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LEARNING ENGLISH WITH ETWINNING

Introduction

During two consecutive years an annual project of learning English to young learners was conducted where students in the first and second grade of primary school learned English through collaborative activities in an international environment on eTwinning, a European education platform.

eTwinning is for many educators today a window to the world since it is “a community that is exclusively open to educators and other school staff in initial vocational education and training and education from early childhood education and care to upper secondary schools... (it) embodies a methodology, a pedagogical approach, a community of practice, and a platform that enables innovation, communication, and collaboration.”¹ This means teachers and students are allowed to collaborate with peers from different schools free of charge on a safe online platform made especially for schools.

Central Support Service for eTwinning consistently posts suggestions for a successful project and one of the most recent ones was published in an infographic where ten crucial steps² are stated:

1. Project plan with timeline of activities
2. Choosing the activities and tools in agreement with partners
3. Netiquette rules
4. Inform the head teacher, colleagues, and students about the project
5. Plan the Twinspace web pages design and appearance for each activity
6. Using Twinspace tools (Twinmail, Teacher Bulletin, Discussion Forums)
7. Adding chat or live elements
8. Integration of collaborative activities
9. Feedback: comments, evaluation, diary
10. Applying for a Quality Label and promoting the project

About the projects

The project “First Graders Learn English 2022” was planned at the beginning of the school year 2021/2022 where first graders started learning English and worked on additional activities on eTwinning. The project was a great success, so it was continued for the second year as “Second Graders Learn English” during the school year 2022/2023.

¹ European School Education Platform.

<https://school-education.ec.europa.eu/en/about> [06.01.2024.]

² eTwinning. 10 Steps for a Successful eTwinning Project.

https://www.leargas.ie/wp-content/uploads/2021/06/10-steps-successful-project_v3.pdf
[07.01.2024.]

The figures 1 and 2 below summarize the number of schools, teachers, students, and countries involved in the projects “First Graders Learn English 2022” and “Second Graders Learn English” respectively, as well as the number of students in Primary School Strahoninec, a school where this study was conducted.

12 schools	12 teachers	303 students
6 countries	Croatia Spain Turkey, Georgia Bulgaria, Poland	Primary School Strahoninec: 46 students

Number of schools, teachers, students, and countries in “First Graders Learn English” project (Figure 1.)

14 schools	16 teachers	301 students
4 countries	Croatia Greece Spain Turkey	Primary School Strahoninec: 47 students

Number of schools, teachers, students, and countries in “Second Graders Learn English” project (Figure 2.)

The aims of the projects were to stimulate students’ English learning through new activities different from textbooks, share them with peers from abroad, and develop new teaching and learning resources in a digital form. In the first year the aims were the following:

- to practice speaking, listening, and indirectly reading and writing in English
- to use English in communicative activities
- to practice new vocabulary by creating digital resources
- to learn English as a foreign language in an international community
- to raise intercultural awareness

In the second year of the project, the aims were slightly revised and updated and included the following:

- to practice speaking, listening, reading, and writing in English
- to empower students for speaking and improving their presentation skills
- to use ICT and different digital tools for learning
- to learn English as a foreign language in an international digital environment
- to raise awareness of diversity and embrace differences

Teachers collaborated monthly and suggested activities for topics that were outlined at the beginning of the project. The final learning results of each activity were published by using various teaching methods, from project-based learning, inquiry-based learning, use of ICT, gamification, games, songs, storytelling, and communicative approach in general. Students participated in creation of materials and the teachers posted the results online on the project website.

Research questions

Upon the completion of the project in the second year, and after having received European Quality Labels from eTwinning for both projects, the aim of this study was to determine:

- which activities do students enjoy in English classes?
- are students interested to continue to learn English with eTwinning?
- what are the teachers in the project suggesting for improvement?
- do eTwinning activities positively affect students' skills, namely communicative competence, intercultural awareness, ICT skills, and working in a team?

These research questions pave the way for a more informed and targeted approach to teaching English to young learners using eTwinning in the future. By identifying which activities students enjoy most in English classes and measuring their interest in continuing their English learning journey through eTwinning, educators can tailor their teaching methods to better engage and motivate students. Understanding teachers' suggestions for improvement within the project can lead to refinements that enhance the overall learning experience. Moreover, assessing the positive effects of eTwinning activities on students' communicative competence, intercultural awareness, ICT skills, and teamwork abilities can guide educators in designing more effective and comprehensive learning modules, ensuring a more holistic development for young learners in English language acquisition.

Literature review

Project-based learning started developing in ancient times, with Aristotle and Confucius being the “early proponents of learning by doing”³ and “Socrates modelled how to learn through questioning, inquiry, and critical thinking”⁴ which are still relevant strategies in today's PBL classrooms. Furthermore, John Dewey

³ Suzie BOSS: *Project-Based Learning: A Short History*, Edutopia. 20.09.2011.
<https://www.edutopia.org/project-based-learning-history> [07.01.2024.]

⁴ Ibid.

endorsed learning grounded in experience and driven by student's interest where student is not just a passive recipient of knowledge, but an active participant being prepared for life and Maria Montessori and Jean Piaget both supported building experiences "by asking questions, investigating, interacting with others, and reflecting on these experiences".⁵

Blumenfeld et al. define project-based learning (PBL) as "a comprehensive approach to classroom teaching and learning that is designed to engage students in investigation of authentic problems."⁶ Thomas defines PBL as "a model that organizes learning around projects" and definitions found in PBL handbooks for teachers, "projects are complex tasks, based on challenging questions or problems, that involve students in design, problem-solving, decision making, or investigative activities; give students the opportunity to work relatively autonomously over extended periods of time; and culminate in realistic products or presentations."⁷

Blumenfeld and colleagues emphasize the significance of maintaining student interest through tasks that involve closure and the creation of authentic artifacts. They highlight that varied, challenging tasks with authentic problems sustain interest, especially when students have choices and opportunities to collaborate. Additionally, they stress the importance of perceived and achieved competence, advocating for skills, knowledge, cognitive abilities, and metacognition in task performance. Their suggestions for teachers include creating learning opportunities, providing information access, scaffolding instruction, modelling tasks, and encouraging metacognitive processes. They underscore the role of assessing progress, offering feedback, and evaluating outcomes. Furthermore, they advocate for long-term projects generating significant artifacts to motivate students and enhance subject matter understanding. Finally, they argue that technology plays a vital role in addressing project-based learning challenges, enhancing interest by providing variety, challenges, peer interaction, and facilitating artifact creation.⁸

Thomas highlights the complexity of assessing the effectiveness of instructional methods like PBL.⁹ While self-report measures through questionnaires and interviews provide insights into perceived benefits, they solely reflect participants' beliefs rather than objective outcomes, potentially leading to misleading conclusions. Researchers assessing PBL's effectiveness face challenges, including overestimation of its benefits due to its engaging nature, making observation-based assessments similarly prone to biases. Studies exploring PBL's impact often rely on self-reported teacher assessments, detailing various positive effects on students, such as improved attitudes toward learning, enhanced work habits, problem-solving skills, and increased self-esteem. Thomas

⁵ Ibid.

⁶ Phyllis C. BLUMENFELD–Elliot SOLOWAY–Ronald W. MARX–Joseph S. KRAJCIK–Mark GUZDIAL–Annemarie PALINCSAR: *Motivating Project-Based Learning: Sustaining the Doing, Supporting the Learning*, Educational Psychologist, 1991. 26:3–4, 369–398.

⁷ John W. THOMAS: *A Review of Research on Project-Based Learning*. 2000.

⁸ http://www.bobpearlman.org/BestPractices/PBL_Research.pdf [07.01.2024.]

⁹ Ibid.

⁹ Ibid.

suggests a comprehensive approach to evaluating project effectiveness and assessing student learning that incorporates various measures. These measures encompass diverse methods such as observation, paper-pencil tests, performance tasks, standardized tests, expert evaluations, ratings of student products, and self-reports from students. Moreover, the evaluation should consider a range of effects, including whether students have achieved the intended learning goals, their ability to apply acquired knowledge in different contexts (transfer of training), identification of additional skills, strategies, and unplanned dispositions acquired through the project, changes in the classroom culture, and the impact of project work on individual learners outside the project setting. This multifaceted evaluation framework allows for a holistic understanding of the project's impact on student learning and broader educational outcomes.¹⁰

Potential benefits of PBL according to Dornyei¹¹ are increased motivation and expectancy of success in target language, improved group cohesiveness, synthesis of academic and social goals, reduction of anxiety, and promotion of effort-based attributions. Zhang and Ma also reported PBL significantly improved students' learning outcomes and positively contributed to academic achievement.¹² Ellis¹³ advocates Task-based language teaching (TBLT) who suggests it can work with beginner-level learners by using input-based tasks which were part of these projects. He further notes that "L2 acquisition takes place naturally... when learners are engaged in the effort to communicate". Zaafour and Salaberri-Ramiro state "(PBL) and Cooperative Learning (CL) are regarded to be among the best methods of empowering students with the most needed skills in the twenty-first century, especially if these two approaches are combined so that one reinforces the other".¹⁴

In recent years, more research on use of eTwinning has been done. Akdemir thus states that "eTwinning projects are valuable opportunities for both language teachers and students in terms of enhancing learning and teaching process, enabling intercultural exchange, student engagement and developing language skills."¹⁵ Alcaraz-Mármol explored if telecollaboration through eTwinning with peers from another country improves students' intercultural communicative awareness and found positive results where students who worked with eTwinning achieved higher level of intercultural communicative

¹⁰ Ibid.

¹¹ Zoltán DÖRNYEI: *Motivational Strategies in the Language Classroom*, 2001. Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, 100–101.

¹² Lu ZHANG-Yan MA: *A study of the impact of project-based learning on student learning effects: a meta-analysis study*. *Frontiers in Psychology*. 2023. 14. 1–14.

¹³ Rod ELLIS: *Task-based language teaching for beginner-level young learners*. *Language Teaching for Young Learners*, 2020. 2/1. 4–27.

¹⁴ Abderrazak ZAAFOUR–María Sagrario SALABERRI-RAMIRO: *Incorporating Cooperative Project-Based Learning in the Teaching of English as a Foreign Language: Teachers' Perspectives*. *Education Sciences*, 2022/12. (388) 1–12.

¹⁵ Ahmet Selçuk AKDEMİR: *eTwinning in Language Learning: The Perspectives of Successful Teachers*. *Journal of Education and Practice*, 2017/8. (10), 182–190.

competence¹⁶ which was in line with Carvalho Silva's¹⁷ study about pedagogical value of eTwinning in construction of openness and tolerance towards other cultures. Some of the advantages for pupils and teachers have been highlighted by Segura Vídes¹⁸ such as working in a real context, intercultural understanding and empowerment of the European identity, increased individual and team-work satisfaction, it is beneficial to the teaching and learning process as well as the students with difficulties, it improves attitudes towards collaboration and improves ICT skills and confidence to use it. There are certain disadvantages such as time efficiency since it takes a lot of time to document, maintain contact and update the project websites which has especially been a struggle during the pandemic and changing from eTwinning platforms to ESEP platform. Another disadvantage is a lack of commitment or support from project partners which can happen in any partnership, however many advantages outweigh them so many teachers use eTwinning as a way of delivering and publishing classroom projects today.

On the account of early language learning in Croatia, the Ministry of Education supported many scientific research projects and early acquisition of foreign language has been a topic of many research starting from Vilke¹⁹ who established applied linguistics in Croatia, and whose research proved that early beginners of English aged 9 had far better phonetic-phonological features on the level of production than older beginners aged 17. She also determined that children's attitudes towards learning a foreign language at the beginning of learning reflect parents' attitudes. Mihaljević Djigunović²⁰ who dealt with motivation where she identified three types of motivation to learn English: usage-communicative (using English for practical and communicative purposes), affective (aesthetic and emotional components of a language) and integrative (to integrate in one of the social-cultural groups that use English as their mother tongue). Mihaljević Djigunović also explored affective factors, language learning strategies, and early EFL learning,

Vilke and Vrhovac²¹ who gathered experts and published many works about teaching foreign languages in primary context have published the criteria for early language teaching based on the Council of Europe project Language

¹⁶ Gema ALCARAZ-MÁRMOL: *Developing intercultural communication in the EFL primary education classroom: Internationalization through virtual team collaboration with eTwinning*. Tejuelo, 2020. 32, 147–170.

¹⁷ Maria Piedade CARVALHO SILVA: *eTwinning project 'Photography as a pedagogical tool: a teaching approach to create and sustain motivations*, Conference Proceedings for ICT for language learning Florence: University of Florence, 2007. 191–195.
<https://conference.pixel-online.net/files/ict4ll/ed0007/FP/1068-ICL656-FP-ICT4LL7.pdf> [07.01.2024.]

¹⁸ Francisco Javier SEGURA VÍDES: *Analysis and Implementation of eTwinning in the English Classroom*, 2014. Facultad de Ciencias Humanas y Sociales. Universidad Pública de Navarra.

¹⁹ Mirjana VILKE: *The Age Factor in the Acquisition of Foreign Languages*. Rassegna Italiana di Linguistica Applicata, 1976. 8, 179–190.

²⁰ Jelena MIHALJEVIĆ DJIGUNOVIĆ: *Interdisciplinarna istraživanja u području obrazovanja na primjeru glotodidaktike*. Sociologija i proctor, 2013. 51. 197/3. 471–491.

²¹ Mirjana VILKE, and Yvonne VRHOVAC (Eds.) *Children and Foreign Languages II*, 1995. Zagreb: Faculty of Philosophy, University of Zagreb.

Learning for European Citizenship 1991–2001 where the aim was to examine a process of early language learning. Mihaljević Djigunović highlighted that the findings of the project showed that lessons should be intensive with no more than 15 students per class and teachers should be especially educated to teach such young learners. Although not all the criteria were met, the compulsory teaching of foreign languages from the first grade of primary school therefore started in Croatia in 2003 and the Faculty of Teacher Education trained future language teachers to ensure high quality lessons. The activities in this project were aligned with the age of students and many games, songs, stories, and physical movements were involved along with crosscurricular content integration.²²

Method

This study was conducted by mixed methods design by utilizing a combination of qualitative (project documentation analysis, focus group interviews) and quantitative (questionnaire) methods to gain a comprehensive understanding of the research questions.

The methodological approach involved three following procedures:

1. project documentation analysis (websites, videos, and images) where project activities and topics, teaching methods, ICT tools, and evaluation were analysed and categorized.
2. a questionnaire about learning English was conducted in October 2023 in two classes that participated in the projects to gather quantitative data on students' perceptions and experiences regarding learning English through the project. An online Microsoft Forms questionnaire was done in class due to economic and time restrictions.
3. interview in focus groups was conducted after the questionnaires in two separate groups which was audio recorded, transcribed and analysed to delve deeper into students' experiences, attitudes, and insights related to learning English through the project.

Participants

The participants in the study were second grade students at a suburban Primary School Strahoninec in Croatia, aged 8-9, who participated in the projects in 2021/2022 and 2022/2023 whose parents gave permission to participate in the study. Students were learning English for two consecutive years as a foreign language, having English two 45 minutes lessons per week. In total, 47 students participated in the project in the second year. The Table 1 below summarizes the participants' data.

²² Jelena MIHALJEVIĆ DJIGUNOVIĆ: *Interdisciplinarna istraživanja u području obrazovanja na primjeru glotodidaktike*. Sociologija i proctor, 2013. 51, 197/3, 471–491.

Class group		Class group	
2.a		2.b	
girls	boys	girls	boys
10	14	11	12

Participants in two groups (N=47) (Table 1.)

The participants' final marks in English at the end of each school year are shown in Table 2 showing highly positive achievement (5 being the excellent mark in Croatian educational system).

	Grade 1		Grade 2	
	1.a	1.b	2.a	2.b
Excellent (5)	23	22	19	17
Very good (4)	1	1	4	5
Good (3)	0	0	1	1
Average mark:	4.96	4.96	4.75	4.70

Final marks in English in two groups (N=47) (Table 2.)

Instruments

To gather qualitative and quantitative data, three instruments were used. First, to analyse the project documentation, the websites were accessed online so that project activities and topics could be categorized in a Microsoft Word table. For each category, a teaching method was chosen and ICT tools used were marked. Since projects had contained evaluation by teachers, these tables and charts were also marked down.

The second instrument was a questionnaire compiled for this study based on Asmali's questionnaire²³ to gather besides demographic data, also data upon students' motivation to continue learning English with eTwinning, their attitudes towards English, their teacher and textbook, what their parents think about learning English, as well as how easy is it to learn English and how much they enjoy English lessons. First questions involved a three point Likert scale and the next questions were multiple choice type to retrieve information about which activities they enjoy or dislike, why they learn English and which activities they find the easiest or most difficult. Next questions were concerning the project activities which they enjoyed the best and participants could choose multiple images that were displayed along with the text descriptors. Final questions dealt with ICT tools and intercultural competencies the students had to report they have acquired.

The third instrument was an interview in focus groups which was conducted in two separate groups. The teacher asked the questions about learning English with eTwinning, learning English in general and similar questions that were prepared earlier to talk about students' skills, communicative competence,

²³ Mehmet ASMALI: *Young Learners' Attitudes and Motivation to Learn English*. Novitas-ROYAL (Research on Youth and Language), 2017/11. (1) 53–68.

intercultural awareness, ICT skills, intercultural learning and working in a team. The interviews were audio recorded, transcribed, and analysed.

Data Analysis

The data collected by the three instruments were analysed to gather answers to the research questions posed. Analysis of project websites showed predominant teaching methods used in classes for each topic as well as ICT tools used. The criteria for assigning a particular teaching method to each activity was the predominant method used, although the teaching methods were intertwined throughout the English classes and the project.

The most frequent teaching methods were project-based learning (N=13), cooperative learning (N=12), ICT based learning (N=6), communicative teaching (N=4), Total Physical Response (N=3), role-play (N=2), gamification (N=2), outdoor learning (N=2), storytelling (N=2), inquiry-based learning (N=1).

The table below summarizes the tools used for each topic as well as the teaching methods that prevailed within the communicative approach:

Topic	Tools	Teaching Method
Introductions	Chatterpix videos	Cooperative, PBL
School, Classroom (pack my pag)	Videos, Book Creator, Quizlet, Wordwall (memory)	Cooperative learning, Role-play, gamification
Breakfast, Morning Routine	Canva poster Chatterpix	Cooperative learning, PBL, Communicative teaching
Advent Calendar	Adventmyfriend, Google Santa tracker, Quizlet, Educaplay	cooperative learning, ICT, PBL, communicative teaching
ABC Book	Songs, Google Slides booklet	Cooperative, ICT, PBL
Animals, Valentines	Google Slides booklet, Paper crafts	Cooperative, PBL
Spring and Plants	Posters, realia	PBL, outdoor learning
Earth Day activites	Story, realia	Storytelling, outdoor learning, communicative

Topics, tools and teaching methods used in 2021 (Table 3.)

Topic	Tools	Teaching Method
Introductions: create a video by using the prompts	Videos	ICT, Cooperative learning Project-based learning (PBL)
Food: describing favourite meals, making posters	Posters Videos, Chatterpix	ICT, Cooperative learning, PBL, Storytelling
Body parts: songs, drawing dictation, monsters story	Videos	PBL, Cooperative learning, TPR (Total Physical Response)
Christmas cards	Wordclouds Wordart pictures	PBL, Communicative language teaching
Seasons	Pictures, posters, songs Mural	ICT, Cooperative learning PBL, TPR
Clothes	Pictures, posters	Cooperative learning PBL, TPR
Animals	Collaborative booklet, Google Slides Minecraft Education	Cooperative learning, ICT, PBL, inquiry-based learning, gamification
Tea Party	Props, stories	Storytelling, role-play, PBL
Summer	Song	Cooperative learning, TPR

Topics, tools and teaching methods used in 2022 (Table 4.)

Teachers' attitudes questionnaire at the end of the project was conducted as part of the project evaluation with open-ended questions. The questionnaire results showed that most teachers (N=12) within the project want to continue the collaboration online with third graders. Teachers suggested the expansion of topics for the following year, including animals, food, and weather. Some new topics were also suggested, namely, sports, free-time activities, and telling time. Teachers aimed at setting a new goal for the following year in more independent use of ICT for students along with new activities including video calls, use of AI, STEM, outdoor learning, birdwatching, biodiversity, and cards exchange.

Students' questionnaire (N=47) collected demographic data, academic achievement, and students' attitudes towards learning English. The results showed mainly positive attitudes towards learning English and learning with eTwinning projects. All the participants want to continue learning English with eTwinning and 96% of them think learning English is fun, 98% of the participants like their English teacher, and 96% of them think their English textbook is fun. A bit lower score of 90% of participants reported that their parents think learning English is important whereas the rest of them responded negatively or does not

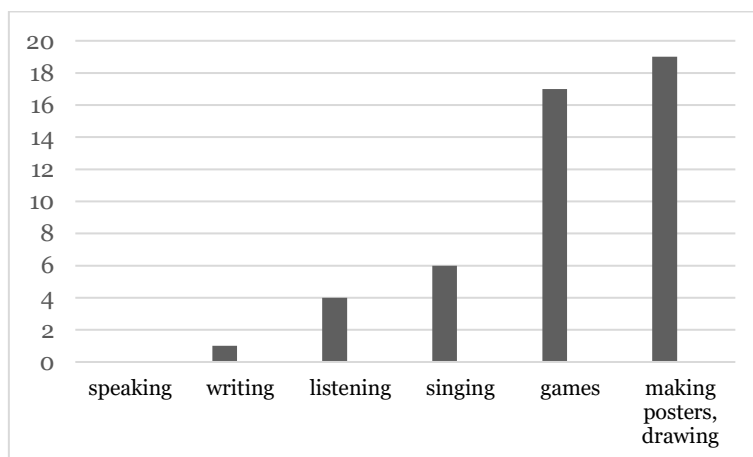
know their parents' opinion. Furthermore, 98% believe their parents are happy they are learning English, all the participants responded they like English and are looking forward to English lessons, however 66% find they are good in English and 32% think they are somewhat good in English. Similar responses were recorded for the question that English is easy to learn – 66% chose affirmative answer and 30% chose the middle option, the final 4% chose a negative answer.

Expressions	Yes		A little		No		I don't know	
	%	f	%	f	%	f	%	f
I want to continue learning English with eTwinning.	85.1	40	14.9	7	0	0	0	0
Learning English is fun.	85.1	40	10.6	5	4.3	2	0	0
My parents say it is important to learn English.	85.1	40	4.3	2	6.4	3	4.3	2
I love my English teacher.	97.9	46	2.1	1	0	0	0	0
Our English textbook is fun.	76.6	36	19.1	9	4.3	2	0	0
My parents are happy that I am learning English.	97.9	46	2.1	1	0	0	0	0
I love English.	83.0	39	17.0	8	0	0	0	0
I look forward to English classes.	85.1	40	14.9	7	0	0	0	0
I am good at English.	66.0	31	31.9	15	2.1	1	0	0
English is easy to learn.	66.0	31	29.8	14	4.3	2	0	0

Descriptive statistics of young learners' attitudes towards learning English based on Asmali's²⁴ questionnaire (Table 5.)

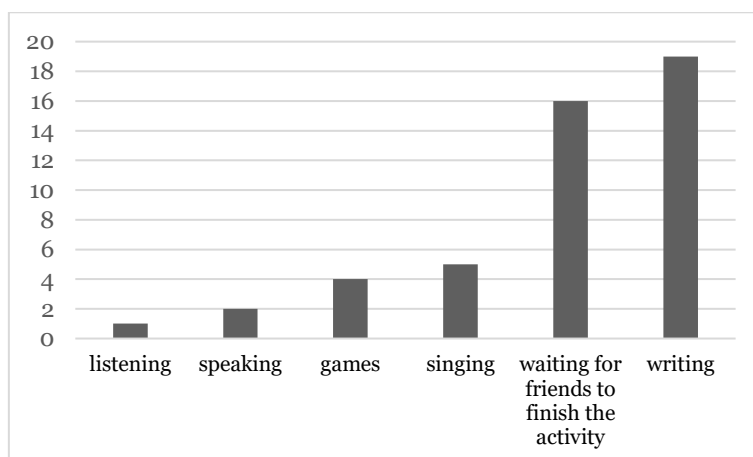
Next questions dealt with the types of activities students enjoy the best. The activities students feel the happiest are making posters and drawing (N=19), playing games (N=17), singing (N=6), listening (N=4), writing (N=1), whereas no one chose speaking, probably because young learners are still unaware that all the other activities also involve speaking.

²⁴ Mehmet ASMALI: *Young Learners' Attitudes and Motivation to Learn English*, Novitas-ROYAL (Research on Youth and Language), 2017. 11/1, 61.



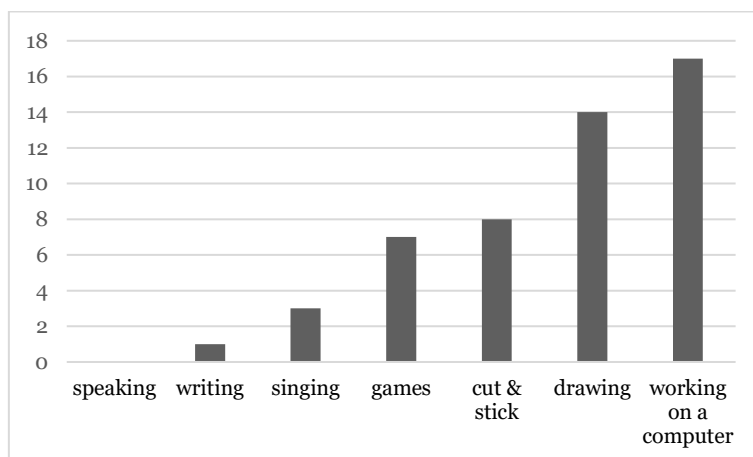
Activities where students feel the happiest (Figure 1.)

The most boring activities are writing (N=19) and waiting for friends to finish the activity (N=16), singing (N=5), games (N=4), speaking (N=2), and listening (N=1).

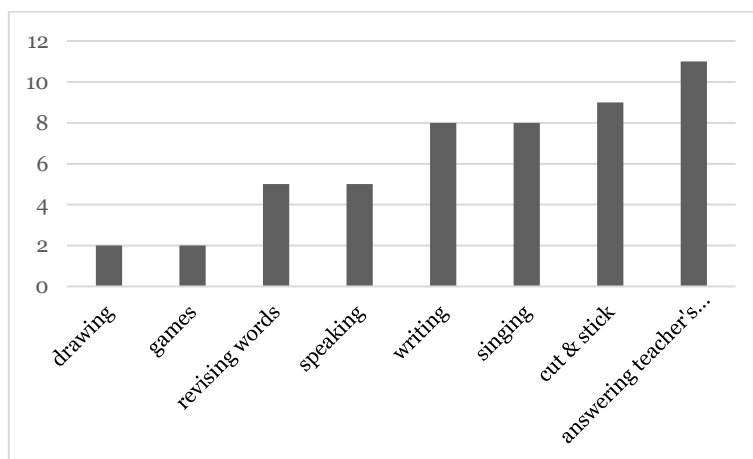


Activities that students find the most boring (Figure 2.)

Participants chose their favourite activities as shown in Figure 3 and their hardest activities in Figure 4.



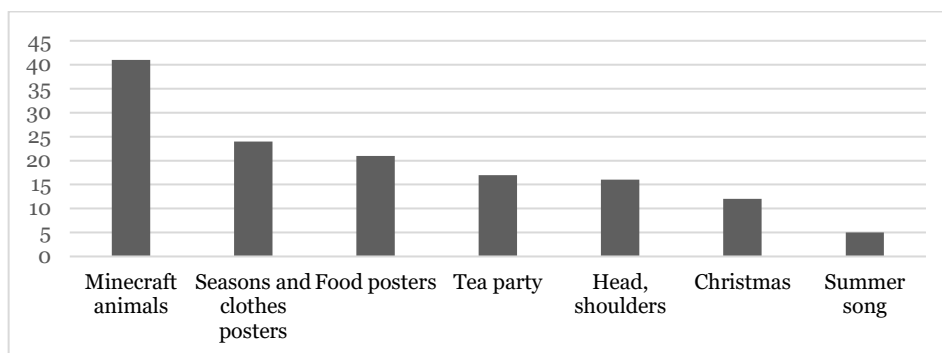
Students' favourite activities (Figure 3.)



Students' hardest activities (Figure 4.)

The questionnaire also provided insight into why students learn English and the majority does not learn it just because it is a subject in their class (N=43), but they equally display integrative, intrinsic, and extrinsic motivation (eg. "So, I can talk to tourists." N=15; "So I can speak English." N=15; "Because I love English." N=15.) Another positive result from the questionnaire was that students generally enjoy English classes (82% responded they feel excellent or very good in classes.)

As far as the eTwinning projects are concerned, students could choose up to three favourite activities and the Figure 5 summarizes their choices where Minecraft animals and creating posters were three favourite activities.



Students' favourite activities in eTwinning projects (Figure 5.)

Students' self-assessment on ICT use showed positive results where all students feel they are better (76%) or a little better (24%) at using computer and ICT tools (Chatterpix, Minecraft, Wordwall and other tools they have used). Students are interested in meeting friends from different schools and countries online and continuing cooperating with them via eTwinning (88%).

The interviews in focus groups granted insight into why students like English and they are aligned with some results from the questionnaire. Participants highlighted the practical utility of English as a means of communication in multilingual settings. For instance, one student mentioned, "I visit my dad in Germany, and I don't know German, so I speak English." This underscores the role of English as a bridge language facilitating communication in diverse environments. Another significant theme revolved around the desire to interact with a global audience. Students expressed their enthusiasm for English to communicate with tourists, which suggests a motivation beyond local contexts, emphasizing the international relevance of English. A noteworthy motivation identified in the interviews related to entertainment and media consumption. Students highlighted the advantage of knowing English for watching TV shows without relying on subtitles, which aligns with contemporary media trends, emphasizing the influence of language proficiency on accessing global content. The interviews revealed that students associate English with academic activities, such as reading and writing. One participant mentioned, "We read and write in English," indicating a perception of English as a language integral to their educational practices.

Opinions about people from English speaking countries that students reported were part of their intercultural learning. A common theme among students' perceptions revolves around dietary habits. Stereotypes include the belief that people from English-speaking countries eat a lot of unhealthy food, indulge in breakfast with items like eggs, bacon, beans, black pudding, tomato, and hash browns. Students associate English speakers with early bedtime based on personal observations, such as cousins going to sleep earlier when visiting. This reveals how individual experiences contribute to the construction of cultural stereotypes. The mention of a substantial breakfast, including specific food items,

provides insights into how students perceive cultural practices, particularly related to morning meals. The perception of big cities in English-speaking countries emerges as a distinctive feature. This stereotype suggests that students associate English speakers with a metropolitan lifestyle, contributing to a broader cultural image. The association of English-speaking countries with Christianity is noted in students' responses, which reflects an intercultural perception linked to religious practices and beliefs. Positive stereotypes emerge, with students describing people from English-speaking countries as "really smart" which contributes to a more nuanced view of intercultural perceptions. Students recognize the uniqueness of both their own culture and that of people from English-speaking countries, emphasizing a sense of distinctiveness while acknowledging similarities. Students note differences in holidays and highlight practices like tea drinking and Halloween traditions (trick or treat).

Question: What do you think about people from English speaking countries?	
Students' answers:	
•	"They eat a lot of unhealthy food."
•	"They go to sleep earlier (because my cousins did when they were visiting us)."
•	"They have big cities."
•	"Their lands are Christian."
•	"They have a lot of food for breakfast."
•	"They eat eggs and bacon, beans, black pudding, half of tomato, hash browns."
•	"They are really smart."
•	"They are special, just like we are special."
•	"They drink tea. / They trick or treat."
•	"We don't have the same holidays."

Students' answers in the interviews transcribed and translated (Table 6.)

The awareness of speaking in English was mostly connected to situations external to classroom such as when playing online games, encountering foreigners in a shop or church, but the students were aware they used English when they received a new student from Ukraine. A prevalent theme among students is the awareness of using English while engaging in online gaming (most commonly Fortnite). This includes communication with friends who speak different languages, such as French, and encountering players from foreign countries. The virtual gaming space emerges as a dynamic environment for language exchange and cultural interaction. Students reported instances of English language use in public spaces, particularly in shops, where they overheard or engaged in conversations with individuals speaking English which suggests that extracurricular activities, like shopping, serve as opportunities for students to apply their language skills in authentic, unplanned interactions. The arrival of a student from Ukraine and one student mentioned using English in church settings, where visitors from different countries are present as a significant context where students become consciously aware of using English which indicates the role of language as a tool for communication and integration in diverse social settings, transcending linguistic, religious and cultural boundaries,

showcasing the diverse contexts in which students may find themselves engaged in English language communication.

However, when asked if they speak about learning English to their parents, a common response was a straightforward "No". This suggests a potential gap in communication between students and their parents regarding the specifics of their language learning experiences. Some students mentioned discussing learning English in the context of travel aspirations. One student expressed a desire to go to France, indicating that English proficiency is seen as a means to facilitate international travel. Another response highlighted the role of responsibility, with a student stating, "I have to teach my sister English." what underscores a family dynamic where older siblings take on a teaching role, possibly influencing their own language learning strategies. A positive interaction was reported with a student mentioning, "I spoke to my grandad, and he said my English was good." The context indicates the potential influence of positive reinforcement and family support on students' language learning motivation. A notable response indicated that parents think English is important for effective communication and job opportunities which offers a pragmatic perspective with broader societal expectations and aspirations tied to language proficiency.

When asked about their learning strategies, the answers were quite simple. Some students reported using minimal or no specific learning strategies. This straightforward response suggests a lack of awareness or articulation of explicit strategies employed in the language learning process. One student mentioned using a digital platform called IZZI, combining technology with a traditional textbook which shows a shift towards incorporating digital resources into language learning practices.

Results and Discussion

The analysis of the data from project evaluation, questionnaires and interviews showed that students display positive attitudes towards learning English and the questionnaires and interviews confirmed which activities they enjoy. Students have improved their skills in using English as a foreign language, working in a team, digital literacy, and use of ICT. Teachers want to continue the project and certain developments for future projects have been initiated.

The most frequently used teaching methods were project-based learning, cooperative learning, and ICT-based learning which was mostly influenced by the eTwinning project being an online project.

Student questionnaire results showed positive attitudes towards learning English and participating in eTwinning projects. Students expressed interest in various activities such as making posters, drawing, playing games, singing, and listening. Students demonstrated high levels of motivation for learning English for practical communication, interaction with a global audience, and entertainment purposes. Most students felt they were good at English, found it fun, and had positive perceptions of their English teacher and textbook.

Teachers expressed a desire to continue the collaboration online with third graders, suggesting topics such as animals, food, and weather for future projects.

Teachers aimed at enhancing students' independent use of ICT, incorporating video calls, AI, STEM, outdoor learning, birdwatching, biodiversity, and card exchanges.

Limited communication about learning English with parents was reported, indicating a potential communication gap which could be improved by parent-teacher communication.

Some students reported minimal or no specific learning strategies, suggesting a lack of awareness or articulation of explicit strategies. Positive outcomes included improvements in English language skills, teamwork, digital literacy, and ICT use.

Teaching Implications

The findings from focus group interviews provide a nuanced understanding of students' motivations for liking English. These motivations encompass practical communication needs, global interaction, media consumption, and academic engagement. Recognizing and leveraging these motivations can inform language education strategies. Integrating real-world applications, global perspectives, and media-rich content into language curricula may enhance student engagement and proficiency.

When it comes to intercultural learning, the importance of addressing and challenging stereotypes in language education to foster a more culturally sensitive and informed global perspective is encouraged to promote a better understanding of diverse cultures. By fostering open discussions and challenging preconceived ideas, educators can contribute to the development of culturally aware and respectful learners.

The study reveals diverse patterns in how students communicate with their parents about learning English and the simplicity of reported learning strategies. While some students connect language learning with travel aspirations, familial responsibilities, and positive reinforcement, others express limited discussions with their parents. The incorporation of digital platforms into learning strategies highlights the evolving landscape of language education. Language educators should consider the influence of family dynamics and societal expectations on students' language learning motivations. Encouraging open communication between students and their parents about language learning goals may enhance overall support and engagement. Additionally, recognizing the role of digital platforms in students' learning strategies could inform the integration of technology in language education, fostering a more dynamic and inclusive learning environment.

Conclusion

Overall, the data analysis indicated positive outcomes in students' attitudes, skills, and motivations related to English language learning through the eTwinning project.

Teachers expressed a willingness to continue and expand similar projects, incorporating new topics and activities to enhance students' language proficiency and engagement.

Students showed positive experiences with use of eTwinning in the classroom and are eager to continue similar activities, meet friends online and collaborate to work on common goals. Students' skills in general have been reported to have been improved, namely communicative competence, especially in speaking, intercultural awareness was raised as confirmed in the interviews, ICT skills, and working in a team have been improved via project activities. However, limitations should be considered due to instruments used in this study, self-assessment and questionnaires were employed by the teacher who was also a researcher and as Dörnyei²⁵ suggests responses may have been unreliable because students misinterpreted questions, had literacy problems or chose socially desirable answers. However, questionnaire results were aligned with previous research by Asmali²⁶ and there are no significant differences.

The study also gave insight into favourite and least favourite activities that students do in English classes and the activities in the project that they liked the best which can be used in future teaching to deliver lessons of higher quality and nurture positive classroom atmosphere.

Since PBL is currently popular method of teaching with favourable benefits for students, further research would benefit the insights into learning and teaching strategies, as well as the language acquisition processes that take place.

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Abstract

ANGOL NYELVTANULÁS AZ eTWINNING-GEL

A projekt a második osztályos diákok angol tanítására összpontosított az eTwinning platformon végzett együttműködéses tevékenységek révén. Célja az angol tanulás gazdagítása volt a tankönyveken túlmenően, különböző tevékenységekbe való bevonódással és azok nemzetközi megosztásával. A tanárok havonta koordináltak, előre meghatározott témához igazodó tevékenységeket javasolva. A projekt változatos tanítási módszereket alkalmazott, ideértve a projekt-alapú és érdeklődés-alapú tanulást, az IKT használatát, játékosítást, játékokat, dalokat, történetmesélést és a kommunikatív megközelítést. Végül a projekt értékelése pozitív eredményeket mutatott: a diákok fejlesztették az angol nyelvi képességeiket, csapatmunka-képességeiket és digitális jártasságukat. Az kezdeményezés kedvező attitűdöt alakított ki az angol nyelvtanulás iránt a résztvevők körében.