests to quantify the improvement of the speaking skills. Additionally, participants advocated that PBLL help them to get fluent and confident in verbal and non-verbal communication.

For their part, Vaca and Gómez (2017) implemented a qualitative study in Colombian middle school students. In the interviews, students reported that they were motivated and confident to use English in class. Additionally, students advocated that their English vocabulary increased through peer and teacher support. Likewise, Maulany (2013) conducted a two-cycle action research with Indonesian elementary students. The instruments were one pre-test, and 1 posttest after each cycle. The author found out that speaking skill components; namely, comprehension, vocabulary, grammar, fluency, and pronunciation were enhanced after PBLL application.

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Although the aforementioned authors supported that PBLL provides opportunities to practice and benefits the development of the English speaking skill, Yacoman and Diaz (2019) determined that students used limited English when they had speaking opportunities. Therefore, Yacoman and Diaz (2019) conducted a qualitative empirical study with Chilean middle school students to know the frequency of English and Spanish usage during the development of projects. Researchers used audio recordings of the classes to gather information. Among the findings, it was determined that learners frequently employed English language in simple phrases like yes/no questions and short answers. On the other hand, learners use Spanish to communicate complex texts like WH-questions and opinions. Additionally, the researcher noted that learners preferred to use Spanish instead of English language when the teacher was not around the group.

Sa'diyah and Cahyono (2019), Ruengkul and Wasanasomsithi (2020), and Thitivesa (2014) suggested that PBLL was a method that guarantees the development of writing skills. Indeed, Sa'diyah and Cahyono (2019) conducted a quasi-experimental research with Indonesian university learners. The participants were divided into control and experimental groups. The findings showed that the experimental group had significantly higher scores in the writing post-tests than the control group.

Similar results were reported by Ruenkul and Wasanasomsithi (2020) who conducted a mixed-method research study with undergraduate Thai students. The study aimed to investigate the PBLL effects on the composition of procedural, descriptive, narrative, and persuasive paragraphs. After comparing the pre and posttests, researchers verified that students significantly improved their scores in writing. Likewise, Thitivesa (2014) carried out a quantitative research study to evaluate writing components such as

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mechanics, usage, and sentence structure in a review article. The author received twice the learners' work to provide suggestions and analyze the development of the three aforementioned writing components. In the results, the three components improved although mechanics and usage had higher scores in the posttest.

3.3 PBLL effects on students' attitudes towards English

Students experienced changes in their attitudes and motivations towards their English learning after the application of PBLL in EFL classrooms. Thus, the literature in this section was analyzed based on different aspects that caused either positive or negative attitudes in EFL students. The following information was gathered through questionnaires and interviews.

Students had positive attitudes towards the challenging and meaningful tasks that PBLL provided them in EFL classrooms. On one hand, Sirisrimangkorn (2018), Pinzón (2014), and Vaca and Gómez (2017) advocated participants had positive attitudes towards PBLL because it challenged them to overcome fear of public speaking through constant rehearsals and presentations in class. On the other hand, Tabaku and Ecirli (2014), Ruengkul and Wasanasomsithi (2020), and Zhang (2015) expressed that their participants were interested in English because project tasks had real purposes, and that they were varied. For example, Tabaku and Ecirli (2014) stated that the participants in their study felt motivated to complete listening and reading activities because these activities were useful to complete future activities in the project. Ruengkul & Wasanasomsithi (2020) observed that students felt interested in writing activities because learners had to present a booklet or brochure instead of a simple paragraph. Likewise, Zhang (2015) affirmed that students

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were enthusiastic to work with PBLL on different tasks like making and conducting surveys rather than the traditional textbooks activities.

Students expressed positive attitudes towards the connection of real-life relevance and EFL learning in PBLL. Marwan (2015) carried out interviews in which students expressed they had a positive experience with PBLL that motivated them to develop international communications via email even after the implementation has finished. Likewise, Shin (2018) and Sapan et al. (2019) expressed that the simulation projects significantly helped students to understand job related settings that required the use of English. Additionally, Vaca and Gómez (2017) explained that students were happy to learn at the same time about their community and English language.

Students had positive thoughts towards the opportunities that PBLL provided them to improve the language either for short or long term. For example, Sapan et al (2019), Tabaku and Ecirli (2014), and Barr and Chinwonno (2016) explained that students were engaged in learning English because PBLL provided them opportunities to improve their productive, receptive, and other language skills. Additionally, Syriafah and Emiliasari (2019), and Marwan (2015) explained that some students had the desire to continue learning about the English language in the future after PBLL intervention.

Some researchers found out that students enjoyed learning English through collaborative work. Participants exposed that it was joyful to work with close people. Sapan et al (2019) and Vaca and Gómez (2017) stated that learners had positive attitudes towards working groups because each member helped them improve linguistic and affective weaknesses. Likewise, Ruengkul & Wasanasomsithi (2020) advocated that students

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appreciated when they work in groups because they were more responsible for their individual tasks and they work based on their preferences.

Although most students had positive attitudes towards the connection of learning English and PBLL, some negative attitudes were identified. For example, collaborative work was a challenge for some students. Indeed, Yuliani and Lengkanawat (2017), Yimwilai (2020) reported that some students did not know how to use their autonomy, and they preferred to do nothing. On the contrary, Zhang (2015) noticed that some students prefer to do most of the job by themselves. Moreover, Zhang (2015) stated that some students were not comfortable with the new role of the teacher of being a guide, observer, and monitor. Additionally, Tabaku and Ecirli (2014), Zhang (2015), and Ruengkul & Wasanasomsithi (2020) reported that some students thought PBLL was time consuming.

This chapter explained the research and discussions regarding PBLL in the last years. The following chapter will cover the methodology used in the present work.

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CHAPTER IV: Research Methodology

The present work involved a research synthesis to understand the effects of Project-Based Language Learning methodology on English as a Foreign Language classrooms. A research synthesis broadens the understanding about a certain topic through the description of theories, analysis of empirical research, and reflection of possible gaps for future research (Cooper & Hedges, 1994).

In order to obtain suitable information to carry out this research synthesis, a broad search was carried out. The information was gathered through online databases such as Taylor & Francis, Science Direct, EBSCO, ResearchGate and Google Scholar. Moreover, various educational journals such as *Canadian Social Sciences, English Language Teaching, English Teaching, Indonesian Journal of Applied Linguistics, Journal of Education and Practice, and Journal of English and Education* were useful alternatives to find articles for this work. The keywords used for searching were: 1. Project-Based Learning 2. Project-Based Language Learning.3. Collaborative work 4. Active Learning 5. EFL classrooms.

The studies were selected according to the following inclusion criteria: First, the articles had to be empirical works. Second, the studies must be peer-reviewed publications to guarantee the accuracy of the results in the research synthesis. Third, the studies must have been published in the last 10 years to have enough articles for the analysis. Fourth, the design methods of the studies were either quantitative, qualitative or mixed methods to have varied results for the proposed research questions of this work. Finally, studies were chosen based on the following categories: PBLL and its teaching techniques; PBLL effects

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on the four English skills; and PBLL effects on student´s attitudes or motivation towards

English language.

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CHAPTER V: Data Analysis

The current research synthesis analyzes 25 empirical studies to achieve the proposed objectives. This part is divided into three sections based on the 3 research questions: what the most common PBLL Teaching Techniques are, what the PBLL effects on English Language Skills are, and what the PBLL effects on students' attitudes towards English are.

5.2 PBLL Most Common Teaching Techniques

This section intends to answer the first research question regarding the most common teaching techniques in the application of PBLL in EFL classrooms. First, the interventions of 21 studies provided qualitative data about teaching techniques for the analysis. Then the data was organized into a preliminary table (**Appendix 2. Complete list of PBLL teaching techniques**). After the information was compared, it was narrowed into five categories since the list of PBLL teaching techniques was too broad to analyze. The teaching techniques categories are shown in figure 1.

Figure 1

Teaching Techniques
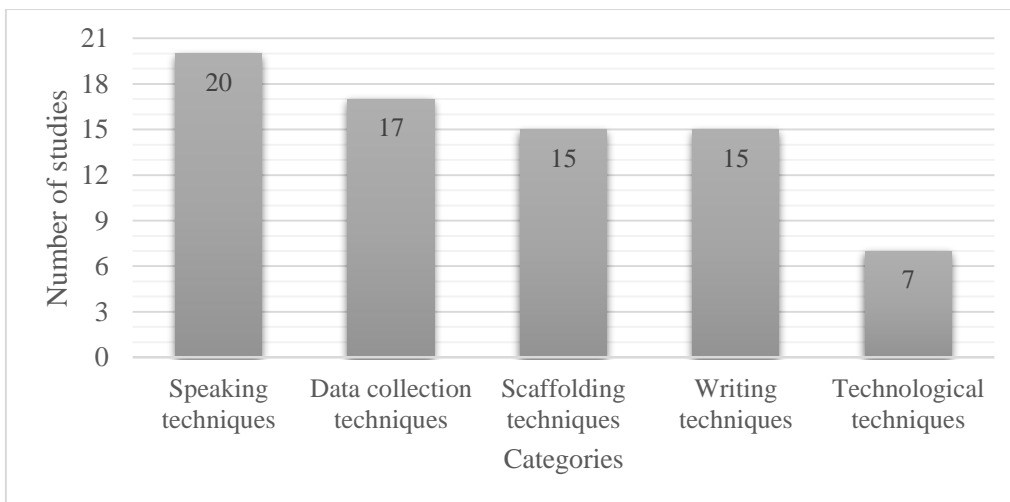
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Figure 1. Most common PBLL teaching techniques in PBLL.

Note. Some studies are used in more than one category

Figure 1 shows that 20 studies used *speaking techniques which were* the most common category in all PBLL stages since students developed the projects in groups (Vaca & Gómez, 2017; Abu et al., 2019; Sa'diyah & Cahyono, 2019). Next, seventeen studies applied data collection techniques to gather audiovisual or textual information and foster mainly reading and listening skills (Yoshitomi, 2012; Marwan, 2015; Barr & Chinwonno, 2016). Afterward, fifteen studies reported that scaffolding techniques were applied in different stages to strengthen language and content knowledge (Barr & Chinwonno, 2016; Vaca & Gómez, 2017; Yacoman & Diaz, 2019). Finally, seven studies applied technological techniques to motivate and engage students in the development and presentation of the projects (Marwan, 2015; Shin, 2018; Sa'diyah & Cahyono, 2019). Additionally, the 5 aforementioned categories were analyzed and divided into subcategories.

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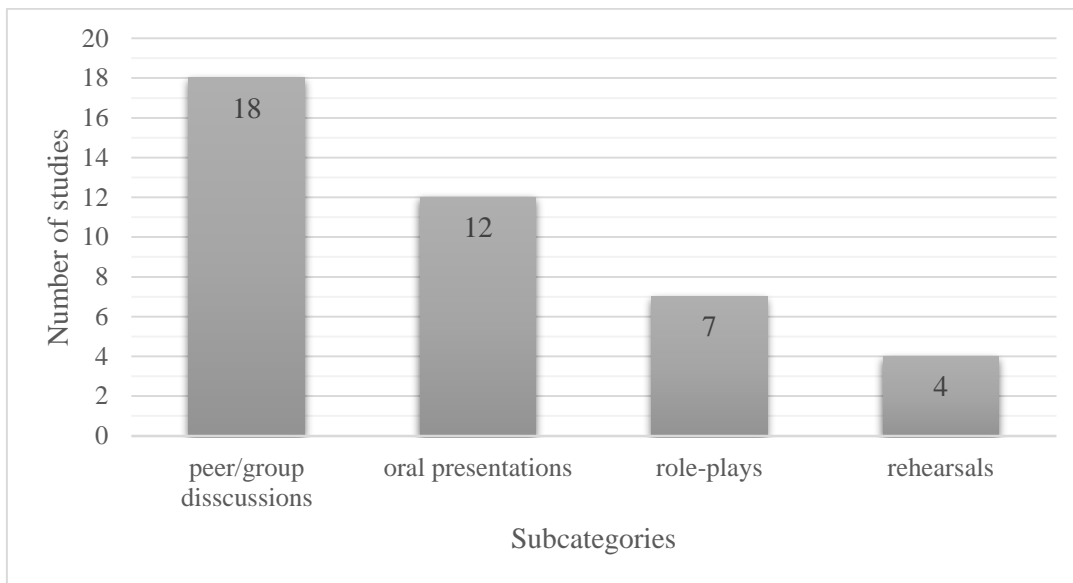
Figure 2

Speaking Techniques

Figure 2. Most Common Speaking Techniques

Note. Some studies are used in more than one category

Figure 2 illustrates that 18 articles found that the *peer/ group discussions technique*

was the most common in this category. Teachers applied this technique in all stages since

students kept an ongoing communication throughout the project (Vaca & Gómez, 2017). In

fact, authors had students develop the projects in groups which presented various

opportunities for practicing English communication, learning about the language, and

gaining confidence in speaking (Marwan, 2015; Sirisrimarkorn, 2018; Abu et al., 2019).

Additionally, group discussions were held by students to plan the project activities, select

project topics, provide peer feedback, analyze information, and organize the presentation of

the project (Yoshitomi, 2012; Barr & Chinwonno, 2016; Kovalyova et al., 2016; Aghayani

& Hajmohamadi, 2019; Sapan et al., 2019).

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Twelve studies applied *oral presentations* in the last stages where students presented in groups the results of the projects (Pinzón, 2014; Tabaku & Ecirli, 2014; Kovalyova at al., 2016; Vaca & Gómez, 2017; Abu et al., 2019). Yoshitomi (2012) and Marwan (2015) explained that oral presentations kept a constant interaction between the audience and the moderator group.

Seven studies *applied role-plays* to foster English communication in meaningful social contexts. Tertiary students role-played themes meaningful for their professional life such as applying for a job, applying for international scholarships, presenting new products in a company and performing a masterpiece story (Marwan, 2015; Barr & Chinwonno, 2016; Marisah & Robiasih, 2017; Yuliani & Lengkanawat, 2017; Sapan et al., 2019; Shin, 2018; Sirimangkorn, 2018).

Additionally, four articles used *rehearsals* as supportive techniques for the success of oral presentations and role-plays. Thus, various authors suggested that *rehearsals* allowed students to foster confidence, vocabulary, fluency, pronunciation, and organization (Pinzón, 2014; Vaca & Gómez, 2017; Yuliani & Lengkanawat, 2017; Sirisrimangkorn, 2018).

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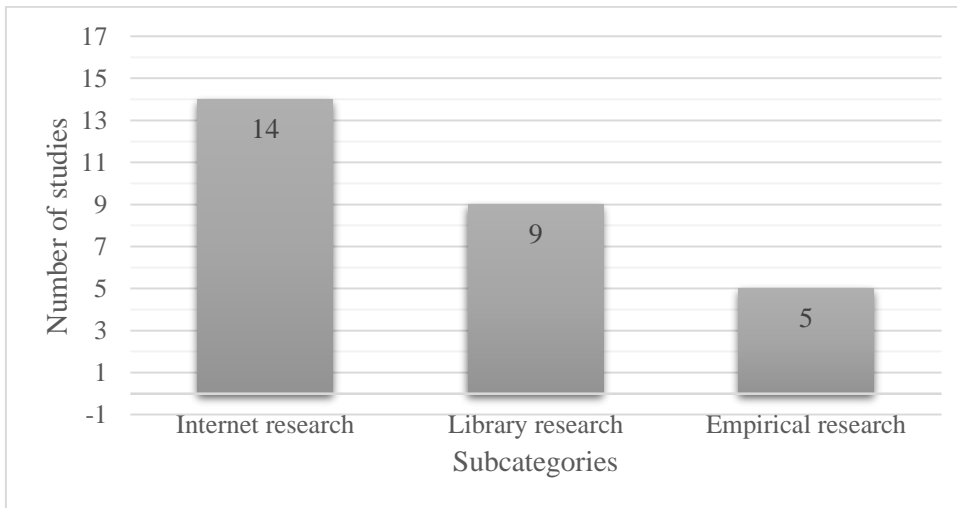
Figure 3

Data Collection Techniques

Figure 3. Most Common Data Collection Techniques

Note. Some studies are used in more than one category.

Figure 3 illustrates 14 studies reported that *Internet research was* the most common data collection technique. Internet research was a popular technique due to the easy access and broad textual or audiovisual information for the project (Pinzón, 2014; Sapan et al, 2019; Shin, 2018; Tabaku & Ecirli, 2014). Marwan (2015) stated that students developed their reading and listening skills when they carried on research on the Internet.

Nine studies reported the use of *library research* which was combined with *Internet research*. Usually, students applied library research to gather theoretical information for the project while internet research provided examples, pictures, videos or any other supporting information (Yimwilai, 2020; Barr & Chinwonno, 2016; Kovalyova et al., 2020; Yoshitomi, 2012)

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Field research was the less common data collection technique. Indeed, 5 studies reported that students planned and carried out surveys and interviews to gather information from other people. This technique aimed to collect empirical data and foster oral communication skills (Vaca & Gómez, 2017 Barr & Chinwonno, 2016; Yacoman & Diaz, 2016; Yoshitomi, 2012; Zhang, 2015).

Figure 4

Scaffolding Techniques
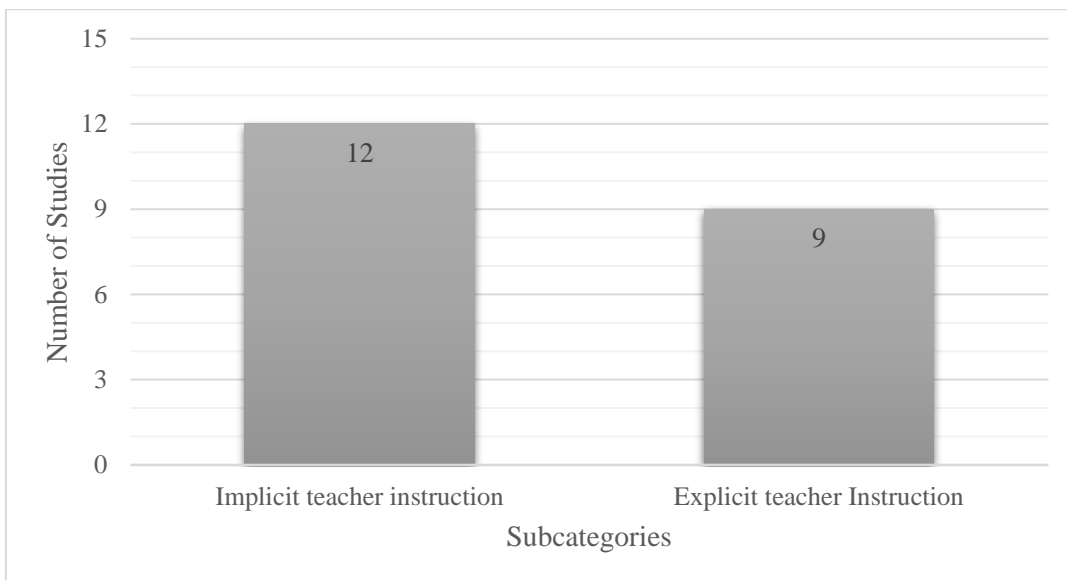
Figure 4. Most Common Scaffolding Techniques

Note. Some studies are used in more than one category

Figure 4 shows that 12 studies applied *implicit teacher instruction* as the most common scaffolding technique. The studies reported that implicit teacher instruction involved small activities that focus on developing linguistic, cognitive, social, emotional, and other skills before students carry on autonomous activities (Kovalyova et al., 2016; Barr & Chinwonno, 2016; Abu et al., 2019; Vaca & Gómez, 2017; Yacoman & Diaz, 2019; Marwan, 2015).

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Finally, 9 studies reported that *explicit teacher instruction* was mainly used to introduce PBLL methodology to the participants (Shin 2018; Yimwilai, 2020; Zhang, 2015; Vaca & Gómez, 2017; Kovalyova et al., 2016). Other authors used explicit teacher instruction to explain the language or project content (Barr & Chinwonno, 2016; Sa'diyah & Cahyono, 2019). Additionally, two studies applied *explicit teacher instruction* when teachers met each small group to check the project development (Ruengkul & Wasanasomsithi, 2020; Barr & Chinwonno, 2016)

Figure 5

Writing Techniques
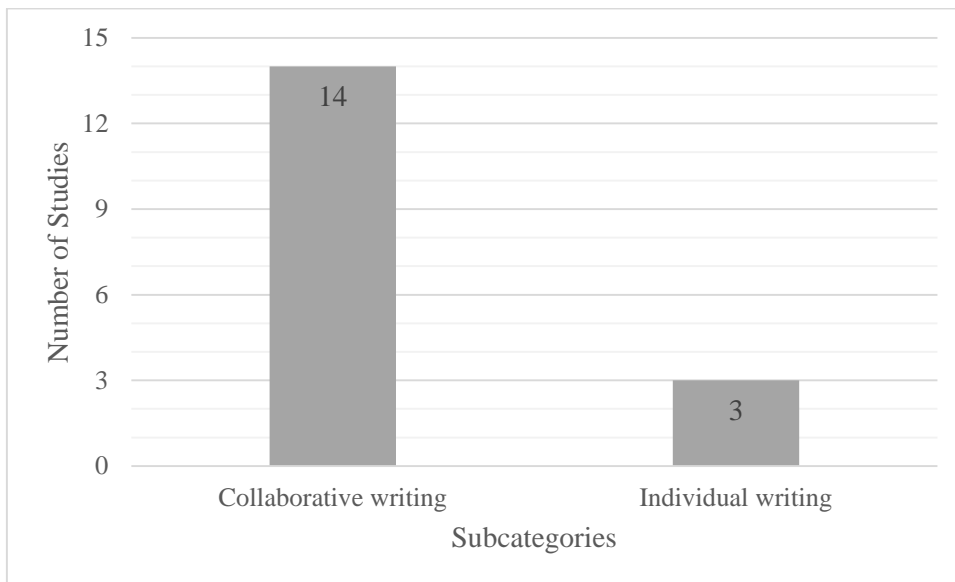
Figure 5. Most Common Writing Techniques

Note. Some studies are used in more than one category

Figure 5 highlights that 14 studies indicated that *collaborative writing* was the most common writing technique. Small groups of students got involved in writing processes where they had to brainstorm topics, outline, write drafts, evaluate, and present the final text (Aghayani & Hajmohammadi, 2019; Ruengkul & Wasanasomsithi, 2020). Writing in

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groups strengthened creativity, peer- evaluation, confidence, and quality of the product (Syarifah & Emiliasari, 2019; Sa'diyah & Cahyono, 2019; Marwan, 2015, Sirisrimangkorn, 2018)

Additionally, other authors such Barr and Chinwonno (2016), and Yoshitomi (2012) applied *individual writing* to foster individual research before joining the groups' discussions. Only Kovalyova et al. (2016) have students work individually in the whole writing process.

Figure 6

Technological Techniques
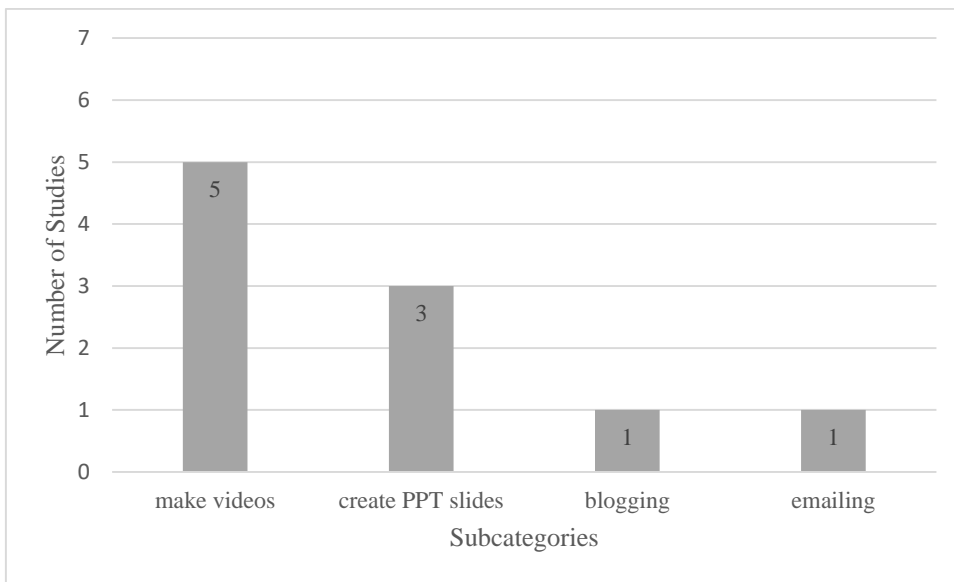
Figure 6. Most Common Technological Techniques

Note. Some studies are used in more than one category.

Figure 6 shows that five studies applied *recording videos* which were the most common technological technique to present the final product (Marwan, 2015; Kovalyova et al., 2016; Shin, 2018; Yacoman & Diaz, 2019). The other 3 studies had students *create PPT slides* to present the information (Tabaku & Ecirli, 2014; Pinzón, 2014). Additionally,

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one study applied *blogging* to motivate students to write (Sa'diyah & Cahyono, 2019). Finally, one study used *emailing* as a technique to communicate with English native speakers (Marwan, 2015).

5.2. Effects of PBLL on English Language Skills

This section aims to answer the second research question regarding the reported effects of the application of PBLL on students´ English language skills. Twenty-one articles were selected for the analysis of this section. The results are displayed in Figure 7.

Figure 7

PBLL and English Language Skills
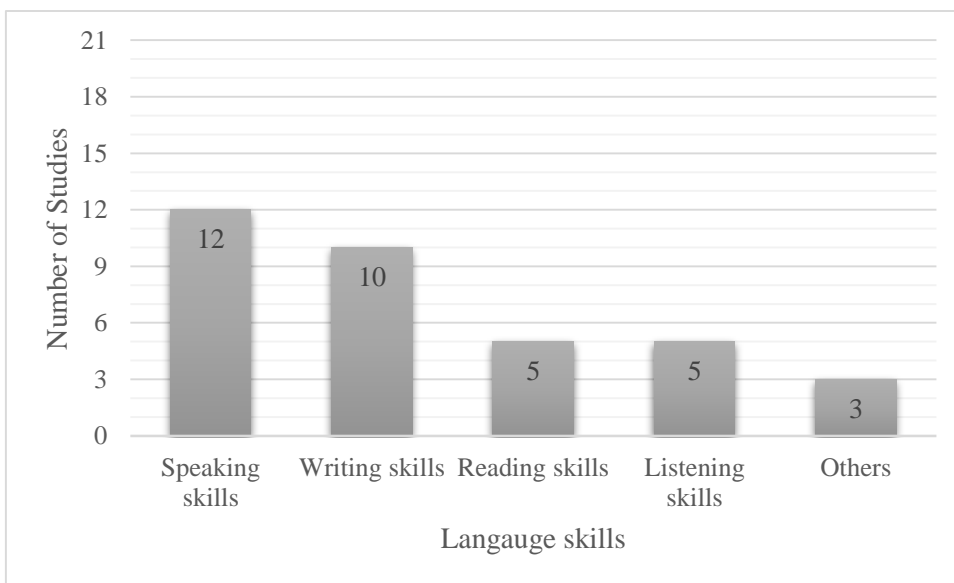
Figure 7. PBLL application and effects on English language skills.

Note. Some studies are used in more than one category.

Figure 7 shows that 12 studies focused on the effects of PBLL on English *speaking skills*. Students improved their speaking skills due to the diverse and authentic communicative opportunities found in PBLL projects (Marwan, 2015; Sapan et al, 2019; Sirisrimangkorn, 2018; Zhang, 2015).

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Specifically, some authors found that PBLL helped students increase their vocabulary in oral communication (Maulany, 2013; Pinzón, 2015; Kovalyova et al., 2016; Vaca & Gómez, 2017; Marisah & Robiasah, 2017; Abu et al., 2019). Additionally, 6 studies reported PBLL fosters students' confidence to speak English in social contexts (Abu et al., 2019; Pinzón, 2014; Kovalyova., 2016; Sirisrimangkorn, 2018; Vaca & Gómez, 2017, Zhang, 2015). Likewise, Maulany (2013), Marisah and Robiasih (2017), and Sapan et al. (2019) stated that PBLL developed English pronunciation Finally, 3 studies reported that grammar and fluency were also improved after the application of (Maulany & Robiasih, 2017; Maulany, 2013; Kovalyova et al., 2016).

Regarding writing skills, 10 studies reported some effects. Generally, the authors agreed that PBLL helped students develop writing skills (Aghayani & Hajmohammadi, 2019; Marwan 2015; Shen, 2018). Indeed, 5 studies concluded that PBLL nurtured the development of vocabulary, grammar, content, mechanics, and syntax (Thitiviesa, 2014, Kovalyova et al., 2016; Sapan et al, 2019; Syrafah & Emiliasari, 2019; Larrea, 2020). Likewise, 4 studies reported that PBLL motivated students to accomplish writing activities. Authors suggested that students' enthusiasm came from the application of collaborative work, technological resources, and real-life project themes (Sa'diyah & Cahyono, 2018; Sapan et al, 2019; Larrea, 2020; Ruengkul & Wasanasomsithi, 2020).

In the same way, some authors reported that PBLL improved reading skills in terms of academic achievement (Barr & Chinwonno, 2016; Shen, 2018; Yimiwilai, 2020). Authors such as Marwan, (2015), Kovalyova et al. (2016) explained that PBLL provided opportunities for students to practice reading skills while they searched for information for

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the development of their projects. Other studies reported that PBLL motivated and pushed students to read in English frequently (Barr & Chinwonno, 2016; Yimiwilai, 2020).

Likewise, five articles reported the effects of PBLL on listening skills. First, Marwan (2015) and Abu et al. (2019) agreed that PBLL techniques such as oral presentations and group discussions allowed students to practice listening skills alongside speaking skills. Additionally, some authors reported that listening comprehension was improved in terms of academic achievement and test scores (Kovalyova et al., 2016; Shen, 2018; Abu, et al., 2019).

Finally, three studies reported that PBLL fosters other skills such as Intercultural Communicative Competence skills and Pragmatics knowledge (Barr & Chinwonno, 2016; Yoshitomi, 2012; Tabaku & Ecirli, 2014).

5.3 PBLL Effects on Students' Attitudes towards English

This section aims to answer the third research question regarding the PBLL effects on students' attitudes towards English. Thus, seventeen articles were analyzed. Subsequently, the positive and negative effects are presented below.

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Table 1

PBLL Effects on Students' Attitudes

Effects	Number	Studies
Positive	16	Yoshitomi (2012), Pinzón (2014), Tabaku & Ecirli (2014), Marwan (2015), Zhang (2015), Kovalyova et al. (2016), Marisah & Robiasih (2017), Vaca & Gómez (2017), Putri et al. (2018), Shin (2018), Sirisrimangkorn (2018), Abu et al. (2019), Sapan et al. (2019), Syarifah & Emiliasari (2019), Ruengkul & Wasanasomsithi (2020),Yimiwilai (2020)
Negative	7	*Tabaku & Ecirli (2014), *Zhang (2015), *Kovalyova et al. (2016), *Marisah & Robiasih (2017), Yuliani & Lengkanawat (2017), *Abu et al. (2019), *Ruengkul & Wasanasomsithi (2020)

Note. N= 17 studies

*Some studies are used in more than one category

Table 1 shows general PBLL effects upon students' attitudes. On one hand, 16

articles reported that students experienced positive attitudes to learn English and to

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participate in English lessons. On the other hand, seven studies reported that few students presented negative attitudes because they did not adapt to work with PBLL.

Table 2

PBLL Positive Effects on Students' Attitudes

Positive Attitudes	N of studies	*Studies
Motivation	11	Yoshitomi (2012), Marwan (2015), Zhang (2015), Vaca & Gómez (2017), Putri et al. (2018), Shin (2018), Sirisrimangkorn (2018), Abu et al. (2019), Sapan et al. 2019), Syarifah & Emiliasari (2019), Yimiwilai (2020)
Collaboration	11	Yoshitomi (2012), Pinzón (2014), Tabaku & Ecirli (2014), Marwan (2015), Shin (2018), Sirisrimangkorn (2018), Sapan et al. (2019), Syarifah & Emiliasari (2019), Ruengkul & Wasanasomsithi (2020), Yimwilai (2020)
Confidence	10	Pinzón (2014), Tabaku & Ecirli (2014), Zhang (2015), Kovalyova et al. (2016), Marisah & Robiasih (2017), Vaca & Gómez (2017), Putri et al. (2018), Sirisrimangkorn (2018), Abu et al. (2019), Yimwilai (2020)
High class participation	10	Pinzón (2014), Marwan (2015), Marisah & Robiasih (2017), Putri et al. (2018), Shin (2018), Sirisrimangkorn (2018), Abu et al. (2019), Sapan et al. 2019), Ruengkul & Wasanasomsithi (2020), Yimwilai (2020)

Note. N= 16 studies

*Some studies are used in more than one category

Table 2 presents the positive PBLL effects on students' attitudes. Eleven articles reported that students' motivation to learn English was improved after students participated in projects that involved their experiences and preferences (Sapan et al, 2019; Shin, 2018; Yimwilai, 2020; Syarifah & Emiliasari, 2019; Vaca & Gómez, 2017; Putri, Artini &

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Nitiasih, 2018). Additionally, other authors (Marwan, 2015; Yoshitomi, 2012; Zhang, 2015; Sirisrimangkorn, 2018; Abu et al., 2019) stated that students were willing to learn English because of the diverse and creative activities in PBLL.

Additionally, nine studies reported that students perceived linguistic, affective, and social benefits when they worked in groups. For instance, Sapan et al. (2019), Yimwilai (2020), Syarfa & Emiliasari (2019), Vaca & Gómez (2017), and Ruengkul & Wasanasomsithi (2020) indicated that students were confident to ask or provide linguistic and affective support to their peers. For their part, authors such as Yoshitomi (2012), Ruengkul and Wasanamsithi (2020), and Marwan (2015) stated that collaborative work made students more responsible in their group roles. Finally, other authors (Shin, 2018; Sirisrimangkorn, 2018; Syrifah & Emiliasari, 2019; Pinzón, 2014) observed that students created deeper social relationships by getting to know each other's lives.

In the same manner, 10 studies reported that students' confidence to communicate in English improved. Various authors (Shin, 2018; Vaca & Gómez, 2017; Zhang, 2015; Putri, et al., 2018; Marisah & Robiasih, 2017; Abu et al., 2019) suggested that students gained the confidence to interact in English since they dealt with constant communicative opportunities when they work in groups. Additionally, Sirisrimangkorn, (2018), Yimiwilai (2020) Tabaku & Ecirli (2014) Pinzón (2014), and Kovalyova et al., 2016) found that students developed self- confidence to communicate in English when they performed in front of other audiences such as the school community and local people.

Finally, 10 articles reported that students enhance their class participation in learning English. For instance, authors such as Marisah & Robiasih (2019), Pinzón, (2014), and Ruengkul & Wasanomsithi (2020) observed that students asked questions to the

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teacher and reviewed sources of information more frequently. Meaningful project themes, challenging projects and autonomous activities were some causes for students' engagement (Marwan, 2015; Shin, 2018; Putri et al., 2017; Sirisrimangkorn, 2018; Abu et al., 2019; Sapan et al., 2019; Yimwilai, 2020).

Table 3

Negative PBLL Effects on Students' Attitudes

Negative effects	N*	Studies
Boredom	3	Zhang (2015), Mariasah & Robiasih (2017), Ruengkul & Wasanasomsithi (2020).
Insecurity	2	Tabaku & Ecirli (2014), Abu et al. (2019)
Lack of collaboration	2	Zhang (2015), Yuliani & Lengkanawat (2017)
Frustration	1	Kovalyova (2016)

Note. N= 7 studies
*Some studies are repeated in more than one category.

Table 3 shows the negative PBLL effects on students' attitudes. Three articles reported that few students were bored and uninterested in doing some project activities because they perceived PBLL projects as a waste of time (Marisah & Robiasih, 2017; Zhang, 2015; Ruengkul & Wasanosomsithi, 2020). Two articles concluded that few students could not overcome insecurities to communicate and present information in English (Tabaku & Ecirli, 2014; Abu et al., 2019). Likewise, Zhang (2015), and Yuliani and Lengkanawat (2017) found that few students were not willing to collaborate with their groups since study reported that one person wanted to do the whole project by her/himself instead of working together with the group, and another person did not want to participate

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in the group activities. Finally, Zhang (2015) agreed that there were some groups of students who were frustrated when they worked with PBLL because they had troubles at the planning and presentation stage.

CHAPTER VI: Conclusions and Recommendations

6.1 Conclusions

This research synthesis aimed to understand the effects of the Project-Based Language learning methodology on English Foreign Language classrooms. After the analysis of 25 research studies, it was possible to determine the most common PBLL teaching techniques, the effects of PBLL on English language skills, and the effects of PBLL on students' attitude towards English.

Regarding the most common PBLL teaching techniques, five categories were established and identified. They were *speaking, data collection, scaffolding, writing* and *technological techniques.*

Regarding *speaking techniques, group/ peer discussions* were applied in most studies as well as in most project stages. Since PBLL provides a collaborative context, and most projects were developed in groups, students were motivated to keep discussions from the first until the last stages of the projects (Beckett, 1999; Stoller, 2002).

Internet research was the most common *data collection* technique. It was applied essentially in the stage of information research. Li and Hart (2002) explain that EFL learners rely more on Internet research due to the variety, accessibility, and open access to information in different formats.

Likewise, *implicit teacher instruction was the most common scaffolding technique.* Studies reported *it* was applied mostly at the topic orientation stage. Stoller and Alan (2005) explains that teachers should plan scaffolding activities before at least three stages of the project such as research, analysis, and presentation stages.

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In the same manner, *collaborative writing, a writing technique,* was applied at the data collection and preparing data stages. Dressler et al., (2020) and Nguyen (2011) affirm that *collaborative writing* in PBLL means to provide linguist and content support, and feedback to individuals when they work in group and individual projects.

Finally, *making videos*, the most used *technological technique*, was applied as the final product in some studies. Hong et al (2020) advocated that digital and video projects are one of the many alternatives to incorporate technology into PBLL, and consequently, they enhance students' motivation.

To answer the second question about the effects of PBLL on language skills, most of the articles analyzed the effects of PBLL on productive skills such as speaking and writing. Subsequently, the studies reported that PBLL provides various and authentic opportunities to speak in English. Subsequently, PBLL improves speaking skills, regarding its components such as vocabulary, pronunciation, fluency, and grammar. Dewi (2016) and Brown (2001) state that PBLL fosters the development of comprehensible output when learners interact in the foreign language. Additionally, it was reported that PBLL boosted students' confidence and motivation to speak. Harmer (2007b) agrees that students are more eager to express their ideas and provide support in small groups rather in front of the whole class.

Regarding writing skills, PBLL did not only increase the students' motivation to write, but also, it improved writing components such as vocabulary, grammar, content, mechanics, and syntax. Hong et al. (2020) explains that PBLL provides students with plenty of writing practice in collaborative contexts that allow linguistic and affective support.

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On the other hand, few articles analyzed the effects of PBLL on reading and listening skills. According to reading skills, PBLL provided authentic and purposeful reading practice, and consequently, students' reading comprehension was improved in terms of academic achievement. Likewise, students' motivation to read was boosted because of meaningful and ongoing reading practice during PBLL. Regarding listening skills, it was found that PBLL engaged students to interact with peers by listening to and expressing their ideas. Consequently, the studies reported that students improved their listening comprehension in terms of academic achievement. Brown (2001) and Nguyen (2011) state that PBLL fosters both interactive listening and reading alongside other skills. Additionally, although PBLL enhances academic achievement in both reading and listening comprehension, no article explored the PBLL effects on what Brown (2001) has called "bottom-up and top-down processing skills" (p.260).

According to the third question, most articles reported that PBLL had positive effects on students' attitudes. Hence, learners' motivation, class participation, collaboration, and confidence were boosted. Dewey (1938) and Harmer (2007b) state that the relevance of the projects, experimental opportunities, and autonomous work, principles of PBLL, motivate and engage students in the process of EFL learning. Likewise, Pinter (2011) acknowledges that collaborative contexts help students to support each other's learning and overcome communicative fears.

Nevertheless, few articles reported PBLL negative effects on students' attitudes. They were boredom, insecurity, lack of collaboration, and frustration during students' self-directed activities. Smith (1997) and Becket (2006) suggest that teachers who use PBLL should take the time to familiarize students with PBLL, its stages and principles.

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Additionally, teachers should use scaffolding techniques to enhance students' knowledge regarding complex skills such as collaborative, linguistic, and content skills (Stoller & Alan, 2005; Krajcik & Blumenfeld, 2005).

6.2 Recommendations

First, the present study analyzed the effects of PBLL on EFL classrooms without specifying the linguistic level or age of students. Thus, future research should analyze PBLL applications on the aforementioned aspects.

Second, Dressler et al. (2020) states that the use of technology in PBLL improves students' motivation. However, the studies reported a low application of technological resources and techniques in the projects, except the Internet which was essential to collect information in most studies. Therefore, further research should study more alternatives to integrate technology into PBLL.

Third, Stoller (1995) suggests applying scaffolding activities in PBLL at least three times in the project stages. However, the studies reported that the application of scaffolding activities was limited to once, mostly in the first project stages. Therefore, future research should analyze the effects of scaffolding activities in project stages.

Finally, future research should explore the effects of PBLL on receptive skills, listening and reading, since most articles have focused on the effects of PBLL on productive skills. Additionally, future investigations should explore PBLL effects on other language aspects such as Intercultural Communicative Competence and Pragmatics since the available academic information is limited.

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Appendix

Appendix 1. List of Primary Studies for the Analysis

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Appendix 2. Complete list of PBLL teaching techniques

Complete list of PBLL Teaching techniques from the studies		
Author-Year	**Techniques**	**Identified Technique Categories**
Abu, Noordin, & Razali. (2019)	group discussions; oral presentations; scaffolding activities to foster speaking and listening (role play, video response, peer discussion)	Speaking techniques; Scaffolding techniques
Aghayani & Hajmohammadi (2019)	Ss and T select a project topic; library and internet resources recommended by T ; pair research; pair writing; peer discussion	Speaking techniques ; Data collection techniques; Scaffolding techniques; Writing techniques
Sa'diyah & Cahyono (2019)	T explains and provides examples; group discussions; Group planning, writing and reviewing; library and internet researching; blogging	Speaking techniques; Scaffolding Techniques; Writing techniques; Data Collection Techniques; Technological techniques
Kovalyova, Soboleva & Kerimkulov (2016)	Internet and library research; individual writing; PPT creation and oral presentation; exemplification by teacher; peer discussions; make a video	Data Collection Techniques; Speaking techniques, Scaffolding techniques; Writing Techniques; Technological Techniques
Larrea (2020)	The author did not reported the details of the intervention.	
Marisah & Robiasih (2017)	group writing; role play; record a video; Fill in the blanks	Speaking techniques; Writing techniques; Technological Techniques; Scaffolding Techniques

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Marwan (2015)	internet research; group writing; oral presentations; role play; record a video; explanations and questioning by the teacher; emailing	Data collection techniques; Writing techniques; Speaking techniques; Technological techniques; Scaffolding techniques
Maulany (2013)	The author did not reported the details of the intervention.	
Pinzón (2014)	group discussion; internet research-group writing; PPT creation; oral presentation; rehearsals	Speaking Techniques; Data collection techniques; Writing techniques; Technological techniques
Barr & Chinwonno (2016)	teacher explanations; games and activities using authentic material, and online video clips; explicit teacher explanation; library and Internet research; Individual and group writing; interviews; group discussions; role play; oral presentations	Speaking techniques; Data Collection Technique; Scaffolding techniques; Writing Techniques
Putri; Artini & Nitiasih (2017)	The author did not reported the details of the intervention.	
Ruengkul & Wasanasomsithi (2020)	Teacher explanation; group writing	Scaffolding Technique; Writing Techniques
Sapan, Siti Katijah, Zulhaimi , Abdul Hamid & Ramli (2019)	group discussion; internet research; role play	Speaking techniques; Data collection techniques
SHEN Zhaowen	The author did not reported the details of the intervention.	
Shin (2018)	teacher explanations; internet research; make videos; role play	Scaffolding techniques; Data collection techniques; Technological techniques; Speaking techniques
Sirisrimangkorn (2018)	Teacher explanation; group discussion; group writing; oral performances; rehearsals	Scaffolding techniques; Speaking techniques; Writing techniques

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Yimwilai(2020)	Teacher explanation; peer discussion; teacher implicit activities (reading activities, games, watch videos); group writing; oral presentation; internet research; oral performance; rehearsals	Speaking techniques; Data collection techniques; Scaffolding technique; Writing techniques
Syarifah & Emiliasari (2019)	group discussions; Internet research; group writing	Data collection techniques; Speaking techniques; Writing techniques
Tabaku & Ecirli (2014)	oral presentations; internet research; group writing	Data collection techniques; Speaking techniques; Writing techniques
Thitivesa (2014)	group discussion; Internet and library research; group writing	Data collection techniques; Speaking techniques; Writing Techniques
Vaca & Gómez (2017)	Teacher explanations; group discussion; teacher implicit instruction (games; watch videos; modeling), interviewing/ group writing; oral presentation	Data collection techniques; Scaffolding techniques; Speaking techniques: Writing Techniques
Yacoman & Diaz (2019)	games; group discussion; carrying on surveys; make videos; oral presentation	Data collection techniques; Scaffolding techniques; Speaking techniques; Technological techniques
Yoshitomi (2012)	Teacher explanations; group discussions; reading activities; watch videos; library and internet research; individual writing survey; oral presentations	Data collection techniques; Scaffolding technique; Speaking techniques; Writing techniques
Yuliani & Lengkanawat (2017)	group discussion; Internet and library research; oral presentation; rehearsals; role-play	Data collection techniques; Speaking techniques
Zhang (2015)	Teacher explanations; group discussion; surveys; oral performance; rehearsals	Data collection techniques; Scaffolding techniques; Speaking techniques

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