



# The Effect of Using Project-based Learning on Improving Self-Regulated Language Learning among English-majored Students at Ba Ria - Vung Tau University, Viet Nam

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**ABSTRACTS:** Project-based learning (PBL) is one of the powerful instructional approaches for students in the classroom (Bender, 2012). PBL is an exciting, innovative instructional approach to motivate students in problem-solving (Baran, 2010). It may be defined as a real world project, based on motivating and engaging tasks, problems, questions to teach students academic content in the context of working cooperatively to solve the problem (Bell, 2010). These authors implied that if teachers utilize PBL, they change their traditional roles into the new mode of teaching. According to Dewey (1959), when students implement meaningful tasks related to problems in real-world situations, they can achieve more profound comprehension. PBL is considered an alternative choice for teaching because it is a powerful tool to encourage students to solve real-world problems (Berger, 1999). It is also believed that PBL assists students to take part in learning activities as active and confident participants (Marx, 1994). This paper examines PBL that influences the self-regulated language learning (SRLL) surveyed at BVU. The study used a quantitative approach with a positivist paradigm. The quantitative approach is deductive because it tests theories, develops models and hypotheses, and collects empirical data (Schunk, 1990). A survey tool was used to collect data from respondents across students of English Studies. The results show that PBL develops the students' SRLL, and setting goals are the centre of SRLL to help the students study better and better at higher education.

**KEYWORDS:** English-majored students, project-based learning (PBL), self-regulated language learning (SRLL).

## 1. INTRODUCTION

Project-based learning (PBL) is one of the powerful instructional approaches for students in the classroom (Bender, 2012). PBL is an exciting, innovative instruction to motivate students in problem-solving (Baran, 2010). It may be defined as a real world project, based on motivating and engaging tasks, problems, questions to teach students academic content in the context of working cooperatively to solve the problem (Bell, 2010). These authors implied that if teachers utilize PBL, they change their traditional roles into the new mode of teaching. According to Dewey (1959), when students implement meaningful tasks related to problems in real-world situations, they can achieve more profound comprehension. PBL is considered an alternative choice for teaching because it is a powerful tool to encourage students to solve real-world problems (Berger, 1999). It is also believed that PBL assists students to take part in learning activities as active and confident participants (Marx, 1994).

It cannot be denied that PBL increases motivation to learn, teamwork, collaborative skills for higher education. It helps the students get acquainted with self-regulated language learning (SRLL), have experience in operating the learning project, increase their eagerness to practice the project devotedly, attempt to manage their time, learn inside and outside classroom effectively, and achieve desired outcomes from their project products.

Based on our observations and experiences, we have found that many students are not familiar with PBL due to a lack of creativity and self-regulation in their learning; they find hard to prepare the projects carefully; they are not used to working in a team; they are not active enough to set clear goals for learning. It means that PBL needs to be used so that the students can make more attempts and efforts in their learning. This paper examines the project-based learning that influence the self-regulated language learning. The secondary objectives of SRLL are listed as follows:

- to determine if there is a relationship between PBL and students' cognitive development in achieving SRLL.
- to determine if there is a relationship between PBL and students' behavioral changes in achieving SRLL.
- to determine if there is a relationship between PBL to continue with their emotion and a decision to achieve SRLL.



- to determine if there is a relationship between PBL to continue with their improvement in social skills and a decision to achieve SRLL.

## 2. LITERATURE REVIEW

PBL is widely recognized as a structured approach to teaching and learning. Several researchers, including Markham (2003), Savery (2006), and Bender (2012), have highlighted PBL as a powerful instructional approach that encourages students to gain knowledge and skills, work in groups, interact with each other, and design new products to solve real-life problems. According to Barron (1998), PBL has four key roles: Learning appropriate goals; Providing scaffolds that support both student and teacher learning; Offering frequent opportunities for formative self-assessment and revision; and Creating social organizations that promote participation and a sense of agency. These roles are interdependent, with students learning to set appropriate goals, assess their own progress, work collaboratively, and use scaffolds to support their learning. In other words, the students understand the imperative roles for setting learning goals and then have many chances to acquire knowledge and skills of contents in each subjects. They raise their awareness of the learning activities so that they know how to be responsible for their own learning, including the goal of their learning, the self-assessment and the collaborative work to the achievement of their goals, the value of scaffolds and the revision.

Since the main goal of PBL is to assist students in enhancing their SRLL performance, students primarily learn how to learn on their own when implementing PBL (Vaiz, 2003). As engaging into implementing PBL through the process of collecting information from different material sources as well as analyzing and synthesizing information, students themselves stand a great chance of comprehending the lessons more thoroughly and apply them into their real-life situations. Through project implementation, their self-regulation in learning improves day by day (Boekaerts, 1999).

There are various definitions or concepts of SRLL from different researchers in literature. Self-regulation occurs when learners take an active role in learning process and control them effectively in order to achieve the desired goals (Bandura, 1986). SRLL is regarded as the process in which students take part in the learning actively in terms of meta-cognition, motivation and behavior (Zimmerman, 1989). SRLL is considered as the extent to which students identify their learning goals and regulate their cognition, motivations and behavior in an active and constructive process (Pintrich, 2000). According to Zumbrunn, et al (2011) in SRLL, students are required to independently plan, monitor, and assess their learning. It is also the process in which learners are in an attempt to control complex learning activities in their own experience of learning.

The importance of SRLL can be found in Wolters (2011), it plays significant roles in language learning acquisition, helps students improve their learning habits and enhances their study skills. It becomes more and more effective when students can monitor their learning in their learning environment on their own. SRLL stresses the learners' motivations for learning in the relationship of self-regulation and learning styles. In terms of academic achievement, it is evident that students who are self-regulating stand a great chance of improving their self-learning, gaining higher levels and succeeding in classrooms. They can monitor their performance and evaluate their academic progress on their own too.

To promote SRLL in the language classroom, it is important for teachers to introduce SRLL strategies to their students. According to Pintrich (2000) and Zimmerman (2004), these strategies facilitate students in setting goals, planning, monitoring their progress, using flexible strategies effectively, and evaluating their learning process. The self-regulated learning strategies include self-evaluation, organization and transformation, goal-setting and planning, seeking information, attention control, record-keeping and monitoring, environmental structuring, self-motivation, self-consequences, rehearsing and memorization, and seeking assistance. However, the following strategies are considered the most important for promoting SRLL.

**Goal setting:** Setting goal is considered an integral element of SRLL strategies because it is the standard to regulate student's actions (Wolters, 1998). In the classroom, goals can be set in various ways, from simple ones such as aiming for good marks in the exam to more detailed ones such as attaining a broader understanding of a topic. Short-term goals, such as setting a timeline or choosing appropriate strategies for a project, can be set to achieve long-term aspirations.

**Planning:** Along with goal setting, planning is necessary to assist students in fostering their SRLL. Both goal setting and planning are mutually complementary factors in SRLL (Schunk, 2001). Planning can be divided into three stages: setting a goal for a project, setting up strategies to reach the goal and determining the time as well as material resources to achieve the goal.

**Self-motivation:** In order to achieve the desired goals or objectives, it is vital for students to take action and self-motivate themselves in their learning process (Zimmerman, 2004). The author highlights self-motivation, which appears when a student



independently applies one or more strategies in their learning process to achieve a set goal. It is important for students to control their learning by themselves and become more autonomous in their learning. To become self-regulated learners, students must master goal orientations and skills, be confident in their learning ability, and value learning projects highly (Wolters, 1998).

Self-control: Attention control is one of the significant strategies for students to master when implementing PBL as they are equipped with the capacity to select what they have to pay attention to and what they should ignore. To self-regulate their learning, students must have an ability to control their attention (Winnie, 1995). When applying this strategy, students need to keep their mind out of dis-tractors as well as work in an appropriate learning environment that is conducive to learning. Teachers should be mindful that the learning environment plays a crucial role in helping students pursue their academic learning productively and achieve their goals. Therefore, it is a priority for teachers to teach students to control their attention by removing stimuli that can cause distractions or providing them with frequent breaks to help improve their attention spans. Additionally, it is necessary to allocate sufficient time to complete the projects, including adequate time for each separate task in the projects.

Self-judgement: It is believed that students become more self-regulated learners when they have the ability to evaluate their learning process independently (Winne & Hadwin, 1998). To improve their self-evaluative abilities, teachers can provide assessment rubrics designed specifically for the project at hand. It is essential for students to reflect on the language and subject acquired during the project, make recommendations for the similar projects in the future, and receive feedback on their language and content learning from teachers. Through this process, students can enhance their learning abilities and achieve better outcomes in the future.

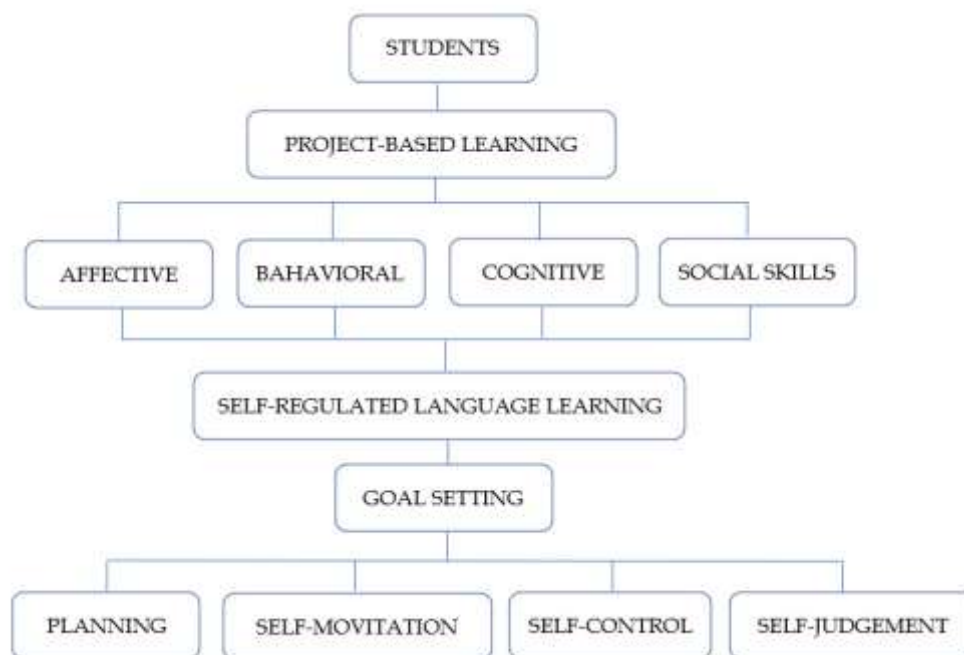


Fig. 1. Framework of the study

3. METHOD

The research employed a positivist paradigm and utilized a quantitative approach to investigate the influence of PBL on SRL at BVU. The quantitative approach is deductive because it tests theories, develops models and hypotheses, and collects empirical data (Kuhn, 1961). A survey instrument was distributed to English Studies students to collect data from respondents. A convenient sampling technique was employed to distribute the web-based questionnaire to respondents via email. A survey method was deemed appropriate as large amounts of raw data could be collected quickly, facilitating rapid data collection and analysis. A total of 235 responses were received and cleaned to ensure data accuracy. Statistical Package for the Social Science (SPSS 23) was used to analyze the primary data via correlation. The data collected through the questionnaire were analyzed using descriptive statistics in which a Likert Scale was used to gauge the students' responses. The response options are scaled as follow: '5' for



strongly agree, ‘4’ for agree, ‘3’ for neutral, ‘2’ for disagree and ‘1’ for strongly disagree. The purpose of correlation analysis in the research is to summarize the data by identifying latent relationships between the students’ SRL and the PBL approach.

**4. RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS**

The results presented in Table 4.1 indicate that students expressed an overall positive agreement towards PBL across four components (M=3.36; SD=.69). Among these, social skills received highest agreement although all of the factors were generally agreed upon by the students.

**Table 4.1** Students’ factors towards PBL

No.	Factors	N=235	
		M	SD
1	Cognitive attitudes	3.56	.67
2	Affective attitudes	3.79	.73
3	Behavioral attitudes	3.59	.71
4	Social skills	3.85	.68
Total		3.69	.69

*Note: M: mean; SD: Standard deviation*

As can be seen in Table 4.2, 5 items of strategies were listed, including goal setting, planning, self-motivation, self-control and self-evaluation. The total mean of using SRL strategies was (M=3.46). It means that the students agreed that SRL is important for them.

**Table 4.2** SRL strategies use in PBL

No.	SRL strategies	N=235	
		M	SD
1	Goal setting	3.47	.72
2	Planning	3.41	.65
3	Self-motivation	3.46	.67
4	Self-control	3.42	.65
5	Self-evaluation	3.48	.75
Total		3.46	.69

*Note: M: mean; SD: Standard deviation*

Take a look at table 4.3, The P-value for the correlation results of all the variables against the decision to achieve SRL was .000. The P-value scores confirmed that all the overall variables examined have an impact on the decision to achieve SRL. The P-value of .000 proved that all variables are significantly correlated.

**Table 4.3:** Summary of accepted and rejected hypotheses

Hypotheses	p	Decision
If there is a relationship between PBL to continue with their cognition and a decision to achieve SRL.	.000	Accept
If there is a relationship between PBL to continue with their behavior and a decision to achieve SRL.	.000	Accept
If there is a relationship between PBL to continue with their emotion and a decision to achieve SRL.	.000	Accept
If there is a relationship between PBL to continue with their social skills improved and a decision to achieve SRL.	.000	Accept



A Pearson correlation analysis was used to determine the relationship between the variables under study. Table 4.4 illustrates the results of the correlations achieved between the variables. A p-value of less than 0.001 was selected to show statistical significance. Based on this explanation, all the variables were statistically significant when tested against the dependable variable (intention to complete) with moderate correlation strengths.

**Table 4.4:** A Pearson Correlation of variables of SRL

Variables of SRL	Goal setting	Self-motivation	Self-control	Self-judgement
<b>Goal setting</b> Sig. (2-tailed) N	1 3032	.404** .000 3111	.511** .000 3112	.329** .000 3022
<b>Self-motivation</b> Sig. (2-tailed) N	.404** .000 3111	1 3032	.429** .000 3017	.401** .000 3015
<b>Self-control</b> Sig. (2-tailed) N	.511** .000 3112	.429** .000 3017	1 3032	.310** .000 3001
<b>Self-judgement</b> Sig. (2-tailed) N	.329** .000 3022	.401** .000 3015	.310** .000 3001	1 3032

\*\* . Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level.

**DISCUSSIONS**

With reference to the SRL strategies promoted from PBL, the findings of this study revealed that the students applied SRL strategies rather frequently. Thanks to PBL, the students are positive and active towards their self-regulated language learning. As referred in literature review, the goal setting strategy was identified as a central factor in SRL strategies. It means that the students recognized the importance of setting goals in PBL as the role of the oriental factor. Moreover, PBL was found to develop students’ affection, cognition, behavioral and social skills as it provided them opportunities for both independent and collaborative work. While students expressed overall satisfaction with PBL, they also reported occasional difficulties in working in groups and sharing their opinions.

**5. CONCLUSION AND SUGGESTIONS**

This paper examines the influence of PBL on SRL at BVU. The results show a positive relationship between the two. PBL helps develop four key factors: cognition, behavior, affection, and social skills. In turn, SRL strategies help students achieve their learning goals through goal setting, planning, self-motivation, self-control, and self-judgement. Participants reported that PBL helps them improve their knowledge and job prospects, making it mainly beneficial for learning purposes. Respondents also indicated that SRL would enable them to take control of their studies as they can learn at their own pace, time, and location.

The paper recommends that all higher education institutions that have adopted PBL create a learning environment that offers independence and freedom of study, motivating students to achieve their learning goals. In addition, well-planned and organized projects that encourage communication and collaboration between students should be ensured. Teachers should actively involve students in classroom learning activities to improve their social skills.

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