

Developing Junior High School Students' Speaking Skills in English as a Foreign Language

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Abstract

This study explores the development of junior high school students' speaking skills in English as a foreign (EFL), by exposure to a new teaching method. The speaking skills were practiced through speech activities and implemented outdoors, outside the classroom, in public. The research population consists of 65 Israeli junior high school girls at the age of 14, from two different state-religious schools in the northern part of Israel: 32 students in the intervention group and 33 in the control group. The findings illustrate a significant difference ($p < .01$) in students' performance in all categories of speech (vocabulary, grammar, sentence structure, and coherence), as well as a significant improvement in scores' distribution. This improvement indicates the effectiveness of the new teaching method and the need to practice EFL speaking outdoors.

Keywords: cooperative learning, English as a foreign language (EFL), foreign language anxiety, outdoor practice of speaking (OPOS), project-based learning (PBL)