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## THE IMPACT OF PROJECT-BASED LEARNING ON STUDENTS' MOTIVATION IN FOREIGN LANGUAGE LEARNING: A COMPREHENSIVE LITERATURE REVIEW

**Abstract:** This literature review explores the level of motivation when introducing Project-Based Learning (PBL) in the mainstream classes of the foreign language. A particular attention is given to its application in language education, highlighting benefits and possible challenges. This review synthesizes findings from various research studies that highlight the benefits of PBL, including increased engagement, deeper conceptual understanding, and faster language retention. Despite the fact that PBL stimulates students to acquire a foreign language, there are some challenges, such as the need for additional guidance, lack of teacher training and assessment techniques. Although the review highlights the exceeding advantages of PBL over traditional teaching methods, it also emphasizes the positive application of balanced approach for improving academic excellence of students. Moreover, the literature review takes into considerations the essence of cultural factor and suggest longitudinal application of PBL for identification of long-term effects on students' motivation to learn a foreign language. The review provides a foundation for further empirical research on integrating PBL into educational curricula and offer essential insights into its best practices in foreign language classrooms. To reach the assigned aim, the synthesized research articles have been taken from the following data bases, such as Google Scholar, Research Gate, JSTORE, and Web Science with prevailing number of them conducted between the period of 2018 and 2024.

**Keywords:** Project-Based Learning (PBL), impact, motivation, benefits, challenges, foreign language learning.

### Introduction

The development and increasing popularity of learner-centered approaches has changed the vector of the educational process completely by encouraging instructors to investigate new innovative methods of teaching. One of the most effective approaches which is taking a great significance and prominence in the contemporary world is project-based programming. These days, numerous companies tend to give their choice over the candidates with developed soft skills, such as collaboration, communication, critical reasoning and a number of essential abilities that might enable their organizations to survive in the fast-changing globalization processes. Therefore, employees should learn all of these inspiring qualities in the university, so they can exhibit all required skills in the working life.

Project-based learning is considered to be one of the most appropriate and effective approaches that meet these elevated demands of a new working tendency. In other words, a project is the perspective when students hear not what they are going to learn, but what they are going to create by the end of the learning process (Lenz et al, 2015). According to Thomas (2000, p.1), "project is a model that organizes learning around projects." In this approach, students alleviate the arising issue through asking various questions, debating with each other, discussing their findings and creating new products.

The given freedom of choice and autonomy in organizing their own learning content is likely to influence students' engagement and raise their interest in the educational processes. Therefore, it has been discovered that PBL has a positive impact on students' motivation and their involvement in the learning (Hilvonen et al., 2010; Chiang et al., 2016; Carrabba et al., 2018; Shin, 2018). Over the past decades, PBL research area has shifted from the simple descriptive studies to very detailed

analysis of determining the effectiveness of real-life projects in stimulating intrinsic motivation of students, deepening their comprehension, and promoting transferable skills. The main aim of the following literature review is to synthesize a great spectrum of research studies and theoretical perspectives on PBL, with a particular focus on its application in foreign language learning. Before delving into empirical evidence of PBL in improving students' motivation, the given literature review explores the historical background and theoretical foundations of PBL. Additionally, it highlights unique challenges and benefits presented when implementing PBL in foreign language education and identifies critical gaps that future research study may address.

The essence of motivating students in foreign language learning process is well established in the literature of many scholars. To illustrate, according to Dörnyei (1990) motivation plays a key role in determining the success of language acquisition, whereas Deci and Ryan (1985) have underscored the significance of inducing students intrinsically throughout the process of language learning. Despite the existing backdrop, integration of PBL in foreign language education fulfills a wide range of motivational deficits by involving students meaningful and authentic tasks. In the following sections, the review will study and provide thorough information on identifying key concepts, historical antecedents, and current controversies around PBL, providing an in-depth analysis of its potential in transforming foreign language instruction.

## **Literature Review**

This section of the research paper synthesizes essential research papers conducted in the field of Project-Based Learning and its effectiveness on students' motivation in foreign language learning.

## **Project-Based Learning**

The history of project-based learning can be traced back to thousand years ago when a popular concept "learn by doing" had been practiced widely by ancient Chinese scholars, later on being implemented in the 16<sup>th</sup> century by Newton and numerous scholars who investigated the most important discoveries of the world. Nevertheless, most contemporary scholars relate the birth of Project-Based Learning to John Dewey's writings in the 1960s. As stated by the empirical philosophy of Dewey, project-based learning involves natural problems that should be alleviated by students through in-depth analysis (Shin, 2018). This type of instruction advocates to be based upon Vygotsky's constructivist and Dewey's experiential learning (Smith, 2005). According to Acar (2013), project-based learning is a constructive approach that is applied in the real-life settings around the fundamental projects which are fully chosen based on students' decisions and selections. Howard (2002) assumes that project-based learning provides students with a meaningful task, thereby improving their critical-thinking and creative abilities, also contributing to the enhancement of cooperation and self-directed skills. In other words, this is a long-term process that enhances student motivation by introducing authentic issues and giving ownership over their own projects. Students deal with the real-world problems where they learn to construct their own knowledge and experience beyond their current understanding (Oh et al., 2020). The main role of the teacher in this method is constructing tasks, challenging students through thought-provoking questions, as well as directing and encouraging social interaction between students. Eventually, the teacher evaluates the learning and knowledge gained at the end of the experience.

Before presenting the final output known as "artifact," students should go through different stages of PBL. The initial step is "Challenging Problem or Question", at this stage students are presented with intriguing questions by enabling them to pose other ones as well. This stage assists in defining the expected direction of the research. The following stages are "Sustained Inquiry" and "Authenticity" where students choose the product which is meaningful in the real-world. In the next stage, students make choices over the sources of information and topics. In some cases, students are given a chance to choose advisors or keep working without them. In the steps that follow, students receive feedback from their peers, analyse and work on mistakes. The last two stages ("Critique & Revision"; "Public Product") associate with students presenting their own work and reflecting on

their own learning processes by highlighting the areas of growth and challenges with which they had to cope throughout the process (Ministry of Education, 2014).

All of the essentials of PBL create a direct link between practical and intellectual abilities of students by promoting significant learning and enabling students to witness various experiences and knowledge-based situations. Based on the following merits of PBL, it has been discovered that there is a direct link between the intervention of PBL in the learning process and motivational improvements of students. According to Chiang and Lee (2016), students' motivation is stimulated in a wide range of ways in a PBL environment by conducting a group-discussion, regular meetings with the supervisor, immediate feedback, self-reflective sessions and sharing leadership.

### **Students' motivation in PBL**

As a psychological phenomenon, motivation has been studied numerous times and defined by various scholars. According to Keller (1983), motivation can be understood as "the choice people make as to what experiences or goals they will approach or avoid and the degree of effort they exert in that respect" (p. 389). Whereas, Gardners (1985) believed that motivation is the combination of three main factors, particularly the learners' efforts to learn something, desires to achieve their goals and favorable attitudes toward it. In general, motivation can be divided into two main types: intrinsic and extrinsic motivation.

According to Plant and Ryan (1985), intrinsic motivation can be defined as a motive that emerges from the activity itself or within the person. Most students are self-motivated when they seek enjoyment, challenges, curiosity or self-expression. In literature, intrinsic motivation is measured through a free-choice task or self-report questionnaires (Deci & Ryan, 1985; Ryan & Grolnick, 1986). As for extrinsic motivation, it is believed to have a motive which arises outside of the activity (Liu et al., 2019). Based on the definition provided, any type of external incentives can be considered as the part of external motivation. For instance, Amabile et al. (1994) has divided extrinsic motivation into two main types: (a) compensation orientation which focuses on external rewards, and (b) outward orientation, which underlines the idea of people comparing themselves to each other.

Some of the research findings have discovered that the process of exchanging ideas and knowledge among participants in the learning increases students' intrinsic motivation (Koh et al., 2010; Rasiah, 2014). The research outcomes are supported by the study conducted by Oh et al. (2020), where it has been investigated that through the intervention of PBL the external factors have been internalized into intrinsic motivation. Students felt much more motivated by receiving the feedback from their peers, it has helped them in understanding their own abilities. Moreover, they felt much more motivated by having more freedom over the choice they make and control over the project outcomes, resulting in a sense of ownership. In addition, the study carried out by Acar (2013) has emphasized that the model of PBL shows very high results in increasing the internal motivation of professional sportsmen. However, it does not impact the internal motivation of the sportsmen of the national team level by leaving more space and time in extending further activities.

Another study conducted by Maftoon (2013) has discovered the existing discrepancy in their research results. The study results have shown that the motivation of foreign language learning have been identified and increased after the intervention of PBL only in two out of four Iranian EFL groups, whereas the rest of the two represented absolutely opposite results by demonstrating no changes in motivational level.

According to the study findings of Kortam et al. (2018), which have been conducted among Arab learners, have been revealed that students felt more motivated to study biology after the intervention of the PBL model. They highlighted the freedom of action and expression that PBL experience has offered them. Moreover, they mentioned that PBL helped them to understand the subject matter more profoundly since they had to search for information and materials to explain it to other students.

### **PBL in Foreign Language Education**

The latest research studies conducted on effectiveness of PBL highlights major improvements in enhancing students' engagement and motivation in the process of foreign language learning. The recent studies illustrate that PBL integration fosters deeper learning, improve better retention of language, and cultivates essential communication skills by making students work in groups (Bui et al., 2020; P'ng et al., 2023). The given investigations emphasize the idea that PBL fully aligns with modern teaching paradigms which prioritize learner autonomy and critical thinking.

For example, a study conducted by Kim and Eisenhower (2019) investigated the impact of PBL on EFL students in a Korean university setting, showing that students have demonstrated a significant level of motivation and exhibited more positive attitude towards language learning compared to traditional learning classes. Likewise, Kavlu (2017) has explored the effects of PBL in English language classrooms within Fezalar Educational Institutions in Iraq by pointing out the enhanced language and social skills of students, highlighting their speaking confidence and increased motivation towards their learning process. Moreover, teachers pointed out not only students' improved abilities of speaking in English, but their willingness to communicate and interact with other students.

### **Challenges of PBL in Language Learning**

Although PBL exhibits some significant improvements in foreign language education, there are certain difficulties as well. One common issue of PBL is the resistance of students to work autonomously, especially in countries where teacher-centered instruction can be considered as the norm of educational process (Wang, 2020). Some students still require scaffolding and structured guidance to be fully involved in PBL activities and struggle with self-directed learning.

Another essential issue is the assessment of PBL projects which do not align with traditional assessments methods due its emphasis on creativity, and real-world application (Bae, 2020). Therefore, educators are likely to adopt to alternative ways of assessing students' works, such as project presentations, portfolios, and peer assessments.

The role of teacher preparedness in integrating PBL into their educational curriculum plays one of the most crucial roles. Numerous language instructors lack basic training in PBL implementation which leads to ineffective facilitation and misalignment with curriculum goals (Yang, et al.,2021).

### **Comparative Analysis with Other Teaching Methods**

When comparing PBL practices with traditional lecture-based instructions and task-based learning (TBL), PBL demonstrates distinct advantages in promoting motivation and engagement. As stated by Beckett & Slater (2021), unlike lecture-based learning where students are seen as "empty vessels," PBL actively involves students in authentic real-world tasks which focuses on developing students' problem solving abilities, collaboration, and creative thinking. This interactive approach associates with higher satisfaction and better retention of linguistic structures.

Nevertheless, some studies dispute the following concern by emphasizing the idea that PBL is unlikely to outperform TBL in terms of immediate language acquisition. Compared to TBL, PBL's broader scope may sometimes reduce attention to grammatical structures (Ellis, 2021). A balanced approach to learning which perfectly combines both methodologies can offer the benefits of task-based practice while maintaining motivational advantages of PBL.

### **Cultural and Institutional Factors**

The effectiveness of PBL depends on the cultural setting where it is implemented and practices. Based on research findings, students from high-context cultures, such as Japan and China, tend to demand more guidance when adapting to PBL due to differing expectations about teacher authority and classroom roles (Chen et al. 2021). Conversely, students from low-context countries, Germany or the USA, more readily adapt to student-centered learning models.

In the context of Kazakhstan, due to the shift towards competency-based education which is outlined in national educational policies of the country, PBL started gaining its popularity as

innovative approach in modern teaching practices. Research studies conducted in Kazakhstani universities suggest that while students face some challenges with transition from teacher-centered methods to PBL, they eventually develop higher levels of learning involvement and motivation toward language acquisition (Tleubayeva & Abisheva, 2022). Despite the effective outcomes of PBL, there are some challenges as varying level of teacher training, lack of resources, and large class sized which hinder successful integration of PBL into Kazakhstani national system (Kenzhebekova, 2021).

### **Longitudinal Studies on PBL and Motivation**

Long-term research studies on PBL and motivation reveal that the benefits of project-based learning go beyond the immediate classroom experience. For instance, a longitudinal study conducted by Song et al. (2023) practiced PBL three academic years and investigated that PBL activities have improved students' intrinsic motivation and self-efficacy towards foreign language learning. Moreover, the majority of students had a tendency to continue foreign language beyond expected coursework. Although without sustained and proper engagement and implementation policies, students may not feel motivated over the time (Chiang & Lee, 2016). This research finding underscores the need for continuous reinforcement through structured projects, mentorship and various opportunities to apply their gained knowledge in real-world context.

### **Conclusion**

Project-based learning has emerged as an innovative and powerful approach in developing students' motivation and maintain their interest through the process of foreign language learning. Though numerous research studies emphasize its effectiveness, certain challenges, such as resistance to autonomy, challenges in assessment, and lack of teacher preparedness ought to be addressed for optimal implementation. Comparative analysis of various research studies suggests that a mixed approach both PBL and traditional methodologies may result in more effective and long-term outcomes. Furthermore, cultural and institutional factors play a crucial role in determining the success of PBL programs.

In Kazakhstan, PBL presents both possible opportunities, especially in foreign language acquisition, and challenges. While the integration of PBL aligns with the modern educational policies in education, the necessity for infrastructural support, teacher training, and localized teaching methods remains. Future research studies should focus on long-term impact of PBL in language proficiency and motivation of students, particularly in the context of Kazakhstan. By alleviating these challenges and leveraging institutional support, educators can maximize essential merits of PBL in fostering and creating more engaging and effective language learning experience for students.

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## ЖОБАЛЫҚ ОҚЫТУДЫҢ ШЕТ ТІЛІН ОҚЫТУДАҒЫ СТУДЕНТТЕРДІҢ МОТИВАЦИЯСЫНА ӘСЕРІ: БАР ӘДЕБИЕТТЕРГЕ ШОЛУ

**Аңдатпа.** Бұл әдебиеттік шолу жалпы шет тілі сабақтарында жобалық оқытуды енгізудегі мотивация деңгейін зерттейді. Оның артықшылықтары мен мүмкін болатын қиындықтарды көрсете отырып, тілдік білім беруде қолданылуына ерекше назар аударылады. Бұл шолу жобалық оқытудың артықшылықтарын, соның ішінде белсенділікті арттыруды, тереңірек тұжырымдамалық түсінуді және тілді тезірек сақтауды көрсететін әртүрлі зерттеу зерттеулерінің нәтижелерін синтездейді. Жобалық оқытудың студенттердің шет тілін меңгеруіне ынталандыратынына қарамастан, қосымша нұсқаулардың қажеттілігі, мұғалімдерді оқытудың және бағалау әдістерінің болмауы сияқты қиындықтар бар. Шолу дәстүрлі оқыту әдістеріне қарағанда PBL артықшылығын көрсетеді, бірақ ол сонымен қатар студенттердің академиялық жетістіктерін арттыру үшін теңдестірілген тәсілдің оң қолданылуына баса назар аударады. Сонымен қатар, әдебиеттерге шолу мәдени фактордың мәнін ескереді және студенттердің шет тілін үйренуге деген ынтасына ұзақ мерзімді әсерлерін анықтау үшін жоба оқытудың бойлық қолдануды ұсынады. Шолу жобалық оқытуды білім беру бағдарламаларына біріктіру бойынша одан әрі эмпирикалық зерттеулердің негізін қалайды және оны шет тілі сабақтарында қолданудың озық тәжірибелері туралы маңызды түсініктерді ұсынады. Осы мақсатқа жету үшін синтезделген зерттеу мақалалары Google Scholar, Research Gate, JSTORE және Web Science сияқты келесі дереккөздерден жиналды, олардың көпшілігі 2018 және 2024 жылдар аралығында жүргізілді.

**Түйін сөздер:** жобаға негізделген оқыту, әсер, мотивация, артықшылықтар, қиындықтар, шет тілін үйрену.

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## ВЛИЯНИЕ ПРОЕКТНОГО ОБУЧЕНИЯ НА МОТИВАЦИЮ СТУДЕНТОВ В ИЗУЧЕНИИ ИНОСТРАННЫХ ЯЗЫКОВ: КОМПЛЕКСНЫЙ ОБЗОР ЛИТЕРАТУРЫ

**Аннотация:** В этом обзоре литературы изучается уровень мотивации при внедрении проектного обучения в основные классы иностранного языка. Особое внимание уделяется его применению в языковом образовании, подчеркиваются преимущества и возможные проблемы. В этом обзоре обобщены результаты различных исследований, которые подчеркивают преимущества проектного обучения, включая повышенную вовлеченность, более глубокое концептуальное понимание и быстрое сохранение языка. Несмотря на то, что PBL стимулирует студентов к изучению иностранного языка, существуют некоторые проблемы, такие как необходимость в дополнительном руководстве, отсутствие подготовки учителей и методов оценки. Хотя в обзоре подчеркиваются превосходящие преимущества PBL по сравнению с традиционными методами обучения, в нем также подчеркивается положительное применение сбалансированного подхода для повышения академического совершенства студентов. Кроме того, в обзоре литературы учитывается сущность культурного фактора и предлагается продольное применение проектного обучения для выявления его долгосрочного эффекта на мотивацию студентов к изучению иностранного языка.

Обзор закладывает основу для дальнейших эмпирических исследований по интеграции проектного обучения в образовательные программы и предлагает важные сведения о передовой практике его применения на занятиях по иностранным языкам. Для достижения поставленной цели были взяты синтезированные исследовательские статьи из следующих баз данных, таких как Google Scholar, Research Gate, JSTORE и Web Science, причем преобладающее количество из них было проведено в период с 2018 по 2024 год.

**Ключевые слова:** проектное обучение, влияние, мотивация, преимущества, проблемы, изучение иностранного языка.

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