

# A STUDY ON USING PROJECT-BASED LEARNING IN ENHANCING ENGLISH LEARNING MOTIVATION AND IMPROVING ENGLISH PRODUCTIVE SKILLS FOR STUDENTS OF GRADE 10 AT CHU VAN AN HIGH SCHOOL, THAI NGUYEN PROVINCE.

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## ABSTRACT

*English, crucial for daily life, work, and international communication, poses challenges for English educators despite its official status as the second international language. Traditional classroom settings may hinder collaboration due to task assignments. Educators, universities, and employers address this issue through practice-based teaching. The National Foreign Language Project (2008-2020) recommends integrating foreign languages into the regular curriculum to improve proficiency. Project-based learning (PBL), a learner-centered method, effectively motivates students and fosters learning interests. Grade 10 students seek practical experience to enhance knowledge and social interactions. Schools have shifted their role beyond knowledge acquisition, and high schools lack desired outcomes in knowledge retention and teaching methods. The researcher's project aims to understand PBL's mechanisms in fostering learner motivation and assess its efficacy in developing productive language skills. PBL benefits both teachers and students, enhancing language proficiency and creating inclusive, collaborative learning environments..*

**Keyword:** *project-based learning, English learning motivation, productive skills*

## CHAPTER 1

### 1. INTRODUCTION

#### 1.1. Rationale for the Study

English, crucial for daily life, work, and international communication, poses challenges for English educators despite its official status as the second international language. Traditional classroom settings may hinder collaboration due to task assignments. Educators, universities, and employers address this issue through practice-based teaching. The National Foreign Language Project (2008-2020) recommends integrating foreign languages into the regular curriculum to improve proficiency. Project-based learning (PBL), a learner-centered method, effectively motivates students and fosters learning interests. Grade 10 students seek practical experience to enhance knowledge and social interactions. Schools have shifted their role beyond knowledge acquisition, and high schools lack desired outcomes in knowledge retention and teaching

methods. The researcher's project aims to understand PBL's mechanisms in fostering learner motivation and assess its efficacy in developing productive language skills. PBL benefits both teachers and students, enhancing language proficiency and creating inclusive, collaborative learning environments.

#### 1.2. Objectives of the Study

This study investigates learning difficulties in English language acquisition among grade 10 students at Chu Van An High School. It assesses project-based learning (PBL) implementation and its potential to enhance motivation, improve skills, and develop soft skills.

#### 1.3. Significance of the Study

This study explores the benefits and challenges of Project-Based Learning (PBL) in English Language Teaching (ELT) for high school students. It aims to assess PBL's impact on student attitudes, learning habits, motivation, and productive skills, while

also investigating its potential to assist teachers in selecting effective teaching techniques.

#### **1.4. Scope of the Study**

The study examines project-based learning (PBL) as a teaching methodology to enhance learning motivation and improve English proficiency among grade 10 students.

#### **1.5. Organization of the study**

The study on PBL's effectiveness in English language instruction is organized into five chapters: Introduction, Literature Review, Methodology, Findings and Discussion, and Implications and Conclusion. Each chapter builds upon the previous one, providing a comprehensive analysis of the topic.

### **CHAPTER 2**

## **2. LITERATURE REVIEW**

### **2.1. Overview of project-based learning**

#### **2.1.1. Definition of project-based learning**

Numerous scholarly publications have explored project-based learning (PBL), presenting diverse perspectives. Some view it as an ideology or teaching methodology, while others consider it a form of teaching that integrates various methods during project implementation.

PBL is a student-centered teaching approach characterized by authentic tasks that encourage learners to apply knowledge to create tangible products. Teams collaborate to solve problems and create shared products like thesis papers, reports, plans, or models.

John Dewey asserted in 1897 that teachers shape learners' ideas and habits, not solely by them. He believed the child's mind is receptive to ideas and habits quickly and accurately, so "expressive or constructive activities" should be the center of education.

In 1918, Kilpatrick, inspired by Dewey's philosophy, proposed project-based learning (PBL) through his essay "The Project Method." He firmly believed PBL was a purposeful learning method that motivated students to excel in project planning.

In 1994, Krajci, Blumenfeld, Marx, and Soloway defined PBL as a process where students pursue authentic problems. This process involves asking

questions, debating ideas, making predictions, designing plans, gathering information, analyzing data, drawing conclusions, and communicating findings.

Tate (2001) identified four phases in a project: purposeful planning, execution, judgment, and reflection. EFL learners should engage proactively in all four phases.

According to Chard (2006), PBL is an "in-depth investigation of a real-world topic worthy of children's attention and effort." Students demonstrate their knowledge by creating final products through methods like experiments, posters, videos, or multimedia presentations.

In 2011, Levin noted that projects are often embedded in problem-based learning, especially during presentations, where they provide solutions and may be recommended to real audiences. Projects focus on identifying effective methods for creating or solving problems. Students learn through practical experiences and problem-solving (Dewey, 1916).

PBL is a well-established method for imparting thinking competencies and fostering flexible learning environments. It benefits students by involving sustained effort, decision-making, collaboration, establishing a real-world connection, and systematic assessment.

#### **2.1.2 History of project-based learning**

Project based learning has endured a century of exposure in the often-tumultuous realm of education reform. Historical research stated that its history can be divided into five phases:

1590-1765: The beginnings of project work at architectural schools in Europe.

1765-1880: The project as a regular teaching method and its transplantation to America.

1880-1915: Work on projects in manual training and in general public schools.

1915-1965: Redefinition of the project method and its transplantation from America back to Europe.

1965-today: Rediscovery of the project idea and the third wave of its international dissemination.

## ***2.2 English learning motivation***

English, a vital tool for studying abroad and job security, is widely taught in schools, vocational colleges, and universities. However, many learners struggle to learn effectively due to finding the right methods and motivation. While motivation varies, the primary goal for foreign language learners is mastering the language.

Johnson and Holubec (1994) suggest project-based learning, which fosters collaboration, reinforces learning, and promotes achievement. This approach engages students in real-world demands, leading to research and addressing various disciplines in a short period.

In conclusion, project-based learning motivates learners to achieve their goals by effectively teaching English.

## ***2.3 Advantages of PBL in English classes***

Project-based learning (PBL) is a profitable learning strategy that offers several benefits. First, PBL aims to produce students who understand each discipline, enabling them to acquire new knowledge easily and memorably. Second, it encourages lifelong learning by providing students with opportunities to apply their knowledge in real-world situations. Third, PBL accommodates students with diverse learning styles and backgrounds, fostering a broader range of capabilities and requiring the use of all modalities in research, problem-solving, and communication. When students are engaged in their learning, they achieve higher levels of success. PBL also develops essential social skills like teamwork, problem-solving, critical thinking, and information technology, which are crucial for success in schools and the workplace. Additionally, PBL improves information exploitation and collaboration, making it an effective method for engaging students and enhancing productive skills.

## ***2.5 Disadvantages of PBL in English classes***

Teaching English through Project-Based Learning (PBL) has several advantages, but it also has some limitations. First, PBL requires a long-term commitment and careful planning to attract learners. If students don't have enough time or teachers aren't flexible, students may be forced to work overtime. Second, PBL is often used in specific situations with concrete topics, rather

than in all contexts. Third, PBL requires necessary facilities and financial resources to implement practical activities, making it difficult to implement in schools. Studies have shown that teachers face challenges when implementing PBL, and they often focus on addressing one or two of these challenges at a time. Finally, PBL is not suitable for transferring abstract theories or practicing basic skills systems. Instead of sitting in class and absorbing knowledge, students in PBL projects must conduct research, gather information, process data, and present their findings.

## ***2.6 Summary***

This chapter explores the theoretical foundations of project-based learning (PBL). It defines PBL and its historical context, outlines the stages of implementing PBL with teenagers, and compares its advantages and disadvantages. The next chapter discusses the research questions, instruments, subjects, data collection procedures, and analysis techniques

# **CHAPTER 3**

## **METHODOLOGY**

### ***3.1 Research questions***

This study aimed to research the effectiveness of project-based learning as a profitable teaching method to enhance English learning motivation and improve productive skills for grade 10 students at Chu Van An High School in Thai Nguyen Province. The study addressed three primary research questions:

1. What challenges do grade 10 students face when learning English?
2. How do students respond to implementing a project-based learning experiment in English classes?
3. Does project-based learning positively impact learning motivation and English productive skills for grade 10 students at Chu Van An High School?

### ***3.2 Data collection instruments***

The study examines PBL's effectiveness in motivating students and improving English skills using surveys, interviews, observations, and product evaluations.

### **3.2.1 Justification**

Questionnaires, interviews, and observation are the most appropriate tools for investigating the effectiveness of project-based learning in teaching and learning English. These instruments will be used to gather information about assessing the effectiveness of PBL.

### **3.2.2 Description**

The researcher published 10 questions on Google Drive for 120 respondents. Five pre-PBL questions asked students about traditional classes and English renovation, while the remaining five post-PBL questions sought feedback.

The researcher observed students designing final product procedures, considering difficulties, and providing support, which enhanced student confidence and provided accurate data.

A 4-question interview with English teachers about PBL's importance was also conducted. The researcher informed respondents that the questionnaire, interview, and observation examined PBL's effectiveness in enhancing English motivation and improving productive skills. All respondents were encouraged to complete the questionnaire or interview honestly.

### **3.3 Subjects**

The study involved 122 participants, including 2 teachers and 120 grade 10 students, to implement a project in language classes.

### **3.4 Data collection procedures**

This section outlines the data collection procedure, comprising four stages:

- 1. Materials and References:** Documents and references in English and Vietnamese were collected to understand the project-based learning approach in teaching English in high schools.
- 2. Survey, Interview, and Authentic Tasks:** I designed a 10-question questionnaire for students and an interview for teachers. I also suggested authentic tasks where students worked in groups to create a final product related to the assigned topic.
- 3. Data Collection:** I delivered questionnaires to 120 prepared respondents, ensuring privacy and freedom in answering. Each respondent answered 10 questions on Google Drive, resulting in 1200

items. Teachers answered 4 questions on PBL. This large sample size ensures reliable results.

**4. Data Analysis:** I calculated the percentage from the 1200 items to estimate the effectiveness of PBL in English training. I also analyzed the interviewee's information and assembled 24 posters for feedback based on specific criteria.

### **3.5 Data Analysis**

The interview results, students' progress, and final projects will estimate study outcomes and evaluate students' cognition and knowledge after applying PBL in English. Data from these instruments will be collected and analyzed to understand teachers' and students' perspectives on PBL's significance in English teaching and learning.

#### **3.5.1 Data analysis from a questionnaire.**

To gather student feedback, I distributed 120 questionnaires via Google Drive. I then collected the responses, calculated the percentages, and presented the data in visually appealing pie charts.

#### **3.5.2 Data Analysis from Interview**

Two English teachers at Chu Van An High School were interviewed to gather their perspectives on students' difficulties in acquiring productive language skills and implementing projects. The researcher also recorded and reported the teachers' suggestions for teaching foreign languages.

#### **3.5.3 Data Analysis from Final Products**

The researcher collected 24 projects from 24 groups of students. Subsequently, they were required to present their products. The assessment was conducted based on predefined criteria.

### **3.6 Summary**

This chapter outlines the methodology employed in the study. It encompasses the research inquiries, instruments selected, and rationale behind their choice. The study's subjects are also described based on fundamental criteria. The detailed procedures for data collection are illustrated, and data analysis is referenced. The subsequent chapter will present the findings and facilitate a discussion of the study's results.

**CHAPTER 4**

**FINDINGS AND DISCUSSIONS**

**4.1 Findings**

4.1.1 Grade 10th students at CVA High School face challenges in English language learning and project implementation.

A questionnaire reveals that most students are positive about English language learning (Figure 1) and understand its importance in today's globalized world (Figure 2).

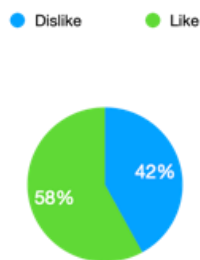


Figure 1: English learning interest

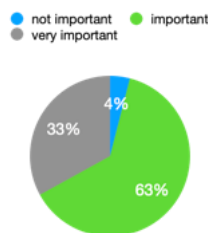


Figure 2: The Significance of English in Contemporary Society

Nearly half of the learners found English uninteresting, some even believing it obsolete. They also noted that their schools' lessons were

insufficient to meet their learning needs (Figure 3).

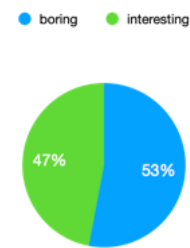


Figure 3: Perceptions of English Instruction at CVA High School: Student Sentiment Analysis

They also highlighted the challenges of learning English, particularly vocabulary and grammatical structures. Students also suggested an unfavorable learning environment as a factor influencing their English learning (Figure 4).

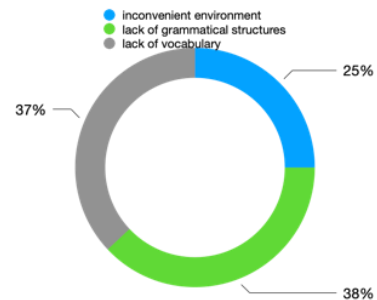


Figure 4: The difficulties in studying English productive skills

To address this challenge, language teachers should use an appropriate English teaching and learning method that encourages students to use language effectively in real-world settings, such as project-based learning. Many learners value this model more than traditional ones (Table 1).

Reasons	PBL		Traditional methods	
	Number	%	Number	%
Sts have more chances to solve the real problems	87	72,5	33	27,5
Sts can reach out beyond the school building	90	75	30	25
Sts developed social skills such as high order thinking, creativity, collaboration skills	75	62,5	45	37,5
It is easy to conduct with general topics, not concrete ones	60	50	60	50
It should be applied to convey abstract theories	98	81,7	22	18,3
Teachers only give instructions, sts do everything	110	91,7	10	8,3

Table 1: The reasons why PBL is more effective than traditional methods

Implementing the project proved challenging. Students were unclear about choosing suitable topics and assigning work. Teachers observed and interviewed students, revealing other obstacles.

	Week 1	Week 2	Week 3
What students knew	Background of PBL	Choose an appropriate topic Delivery work	Procedures to create a project
What students did not know	How to implement a project	Steps to conduct a project	No
<b>Student's difficulties</b>	How to choose a topic How to divide work	Choose the suitable methods to analyze the information How to make an effective presentation	No

Table 2: Teachers' observation while students conducted the project

Learners faced challenges in creating a time schedule due to the three-week project deadline and estimating task time. Self-motivation to follow up the project was lacking. Implementing the project required significant effort and collaboration. By the end of the third week, 24 groups presented and submitted their products. With teacher support, students made rapid progress.

#### 4.1.2 English learning motivation

Findings support the view that project work leads to enjoyment and self-esteem (Levine, 2004). Observing students conduct the project, teachers improved learning motivation, attitude, and interest. The questionnaire data showed over 80% of students were confident PBL can help them gain more confidence in using English (Figure 5).



Figure 5: The influence of PBL on students' learning

#### 4.1.3 English productive skills

PBL significantly impacted the development of low and medium ability students, enhancing their learning skills, particularly productive skills. High ability students made progress in speaking and writing but not in reading and listening.

At the end of the term, learners wrote a paragraph and presented it to introduce their project. Group work and idea sharing allowed students to practice speaking skills. They communicated to improve the product.

Language learners also developed their writing skills by writing an introduction paragraph. Appendix 8 shows one group's writing about "The importance of music in our life." While not excellent, their confidence and naturalness improved when presenting. Looking up new words and using efficient grammatical structures, along with teachers' feedback, would significantly improve their writing and speaking skills.

### 4.2 Discussion

#### 4.2.1 The influence of PBL on other skills

Project-based learning (PBL) equips teenagers with essential skills beyond finding answers. It fosters critical thinking by encouraging students to combine answers to find solutions. PBL is process and product-oriented, allowing learners

to develop work and language skills through problem-solving, creativity, teamwork, and language. Students choose topics and include relevant information, resulting in creative products. Approximately 100% of grade 10 learners at CVA high school prefer group work to individual work through projects, as evidenced by questionnaire data. This preference stems from the opportunity to share ideas and the potential for completing projects ahead of schedule.

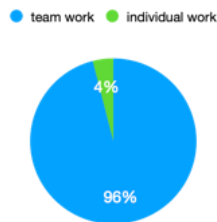


Figure 6: The choice of team work or individual work

Project-based learning fosters resources and information skills, encouraging cooperative work with peers and mentors in a student-centered environment. It promotes exploration of topics of interest and enhances and promotes valuable experiences like social responsibility. PBL helps students develop real-world skills like collaboration, decision-making, initiative, and problem-solving.

#### **4.2.2 Teachers' reflection on project-based method**

Most English teachers, including two at CVA high school, value PBL, which benefits learners and educators. It transforms traditional classrooms into PBL models, converting from following orders to self-directed learning, from memorizing to discovering, and from teacher dependence to empowerment. Two English teachers observed PBL's effects on students' motivation, attitude, confidence, and productive skills, but faced challenges like time limitations, data collection, analysis, and product quality. They suggested adopting new instructional strategies. PBL differs from traditional direct-instruction methods that rely on textbooks, lectures, and assessments, making it challenging for teachers to manage the learning process, develop authentic assessments, and recognize good project opportunities.

#### **4.3 Summary**

This chapter presented data from instruments to answer research questions. It also discussed

implementing project-based learning in all schools, especially high schools, to achieve efficient learning outcomes. The study examined PBL's impact on social skills and students' and teachers' reflections. The researcher emphasized PBL's role in boosting student learning motivation and developing productive English skills for grade 10 students. The next chapter discusses pedagogical implications, study limitations, and the need for further research.

## **CHAPTER 5**

### **5. IMPLICATIONS AND CONCLUSION**

#### **5.1 Implications**

PBL impacts both teachers and students. Learners gain opportunities to share ideas and collaborate in groups to address real-world problems with minimal teacher guidance. As evidenced in chapter 4, students initially had a basic understanding of PBL but delved deeply into it with teacher guidance. This teaching method allows teachers to observe students' work more freely, facilitating their role as facilitators rather than taskmasters. Teachers become indispensable sources of inspiration and encouragement.

To address challenges in traditional classrooms, it's crucial to raise awareness among teachers and learners about PBL. While its benefits are undeniable, a comprehensive understanding of PBL is essential. It's not sufficient to highlight its advantages without considering its disadvantages, as not everyone accepts PBL as an effective teaching method, and some may resist its implementation.

Therefore, experts in the education field should organize meetings or workshops to provide detailed and clear explanations of the PBL model.

Project-based learning is strongly correlated with learning motivation and the development of productive skills. When students engage in authentic problems, collaborate, construct solutions, and adapt their learning approach, their motivation and attitudes towards learning are significantly enhanced. Demonstrating knowledge of contemporary teaching methods and experimenting with non-traditional practices also helps achieve teaching objectives, such as increasing motivation, interest, and performance among English as a Foreign Language teachers.

Project-based learning enhances communicative and collaborative skills as students work in groups. Upon project completion, learners present their products, showcasing writing and speaking proficiency.

Despite challenges, project-based learning benefits English teaching and learning. Given its advantages, it's advisable to include such projects in English classes, especially for English Foreign Learners, who often have limited English opportunities. Grading projects encourages learners to apply language skills and boosts their confidence in using English effectively.

### ***5.2 Limitations of the study and suggestions for further researches***

Despite the researcher's efforts, this study has shortcomings due to time constraints, limited field knowledge, restricted reference sources, and other factors.

The primary limitation is students' unfamiliarity with group work. Initially, they collaborated and assigned roles, but some dominated, while others contributed minimally. Some used their native language instead of the target language. To address these issues, the teacher used cognitive modeling, completed tasks while thinking aloud, and modeled effective strategies.

The current investigation was constrained by students' perception of the project's duration as excessive, leading to a decline in interest and motivation. Short-term projects may be more valid for high school students than long-term ones.

The sample size was limited, and the researcher's request for participants to choose one of two topics restricted generalizability. Future research should involve a larger sample and diverse topics.

Some students felt uncomfortable with the teacher's role as a facilitator and coordinator instead of a knowledge provider. Initially, they were uncomfortable with selecting a topic or developing a team plan, but most soon recognized the teacher's support.

### ***5.3 Conclusion***

[1]. Based on findings, the researcher suggests project-based learning (PBL) as an effective approach to enhancing English learning motivation and improving speaking and writing skills. The researcher

addressed research questions through questionnaires, interviews, and observations.

- [2]. Most students recognized English's significance but acknowledged its challenges and difficulties in identifying effective study strategies. However, after implementing PBL in English classes, many learners agreed it was highly valuable in attracting students. PBL increased students' interest and desire to learn through knowledge acquisition through "building," group formation, cooperation, authentic information sources, processing, evaluation, taking initiatives, and making decisions. It also fostered autonomy as students gained choices and developed a sense of control and responsibility. This approach aligns with students' abilities, styles, and preferences.
- [3]. Despite limitations, the researcher proposes pedagogical implications such as raising awareness of PBL's importance and compelling reasons for its application in all schools. The study serves as a valuable reference source for teaching and studying English. This concluding chapter concludes the study while suggesting avenues for further investigations
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