

ENHANCING SPEAKING FLUENCY IN EFL CLASSROOMS USING PHENOBL

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Abstract: This article details the methodological framework and empirical evaluation of using Phenomenon-Based Learning (PhenoBL) to enhance speaking fluency in English as a Foreign Language (EFL) classrooms. Traditional speaking exercises often rely on isolated topic cards or structural repetitions that lack communicative authenticity and fail to stimulate real-time spontaneous discourse. By centering speech production around holistic, multi-dimensional real-world phenomena, PhenoBL establishes a meaningful communicative purpose that balances lexical retrieval, contextual accuracy, and student motivation. A controlled pedagogical experiment was executed at the Samarkand State Institute of Foreign Languages to assess the impact of this approach on undergraduate language learners. The empirical findings reveal major quantitative and qualitative development in the experimental group's speaking pace, interactive communication strategies, and overall communicative confidence.

Keywords: phenomenon-based learning, speaking fluency, EFL classroom, communicative competence.

Introduction

In the current paradigm of global communication, the primary benchmark of success for learners of English as a Foreign Language (EFL) is their level of speaking fluency. Fluency involves the ability to link ideas smoothly, maintain a natural speech pace, use appropriate conversational strategies, and express complex thoughts with minimal disruptive hesitation. Achieving this conversational agility requires language learners to simultaneously handle pronunciation rules, select accurate words, apply grammar frameworks, and organize logical thoughts during live interactions.

However, conventional speaking methodologies in higher education often fall short of building these advanced communicative skills. Many standard university programs rely heavily on isolated, artificial tasks, such as reading memorized scripts, practicing predetermined dialogue templates, or discussing simple, abstract topics with no immediate real-world relevance. Because these methods decouple language practice from authentic human experience, they fail to trigger deep semantic processing. As a result, students frequently experience language anxiety, struggle with long silent gaps during spontaneous interactions, and fail to adapt their vocabulary to complex, unstudied situations.

To bypass these instructional limitations, this study introduces Phenomenon-Based Learning (PhenoBL) into the foreign language speaking curriculum. PhenoBL replaces

artificial, rule-focused drilling with active collaborative inquiry into multifaceted, real-world phenomena (such as "The Impact of Artificial Intelligence on Future Career Landscapes"). This holistic context shifts the student's primary focus from the mechanical form of the language to the meaningful transmission of information and ideas. The objective of this research is to construct, implement, and analyze an innovative PhenoBL-driven speaking framework to optimize oral fluency and conversational confidence among future EFL specialists.

Methodology

The research was carried out within the practical English departments of the Samarkand State Institute of Foreign Languages. The experimental structure involved a sample population of 60 undergraduate students, split equally into an experimental group (30 students) and a control group (30 students) to establish clear statistical baselines.

The control group continued their regular curriculum, practicing speaking through traditional theme-centered discussions, standard reading comprehension responses, and teacher-led structural dialogues. In contrast, the experimental group was exposed to a targeted, 6-week Phenomenon-Based Learning instructional program. This customized curriculum shifted the classroom dynamic from simple topic talking to multidimensional inquiry, moving through three structured communication phases:

The Shared Inquiry Phase: Students collectively observed a core phenomenon, shared initial perspectives, and identified key knowledge gaps, generating real reasons to communicate.

The Collaborative Brainstorming Phase: Working in small teams, students researched different angles of the phenomenon (e.g., assessing economic, psychological, and environmental impacts), using language as an active research tool to organize complex data.

The Spontaneous Forum Phase: Teams defended their findings in live debates, town-hall simulations, and peer-led presentations, forcing students to respond to unscripted questions and handle spontaneous academic discourse.

Student speaking growth was measured through structured oral assessments conducted before and after the 6-week module. Fluency and oral proficiency were evaluated across four parameters on a 100-point scale: Speech Rate and Fluidity (the speed of words spoken without unnatural pauses), Conversational Resourcefulness (the use of circumlocution and fillers to sustain speech), Structural Coherence (the logical connection of complex thoughts), and Interactive Engagement (the ability to naturally manage turn-taking and follow-up during live debates). The statistical outcomes were compared using group mean distributions and net growth indicators.

Results

The empirical measurements collected at the conclusion of the pedagogical experiment proved that the Phenomenon-Based Learning model delivers distinct advantages for speaking development over traditional frameworks. The comparative table below illustrates the shift in average scores for both student groups.

Speaking Fluency Advancement Tracking Across Evaluation Parameters (100-point scale)

Group Identifiers and Criteria	Pre-Test Average Score	Post-Test Average Score	Absolute Performance Net Gain
Experimental Group (PhenoBL Approach)			
Speech Rate and Fluidity	43.4	88.2	+44.8
Conversational Resourcefulness	40.5	85.3	+44.8
Structural Coherence	38.9	83.1	+44.2
Interactive Engagement	33.6	81.5	+47.9
Control Group (Traditional Framework)			
Speech Rate and Fluidity	44.1	60.9	+16.8
Conversational Resourcefulness	41.2	55.4	+14.2
Structural Coherence	39.3	54.0	+14.7
Interactive Engagement	34.0	48.9	+14.9

The data confirms that both student cohorts possessed comparable speaking skills prior to the intervention. However, the final post-test showed substantial differences. The experimental group achieved remarkable performance increases, with average growth metrics exceeding 44 points across all criteria. The most dramatic improvement occurred in "Interactive Engagement," where the control group improved by a minor 14.9 points, while the PhenoBL group surged by 47.9 points.

Qualitative transcripts from the post-intervention oral exams revealed that PhenoBL students spoke with significantly fewer long, silent blocks. Instead of freezing to look for a perfect grammar rule or a single translation, they used conversational fillers and structural

transitions smoothly. They exhibited an advanced ability to organize lengthy arguments on the spot, demonstrating that studying a comprehensive phenomenon helps students build flexible, readily accessible speech networks.

Discussion

The clear success of Phenomenon-Based Learning over conventional speaking exercises requires an exploration of the cognitive and communicative principles that guide oral language production. Traditional foreign language teaching often isolates speaking skills from real thinking, forcing students to focus excessively on structural errors. This heavy focus on surface grammar blocks natural flow, causing students to over-analyze their words and hesitate during open conversations.

PhenoBL avoids this issue by mimicking the natural way people communicate in the real world. By focusing the lesson on a genuine phenomenon, language shifts from being a stressful subject to study to an active tool for solving problems and sharing information. This changes the internal goal of the speaker: their main focus becomes sharing their perspective on the issue, rather than just worrying about minor sentence errors. This mindset shift helps reduce language anxiety and builds conversational confidence.

Furthermore, exploring a single phenomenon from multiple viewpoints encourages students to look at issues through a broader social and structural lens. Research across diverse literary and language transformations emphasizes that true learning happens when students can link individual details to broader social and structural concepts. PhenoBL brings this exact depth to language classes. When students have a rich, multifaceted understanding of a topic, they naturally have more to say, which helps them sustain longer, more fluid conversations without relying on short, scripted responses.

Conclusion

The practical implementation of this study at the Samarkand State Institute of Foreign Languages proves that Phenomenon-Based Learning is a highly effective methodology for improving speaking fluency in EFL classrooms. By organizing speaking tasks around complex, real-world phenomena, this approach bridges the gap between passive language knowledge and live communicative interaction, training students to become confident, adaptable communicators.

To successfully implement PhenoBL strategies into mainstream foreign language speaking curricula, the following actions are recommended:

Update active speaking and communication syllabi to include multi-perspective, phenomenon-centered modules rather than short, disconnected daily topics.

Structure speaking assessments to reward global fluency, interactive strategy use, and argument construction alongside traditional grammatical correctness.

Turn standard classroom hours into interactive discussion spaces, using student debates, roundtables, and simulated press conferences to maximize talking time.

Provide targeted professional workshops to guide university instructors on how to lead open-ended inquiries and facilitate active student conversations.

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