

# **Effectiveness of Project Based Learning in Bangladeshi Tertiary Classroom**

By

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A thesis submitted to the Department of English and Humanities in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Bachelor of Arts in English

Department of English and Humanities

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It is hereby declared that

1. I/we completed the thesis as part of our degree programme at Brac University.
2. The thesis does not include any content that has been published before or that was written by a third party, unless it is properly cited with complete and correct referencing.
3. The thesis does not include any content that has been approved or submitted for consideration for any other degree or diploma at a university or other institution.
4. I/We have given credit to all major sources of assistance.

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### Approval

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### **Abstract**

Project- based learning (PBL) is a comprehensive method of teaching and learning in which students work in a team or individually to explore real-world issues. The proper use of this method makes the learning more interesting and encourages students to know more deeply about the subject. Since students get to work both in groups and individually, they become more self-directed and confident. The goal of this study is to find out the effectiveness of this method in Bangladeshi context. The researcher chose participants from the English and Humanities Department of Brac University. 9 participants were selected for the survey and then based on the survey result the researcher took interview of 4 participants which was semi-structured to find out all the difficulties that students are facing and the benefits as well. The findings indicated that this method helps students to gain skills however there are some issues because of which this method is not very popular in our country.

## **Dedication**

To myself: I dedicate this work to myself.

### **Acknowledgement**

Firstly, I'm grateful to Allah for fulfilling all of my wishes for me. Then, I'd like to thank my family for their unwavering support during my entire trip. I also want to thank all of my friends who supported me during the entire process and encouraged me. Finally, I want to acknowledge and thank my supervisor, Dr. Asifa Sultana, who helped me in every step of the way. Without her oversight and direction, I could not have successfully completed my study.

## **Chapter 1**

### **Introduction**

Language skills are the key areas which helps humans to communicate, express feelings and conduct complex activities that are not possible for any other animals on Earth. There are many different teaching and learning styles to improve these language skills (speaking, listening, reading and writing). One of those teaching and learning style is Project Based Learning (PBL). This method of learning is employed when learning a second language. Project-based learning (PBL) is a modern learning method which can satisfy the needs of a variety of students. This method provides exercises that are skill-based also it represents an emphasis on students who should become active, demonstrate inner motivation, and inventiveness for another. Through this learning method, students get to expose to real material while working on those real challenges. It appears that in the field of group work, this notion of addressing a real problem has the ability to assist students to learn.

### **Background**

Thomas (2000) defines PBL as a project centered learning method. Therefore, it can be said that PBL encourages students to learn or develop their language skill by applying their practical knowledge. It gives the students an opportunity of in-depth learning for the acquisition of the language learning. It also helps students to develop the skills through the projects. Furthermore, PBL is an effective method for teachers in efficiently developing skills for their students within a set timeline. Basically, this learning method is processed by researching on complicated problems and find out the solutions. It encourages or it can be said that drives students to go beyond their capacity of previously acquired knowledge.

### **Basic Features of PBL**

PBL has some basic features which has made it more popular and those feature are- PBL is based on student's basic needs and interest which leads them to experience something new, it is not only based on educational premises rather it emphasizes beyond the bookish knowledge of the students, this method is more collaborative and it focuses more on group works, PBL integrates school and community because it promotes addition to supplying into greater community and real life (Coufalová, 2006). From these features it can be defined that PBL supports cooperative task or group task rather than competitive task which increases the possibility of gaining success in terms of developing language skills.

### **Aim of the research**

The aim of the research is to focus on the effectiveness of implementing project-based learning (PBL) in English language classes. The study will explore from the students' perspective the effectiveness of project-based learning and how it helps students to develop English language skills over the course timeline.

### **Research Objective**

- To find out the effectiveness of Project-Based Learning
- To evaluate the level of success regarding the implementation of PBL
- To measure the role of students in terms of using this method
- To explore PBL and provide evidence of whether it is helpful for students for learning the English language in their classrooms.

### **Research Questions**

- What are the advantages and disadvantages of project-based learning?
- How PBL is helping students to develop their English language skills?
- How can teachers improve the implementation of project-based learning for effectively improving English language skills among the students?



## **Chapter 2**

### **Literature review**

#### **Introduction**

PBL is commonly regarded as an effective teaching technique for increasing student motivation and encouraging self-directed learning, with teachers serving as mentors (Blumenfeld et al., 1991). It improves the teaching and learning process by emphasizing a student-centered approach rather than a teacher-centered approach. Moreover, it allows students to gain knowledge through project work and experience. Project-based learning has been gaining power in the academic arena for effectively developing certain skills or knowledge through actual participation among groups of people who are assigned tasks and goals individually to achieve a goal collectively (Desai, 2012). Since most of the projects in PBL are group based therefore, groups are formed with multiple individuals where complex tasks and challenges are provided to solve them and get practical experience. Thus this process is very effective because students can relate the learned knowledge afterward in a real-life scenario. In the traditional teaching system, the main tools were books and reading material or it can be said that everything was theoretical or based on bookish knowledge while PBL allows students to think beyond their bookish knowledge. Moreover, project-based learning follows the educational structure and also allows the students to perform them in real-life scenarios through assignments or presentations within a group acting towards a direction for achieving the goals and objectives (Kurniawati&Nugraha,2021). It is more structured and well known in developed countries where more priority is given to real-life problem solving than explaining theories and concepts to students. However, amongst Asian

countries like Bangladesh and India, PBL is more of an experimental theory that is still being used experimentally to measure its effectiveness when applied in classrooms and offices. Not only this the use of PBL in language classes can make the class more interactive and through tasks it can give learners a real-life experience.

According to Janjua (2013), PBL is a teaching strategy that focuses on an activity-based learning approach that captures the learner's enthusiasm and increases motivation to study. Basically, all the exercises in PBL approach are intended to bridge the gap between the classroom and the outside world in order to make learning more realistic. He also added that PBL is currently widely used in EFL (English as Foreign Language) and ESL (English as Second Language) classrooms as an efficient teaching tool. Moreover, Project-based learning helps teachers to strategically guide the students for learning complex lessons in an in-depth approach. The philosophy is to present them with a real-life scenario and explore them by interacting in a group approach. Teachers can closely monitor the progress and assist the students to finish the topic (Nanni, 2020). In Bangladesh, the number of students graduating each year compared to graduates landing in the job sector is very low. This is because the practice of project-based learning has not been utilized properly among educational institutes (afroze et al.,2019). PBL provides the opportunity to develop soft skills and improve communication skills that provide more confidence and a positive attitude for performing wherever it is needed. Employers are very selective of the requirements during job openings and there are more screening processes to identify the best possible candidate before the final interview. However, it is not known how much it can be effective due to a lack of research if the student has gone through a project-based learning program in their educational journey in Bangladesh.

### **Origin of Project-Based Learning**

John Dewey is regarded as the conceptual founder of PBL and one of the most prominent figures in the development of the modern education system of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. In his book which was published in 1987, he termed PBL as 'learning by doing'. PBL has its origins in the interactive learning of American educational pioneer Dewey at the start of the 20th century in the United States. Dewey was anxious that traditional transmitting teaching techniques which had fixed subjects and topics, and a desire to encourage students to memorize 'facts' that dulled young learner's natural tendency to ask, analyze, and apply new knowledge in unfamiliar contexts (Christie & De Graaff, 2017). They also mentioned that the main purpose of PBL is the development of any project or any work. In PBL most of the tasks require experience of the real world and rather than simply passing exams, Project-Based Learning allows teachers to educate their learners for their future professional lives. Christie and De Graaff (2017) also mentioned that after the idea of PBL by Dewey, was later developed into the education system of medical students, engineering students, but it has been also widely successful in helping people in both corporate and educational institutes.

### **Advantages of Project-Based Learning**

PBL appears to be an attractive addition to the educational curriculum because it offers various benefits. Heines (1989) claims that project work enhances students' motivation and engagement in the curriculum. At first, engaging students in the group project enhances their self - motivation because each student brings their unique ideas, viewpoints, and approach to finish the project. Furthermore, PBL allows students to make connections with real-world, allowing them to utilize what they've learned academically to solve real-world problems.

Learning English does not mean to be proficient in grammar structure or grammar accuracy, rather it means to give students the opportunity to utilize English language as much as they can in their real-life situations. On the other hand, it can be said that English language should be used for communicative purpose other than thinking of grammatical accuracy. PBL is the best way to make the English language communicative. The study by Poonpon (2017) finds out that, PBL can be a very effective method of teaching English language in classroom and it will be successful for the students who are more likely to use traditional learning method. Project-based learning creates a suitable environment for students to practice the English language for practical uses which improves their vocabulary and enhance speaking and listening skills. A majority of students in Bangladesh come from a Bengali medium background and despite scoring good marks in English during their schooling; they lag when they go for their undergraduate program. As all the educational materials and classes are performed in English, even the star-marked students find it difficult to understand and cope up. There can be new research conducted that can measure the performance of English medium vs Bengali medium students in the undergraduate degree. This issue was identified by Jahir (2017) where it was found that Bengali medium students are not encouraged to speak or communicate in English inside the classrooms. So their inability to gain expertise over the efficacy of the English language are being a huge problem when those students reach undergraduate level. Therefore, project-based learning should be included from primary level education in Bangladesh to efficiently tackle this problem with the students.

The study by Janjua (2013) language courses at all stages have used well-designed, realistic, and dependable projects with a diversity of aims. He also added that PBL is challenging which makes students to go with their own unique idea. He also said that ELT has benefited by the use of PBL. It was found that students had gained better communication

skills than those of the traditional learning techniques. This is because of the language barrier between English and the native language, students have difficulty processing the communication process immediately. So project-based learning is helpful because those assignments and oral presentation that was given to the students of the experimental group had the opportunity to practice on a real-life scenario and had to give more effort than the other group.

### **Problems in the implementations of Project-Based Learning**

PBL has some significant limitations like all the other teaching techniques. PBL is still underutilized for a variety of reasons, one of which is overgeneralization of the method. Some teachers had some issues while implementing PBL in their own classes which is observed by Thomas (2000). According to Habok and Nagy (2016), PBL requires very time consuming activities or tasks to bring out the details. Similarly, Ladewski et al. (1991) pointed out that, the application of PBL can create a conflict with in-depth ideas on the side of a teacher. As some teachers are reluctant to any proposed transition from the teaching techniques they are currently using with their students to more sophisticated approaches such as PBL. Moreover, other difficulties mentioned by Marx et al. (1994) include the fact that projects frequently take longer than intended. They also added that some teachers have a hard time while monitoring and supervising their students' activities because they either allow them to be freedom or not enough training. Some students struggled to come up with strong leading queries, stay motivated, and actively participate in the development of the project, until it gets finished. They also noticed that some students did not always have access to the technology while conducting the research.

### **Implications of Project-Based Learning in Asian Context**

In our Asian culture, English is not a native language that's why students find it difficult to communicate in English in their real life situations. Therefore, implementing PBL in English language class can make the class more interactive and will make the students well developed in different skills. Belwal et al. (2020) has found communication, self-confidence, English language skills, organizing, planning, and time management skills were among the cognitive skills and abilities that the students gained from the PBL implementations. Moreover, he also added that PBL provided students with a variety of skills than they would have learned in a traditional classroom setting. Although, it's helpful to prepare students for dealing with real-life situations.

An article written by Grant (2017) explains the importance of implementing PBLT in Asian context. He explains how PBLT is important for the students in terms of language learning. Moreover, this is also necessary for the practical language use. He mentioned that a study has conducted in Macau by a number of students who brings out more benefits of project-based learning. Findings from the survey shows that students autonomy, motivation and learning opportunities are also the advantages of PBLT approach. In case of PBLT literature terms, life task and projects are sometimes used interchangeably but these terms are quite different from each other and this needs to be kept in mind while implementing PBLT. Noticing errors can be done more easily through learners output in PBLT. The article clearly states the fact that PBLT can help in developing a classroom that is student centered, which is not very common in Asian contexts. However, there are also a good number of challenges in Asian context for establishing PBLT. For instance, in Mainland China University, students and teachers faced a lot of problems when PBLT was introduced there as they have the lack of access to authentic English resources within their territory. Moreover, sometimes the students lag behind in case of both autonomy and responsibility during group projects.

Nevertheless, after all the challenges, PBLT is found to be very effective in the classrooms of the Asian countries. Furthermore, the case study on the students of Macau proves that this approach is well suited to the students within Asian countries.

### *Identification of Problem in terms of Bangladeshi Context*

One of the most important challenges that all Bangladeshi educational institutions face is the lack of a different curriculum for high, medium, and low achiever students. Academic institutions do not believe it is necessary to accommodate to or groom students who do not succeed academically. As a result, students are not typically segregated based on their ability to learn and the skills that they currently possess. It is not true that everyone is of the same quality, but with the right instruction and leadership, they may all perform well. According to the study by Han et al. (2015), project-based learning is a student-centered approach which applies to all three categories of students. One of the astonishing facts that were discovered within this study was that those students that performed low in their academics had higher scores and their skills improved significantly. However, there was a lack of secondary research in the context of Bangladesh. There is an urgency to undergo for primary research based on both qualitative and quantitative research methodology to address the issue. As the design of the group projects is based on international standards in our country, there is a need to test whether there are any flaws that need to be addressed in the context of Bangladesh.

To summarize, after pointing out all the disadvantages of PBL it can be said that with proper implementation of this approach can make any English language class more interactive or communicative. For making this approach successful, PBL needs to be less structured which will give students to work more independently. Moreover, students require reliable and comfortable educational environment that gives them the opportunity to work

actively. In terms of implementing PBL approach to any educational system, it is very important to understand the method so that the teachers do not get confused while implementing and the students find the approach understandable and relevant. This approach requires a student-centered environment, however, it allows teacher to get a greater understanding of their students to bring out the internal motivation of their students as well. Interactive engagement during group projects and proper selection of research materials can make the approach successful.

### **Chapter 3**

#### **Research Methodology**

The design of any research for generating a usable outcome depends on the research methodology that acts as a guiding point upon which the research will progress. It gives the researchers a specific method to conduct the research. Without a well-accepted methodology, the findings of the research will never be accepted in the research community and the outcomes can be questioned (Devi, 2017). There are two types of research methodology that are widely accepted and used with research community. Qualitative methodology is used for getting in-depth knowledge and especially where the data collection is regarding human perceptions, values, insights, behaviors and many more. Whereas, a Quantitative methodology is followed for statistical and mathematical data collection. The sample size is usually selected from the population and surveys, questionnaires, polls are handed out to the participants. The findings from the quantitative research are generalized to the entire population.

The choice of methodology for research is determined by the researcher so that the objectives and aims can be achieved. The research will be conducted using a qualitative methodology for the in-depth interview because it will enable the researcher to gather the perspectives and real experiences from the sample population. And quantitative



methodology will be also used for the survey questionnaire. Both instruments will be used for this research to gather data from specific participants from the population and also dive deep with a small group of the participant for gathering the experience on a deep level.

### **Participants**

The research was conducted based on primary data because there was no satisfactory or related secondary data found related to this research topic. The population for this research is university students who have moderate experience working on any Project Based Learning program or project within their educational career. The participants of this research were selected from the department of English and Humanities of Brac University. Here the researcher used the purposive sampling method to prove the point. Purposive sampling is a sampling approach in which the researcher chooses individuals from the population to take part in the research based on his or her own assessment. In this sampling technique, components are chosen for the sample are picked based on the researcher's own judgement. Researchers frequently feel that by employing sound judgment, they can acquire an indicative sample and save time (Black, 2010). Since, in our country Project Based Learning is not a very common approach of learning or teaching that's why not everybody is not familiar with this learning/ teaching approach. Therefore, the researcher chose students from English department who have their major in linguistics. A group of 9 participants were selected from the department who participated during the data collection on a random time convenience basis.

### **Research Instruments**

The research instruments are the tools that help collect data for the research. For collecting primary data, the researcher chooses to use a survey questionnaire and in-depth interview which was the ideal choice based on the absence of secondary resources. If there is abundant related secondary data available, a researcher can only research without the need

for collecting primary data (Marshall et al., 2013). The question for the survey questionnaire and interview was designed to collect abundant knowledge retained on the topic of the research.

### **Data collection Procedure**

The first phase of data collection followed randomly choosing the participants from the population pool and then analyzing their credentials for ensuring that everyone is the perfect fit for the research purpose. Then they were asked for the consent to take participate on the survey with their identity. After getting a positive response from the participants they were given an online link on which they were able to participate in the survey questionnaire. The primary data collection of the first phase of this research project was conducted using the quantitative methodology and the survey questionnaire was the ideal tool that was used to collect the raw data from students. The participants of this survey were running university students who are from English and Humanities department of Brac University. As the population of this research is students who had prior experience to work on group projects. 9 participants were selected randomly from that department who are doing their major in Linguistics and they were given a google link to fill up the questionnaire. This method was convenient and flexible for the participants to utilize time based on their busy schedules. The questions were set to understand some initial points of view and basic information regarding project-based learning and whether students are beneficial or their ability were hampered by working on different projects of PBL.

The second phase of the data collection was conducted the in-depth interview. The participants were selected based on purposive sampling. They had the credentials to represent the population for this research. The participants were explained regarding their part within the research and consent for their participation was taken both verbally and in written form. The questions did not follow sequentially. The main agenda and the research topic were

maintained during each interview session with the participants. Interview sessions were conducted on video conferencing on an online platform. For maintaining anonymity, these sessions were not recorded and only the transcription of the conversation was recorded for use within the research.

### **Ethical consideration**

There were a number of ethical considerations that the researcher identified during the planning and execution phase of the research. One of the major considerations was maintaining the anonymity of the participants. It is important because participating in any research should not hamper or create a negative impact on the personal lives of the participants. Moreover, the research should be fair and give proper accreditation on the works of others. The materials within the research have to be genuine and no attempt is being made to direct the research towards a single direction. The findings were analyzed without being biased to any person, entity, or institution.

### **Limitations**

There are always some limitations that the researcher has to overcome for completing the project and accomplishing the objectives that are set during the planning of the research proposal. The possibility of the limitations of this project are:

- Convincing the participants to take part in the interview was a big challenge
- Countrywide lockdown made it difficult to arrange the face-to-face interviews with the participants
- Time management was a big issue towards completing the project in due time
- The resources were very limited for the project which had to be tightly monitored and allocated for successive completion of the research project.

## **Chapter 4**

### **Findings**

#### **Analyzing Data from the survey questionnaire**

The aim of this survey was to get a brief idea about PBL from the participants. Since this study is mostly focused on finding out the advantages and disadvantages of PBL so all the questions were set on this basis so that the researcher can find out the benefits as well as the difficulties that participants are facing. Therefore, the data collected from the survey questionnaire are presented below:

Where did you get acquainted with Project Based Learning?

9 responses

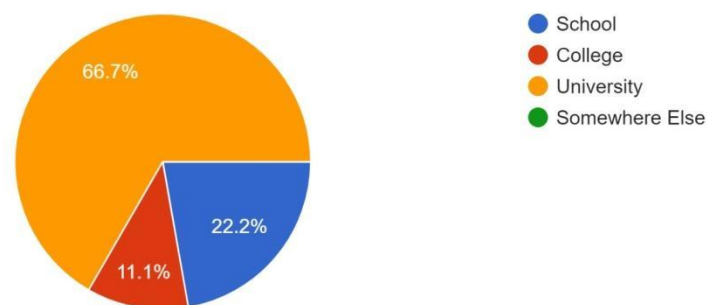


Figure 1: From where students get to know about PBL

In the first question the students were asked from where they got acquainted with project-based learning. It was put to discover from which educational level the participants have got acquainted with group projects. It was crucial to know because, in Bangladesh, most students are not given group works in schools or college levels. After reaching university, they are given project works on a regular basis. This creates a lot of pressure to understand group dynamics and cooperate with others. Therefore, 66.7% conveyed that they became familiar with it from university, 11.1% respondents said that they knew it from college, and the rest of the 22.2% students got to know about Project-based learning while studying at school. This shows that most of the students of our country get familiar with Project-based learning while studying at the undergraduate level. So it can be clearly said that students don't get the opportunity to work on projects that would enhance their problem-solving skills at their early stage of educational life.

### Benefits and difficulties

Do you think Project Based Learning is beneficial?

9 responses

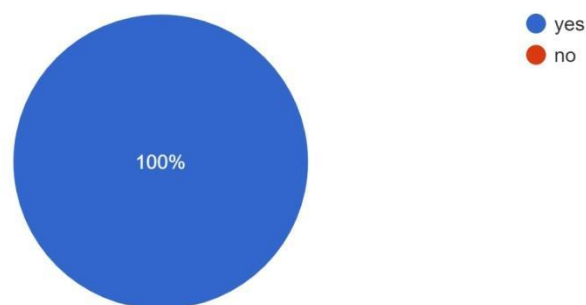


Figure 2: PBL is beneficial or not

The second question of the survey questionnaire was a simple yes/no question. The respondents were asked if the students think project-based learning is beneficial or not. Since in Bangladesh PBL is not a very familiar technique because most of the population prefer

traditional learning technique. Surprisingly 100% of the students found it to be beneficial to them. So it can be said that the students who participated in the online survey have actually got benefitted from project-based learning.

If yes, Project Based Learning is beneficial in which of these following areas-  
9 responses

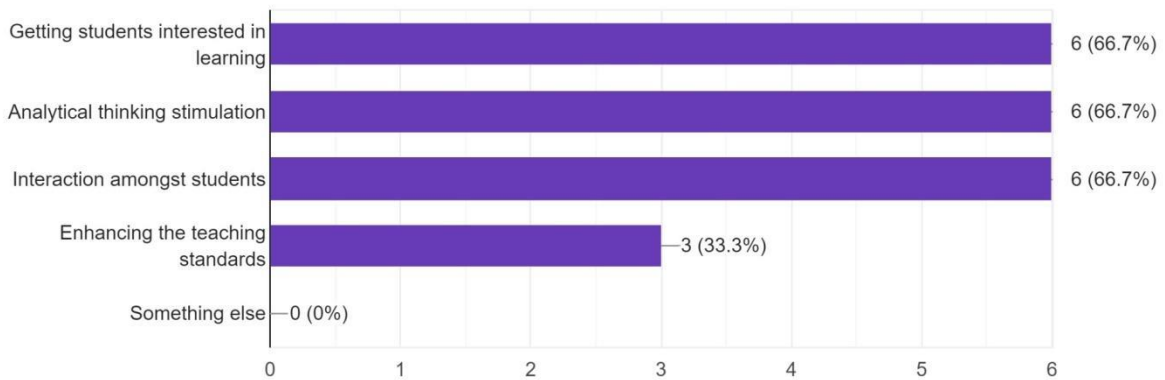


Figure 3: Beneficial areas

The third question of the survey was a multiple choice question which was related to the second question and the respondents were asked if they find it beneficial then in which of the areas of project-based learning was beneficial to them. The question aimed to identify the specific areas in which students get to be benefitted from PBL. In the survey, 66.7% of respondents conveyed that project-based learning helps them in 3 specific areas, which are in getting students interested in learning, in analytical thinking stimulation and helps interaction among students. The rest of the 33.3% of students think that it helps enhance the teaching standards.

If no, conducting project-based learning is difficult because:

9 responses

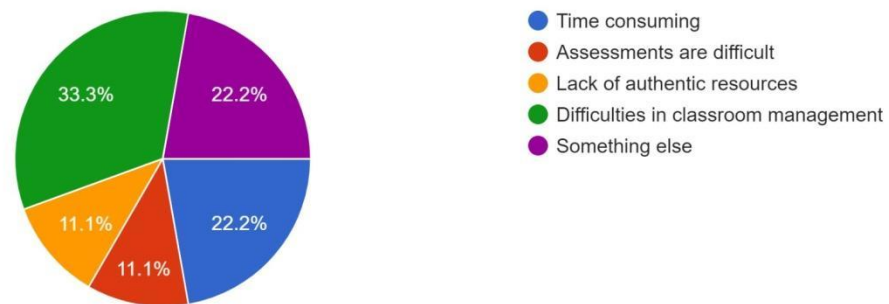


Figure 4: Difficult areas

In the fourth question it was asked why students think project-based learning is difficult which was also related to the second question. The question aimed to identify what difficulties people face in project-based learning while participating in any project work. 33.3% of the respondents find difficulties in classroom management, 22.2% of respondents think it is time-consuming, 11.1% of students find it difficult because of the lack of authentic resources, another 11.1% thinks the assessments are difficult in Project-based learning. The remaining 22.2% of students hold some other reasons to be responsible for finding project-based learning strenuous. From this question, some particular reasons could be identified for which students find PBL difficult.

## Language skills

PBL has helped me to improve my language learning skills while coming up with new ideas  
9 responses

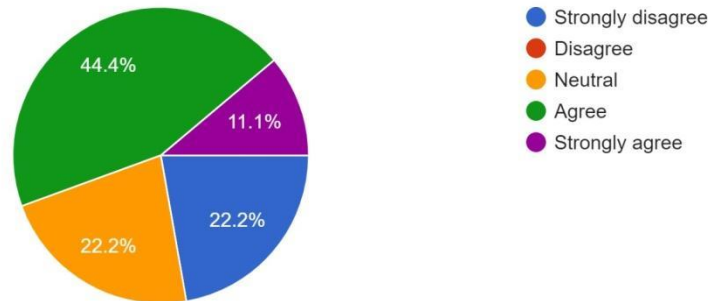


Figure 5: Improving language learning skills

The fifth question was asked to understand whether project-based learning helped the respondents learn language skills and come up with creative ideas. The question was asked to understand whether the participants have actually learned from their past experience of working in a group project. The aim of this question was to find out whether each and every member of the group gets to master the skills and knowledge that was the agenda of the group work. This was necessary because it was a myth among Bangladeshi students that in a group work only the good students do the work and the weaker students don't work or learn as much as the other students. From this survey, it was found that 44.4% of students agreed and 11.1% of students strongly agreed with the statement that working in a group project helped them learn skills. Moreover, 22.2% of students strongly disagreed with the statement and the remaining 22.2% of students are neutral about the given statement.



I feel Project Based Learning has taught me to be original and present my weakness for improving my English language skills.

9 responses

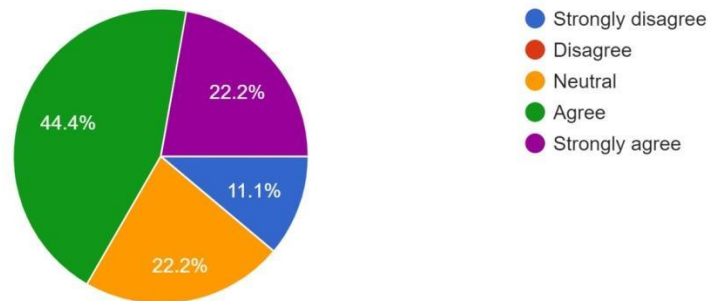


Figure 6: To become oneself

This question aimed to know if project-based learning has taught students to be original and helped them improve their English learning skills. It is necessary to measure the level of satisfaction because it is interrelated with the students' self-motivation to work towards achieving the goals and gaining expertise and skills from any given group project. In the survey, 44.4% of people agreed and 22.2% of people strongly agreed that PBL has taught them to be original and helped them improve their English learning skills. Another 22.2% of respondents are neutral about this topic and the rest 11.1% of students think that PBL didn't have much impact on their English speaking skills.

PBL has taught me to present my language learning input and receive others' opinions to correct my weakness and improve language skills as strengths.

9 responses

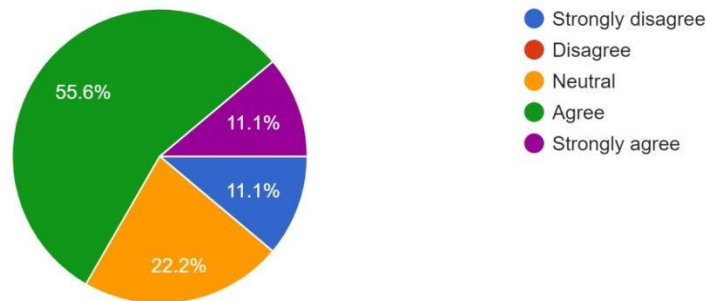


Figure 7: Taking feedback

In this part of the questionnaire, the students were asked if they agree with the statement that PBL has helped them present their language learning inputs and helped them receive others' opinions to correct their weaknesses and improve language skills. There was a need to judge whether the weaker member in any group project does get a chance to improve their skills. There was another assumption that higher-performing members do the work of the weaker members, thus the weaker students do not get a chance to change or improve their skills. However, 55.6% of people agreed and 11.1% of people strongly agreed with the statement. On the contrary, 22.2% of people are neutral and the rest 11.1% strongly disagreed.

PBL has taught me to communicate in English in a professional manner through continuous self-assessment and self-improvements

9 responses

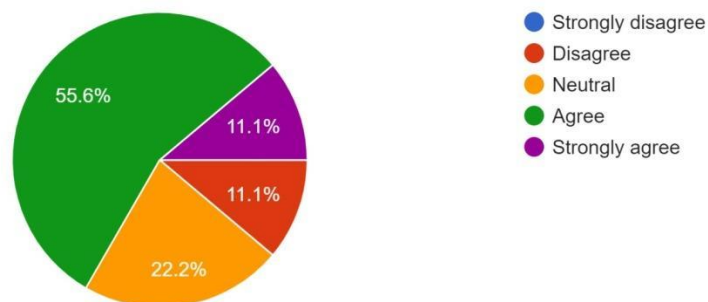


Figure 8: Communication skills through self-assessments

In this part of the survey, we asked the respondents whether they agree that PBL has impacted their communication in English in a professional manner through self-assessment and self-improvements. The survey questionnaire was asked to find whether the participants think if there is any design flaw in their educational institution regarding the group projects. As most of the universities in Bangladesh follow the guidelines that are regulated by University Grants Commission (UGC) and the international standards; so group projects that are given to students are international standards. However, due to cultural and socio-economic reasons, the students in Bangladesh might do better if the design was done considering elements that are applicable to our country's context. 55.6% of respondents agreed and 11.1% of students strongly agreed. However, 22.2% of respondents conveyed that they are neutral about it and the remaining 11.1% of students disagreed with the statement.

### Data gathering

Students that struggle with the experiment and data gathering will have a difficult time  
9 responses

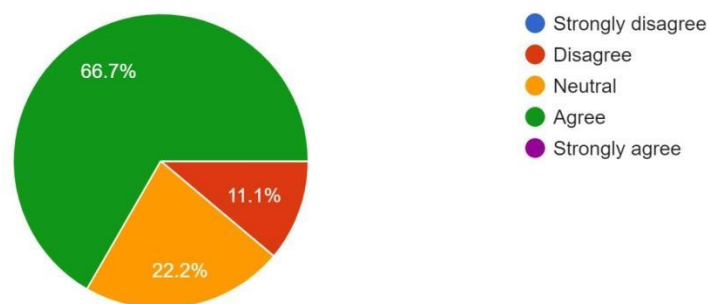


Figure 9: Difficulty in data collection

The ninth question was asked if students struggled while gathering data to complete the experiment. PBL is a learning technique while students get to work in real world, they need to find many resources and collect data to complete the task. Therefore, gathering data is a crucial part of this teaching technique. Since, there are lack of authentic resources in our country so it is very difficult for the students to gather data. In the survey, 66.7% students agreed with the statement and 22.2% students remain neutral with the statement. On the contrary 11.1% students disagreed with the statement.

### Group Tasks

Each project should consist of a mixture between good and weaker students in group projects.  
9 responses

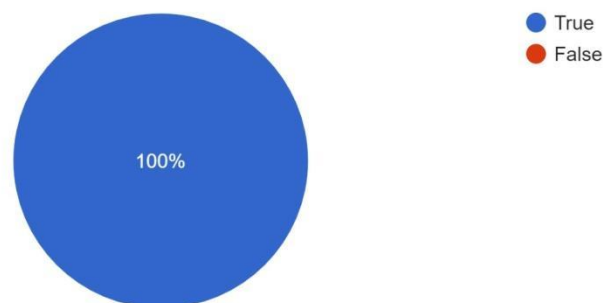


Figure 10: Group forming

The above statement is the starting point for the major agenda of this study report. When selecting or dividing the total students of the class into groups for projects, the participants were questioned if each project should consist of a mixture of good and weaker pupils. It was considered that educational institutions in Bangladesh only cared about good students, and that weaker pupils were simply shoved into lines and made to compete with high-achieving students. The answer to this question, on the other hand, disproves the above-mentioned assumption. In the survey, 100% of people find the statement true that there should be a mixture between good and weaker students in a group project.

Do you think it's more difficult for teachers to evaluate a group, as well as to find out each team member's contribution?

9 responses

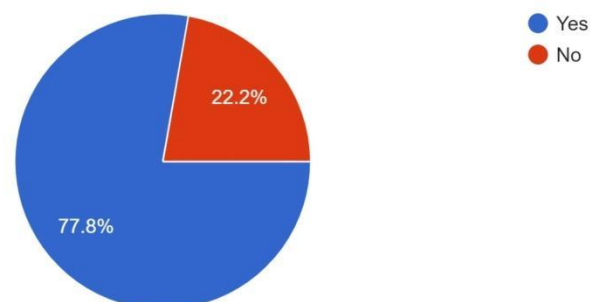


Figure 11: Teacher's evaluation

In the questionnaire, the students were asked if they think the teacher finds it difficult to evaluate each team member's contribution in a group project. In our country it is a common scenario of any group work that only good students do all the work and the weaker students do not participate as the good student. In group works, teachers mainly evaluate according to each group's performances, it is very difficult for the teacher to find out who actually worked more hard. In that question, 77.8% of students agreed with the statement and they choose yes as an answer and 22.2% of students didn't agree with it.

When each group is given a separate topic, it is expected that students would not fully comprehend the concept.

9 responses

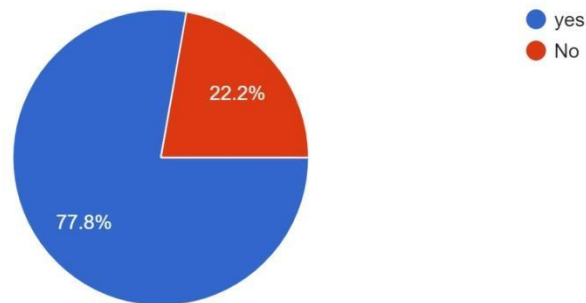


Figure 12: Understanding project topic

In this survey question, respondents were asked if each group of people is given a separate topic, it is expected that students wouldn't fully comprehend the concept. While teachers give any group project, it is very common that different groups get different topic to work on and teacher does this so that students do not copy others work. Therefore, some topics became very difficult for the students to understand. In this survey 77.8% of students chose yes as an option which means they agree with the statement, and the rest 22.2% said that they didn't agree with the statement so they chose no.

## Liked and disliked aspects

What aspects of working on any project did you like the most?

9 responses

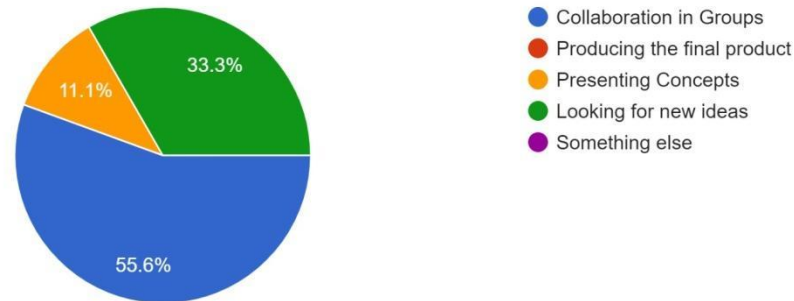


Figure 13: Admired aspects

The students were asked what aspects of working on any project they liked the most. The question aimed to point out the specific sectors the students find interesting about working in a group project. It was a multiple-choice question. 55.6% of students chose collaboration in groups, 33.3% of respondents chose to look for new ideas, and 11.1% of respondents liked presenting concepts the most.

What aspects of working on any project did you dislike the most?

9 responses

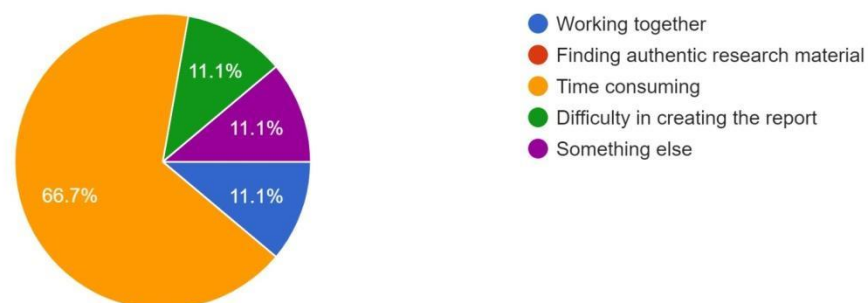


Figure 14: Disliked aspects

In other questions, the students were asked what aspects of working on any project they disliked the most. This question aimed to find out the difficulties that are faced by students

and which should be improved while implementing PBL. 66.7% of students disliked the fact that it is time-consuming, 11.1% of students found difficulty in creating the report, another 11.1% of students disliked working together and the rest 11.1% of students disliked something else.

### **Open- ended responses**

The last two questions of my survey was open ended questions which were to find out three best and difficult qualities of Project Based Learning. These questions were asked to find out what are the qualities of PBL that students find out beneficial and what are the qualities that students find out difficult while working on a project of PBL.

The first open ended question was that students had to write three most essential things that they think are best about PBL. Among the 9 responses two things were mentioned that are communication skill and interaction while working on group projects. Most students mentioned the interaction, co-working, dividing group works, brainstorming together, getting different information from each members. Other qualities that mentioned are creative learning, enhancing knowledge, improving English language skill and presentation skill. These were the common responses among the students.

Another open ended question was that students had to write three most difficult things that find difficult about PBL. Among the 9 responses one thing was common in almost all the answer which was time consuming. The project of PBL are very time consuming and other thing is it requires authentic resources which are also not very available. This was also mentioned by most of the students that lack of authentic resources. Some other difficulties that mentioned are clash of ideas, contribution differences like not all the members contribute in same way while finishing the group projects, classroom management lacking, understand the teacher's suggestion. These were the difficulties that were mentioned by the students.



### **Analyzing Data from the in-depth interview**

This interview was thematically semi- structured. The questions were asked based on some themes which were mostly found in the previous parts of the research.

#### ***Student centeredness***

Participants were asked what they think of PBL whether it is student centered or teacher centered. Surprisingly all the participants said that PBL is a method which is student centered. One of them mentioned that it is a student- centered approach where students get to learn things by doing it together. Another participant mentioned that it gives the opportunity to the students of working independently and give them a real life experience through the projects. Some other points were also mentioned like students become enable to solve their problem by analytical thinking which makes the students more active. Moreover, one of the participants said that PBL is an effective method for students as it allows students to engage themselves to an authentic learning which is somehow relevant to our regular life and it is not the old teaching technique which was completely teacher centered where used to give all the notes and students used to memorize them for good grades.

#### ***Time consumption***

Another question for all the participants was about the duration of the projects and why they think that this method is more time consuming. One of the participants mentioned that the projects of PBL mostly take longer, sometimes the whole semester since it requires a lot of research and presentations. All the participants think that PBL is a time consuming method because it needs to be done by some specific preparations and tasks. They mentioned that sometimes it takes longer than the expected date and since the projects are very complex in PBL approach rather than any other approach that's why they need to give more time and concentration to finish that project. Another participant mentioned that as PBL introduced open-ended topics that's why students need to think critically which takes more time.

Moreover, they have to collect data and organize them in a presentable way which is why they think that it is more time consuming.

### *Resources*

In PBL method, resources are very important element to finish the projects. Without authentic resources it is not possible to complete the project. That's why there was a question about relevant resources whether they are able to find authentic resources or not. Here the answer was different as 1 of the participants said that she was able to find authentic resources by using technology. She also mentioned that it gives her the opportunity to use technology for conducting any research and gathering data and interpret the final result. Moreover, sometimes she gets the opportunity to gather data through real world experience. That's why she enjoys the method. Other participants mentioned that they find it very difficult to identify authentic resources since all of them were introduced with this method in their university life so they were not very good at gathering data. One of them mentioned that there are lack of authentic resources and most of them are requires monthly payment. That's why she finds it very difficult. They mentioned that PBL projects requires many data but there are lacking of authentic resources to gather all those data. One of them mentioned that this is the main reason that they found PBL is a very difficult method.

### *Academic achievement*

Since PBL makes student more communicative and interactive that's why there was a question where participants need to describe about their experience with PBL whether they gain something or not. Among the 4 participants 3 of them were from Bangla medium background and one of them were from English medium background. The participant from English medium background never faced that much difficulty coping up the study materials however she mentioned that in one of the semesters she had a very complicated project in which she had faced many difficulties but through finishing that project she has learned lot of new things. She added, in her departmental course she has to do a lot of group based projects

which helped her and her classmates to learn the language easily. As the teams for the project was consisted of Bangla and English medium students, it provided a great opportunity for them to share their language skills and at the same time develop their language proficiency. She also mentioned very clearly that PBL provides the students with a better opportunity to learn a language since in PBL the students work for a significant amount of time on a certain project which requires them to have a good understanding of the language, and so learning the language itself becomes a rudimentary task for them. Therefore, it can be said that she has achieved many skills through PBL approach.

Among the Bangla medium students, 2 of them were faced difficulty initially while coping up with the study materials. However, one of them mentioned that PBL has encouraged her to become more confident and it helps her to improve language skills. Another participant mentioned that Project based learning helped her a lot to lessen up her lacking. As when she was in her first semester, she was given to do Brochure. It was basically a teamwork and she learned new things from her other group mates which helped her a lot. Another participant from Bangla medium mentioned that she doesn't feel any extra pressure in coping with English study material. However, she found it difficult while giving presentations. She seemed outmost positive about project based learning. She mentioned she could learn her lacking while she was practicing the presentation beforehand the final presentation in front of her group mates. She also learned from one of her group mates how to give an impromptu presentation. This is how all the participants have shared their achievement through PBL approach.

## **Chapter 5**

### **Discussion**

The most challenging part of any research is analyzing the data and interpreting the findings into a meaningful structure for others to understand (Daftary & Craig, 2018). For any qualitative data, the interpretation requires a delicate understanding of what the participants tried to mean as they have shared their own perceptions or insights regarding the research topic. However, the responsibility of the researcher is to analyze them carefully and bring them into a structure. Whereas quantitative data has already a structure and it's easy to create charts, pie charts, or tables to demonstrate the findings and approve or disapprove of the theory.

From the survey respondents and interview participants the researcher got a detailed direction toward the language learning process in our country. Most of the students from Bangla Medium was not introduced with the process of Project based learning in school and colleges whereas the students from English medium have been doing this sort of language learning skills since school and colleges. From the survey we found that most of the students cannot get the chance to enhance their language learning capabilities due to the lack of practicing Project based learning in the classroom. Poonpon (2017) has also found that the challenge to developing the English language skills for non-native students is that they lack the background of the language and also lag when completing the given tasks. Some of the students pointed out some problems regarding Project based learning. As it is a sequence based performance, it requires much time. Barron et al. (1998) has also found the issue that the environment of PBL requires more time. Some students find it difficult as it takes much time and concentration. Moreover, most students face difficulty while gathering data because they thought there are lack of resources. Also initially students face fear in giving presentations. However, in the Bangladesh context, most of the students feared that the

marking system is a bit confusing. The teacher doesn't tend to evaluate the students individually they prefer to do the evaluation as a group. As a result, the students who don't work hard or participate wholly, get the equal marks. When selecting or dividing the total students of the class into groups for projects, the participants were questioned if each project should consist of a mixture of good and weaker pupils. It was considered that educational institutions in Bangladesh only cared about good students, and that weaker pupils were simply shoved into lines and made to compete with high-achieving students. Most of the respondents agreed with this statement. However, it is a matter of great hope that whether the students are from Bangla or English medium at some point they do understand the importance of Project Based Learning and how it can be helpful in learning English language. The respondents pointed out some best parts of the Project based learning system. These are the interaction skill, communication skill, and cooperation with co-workers. Moreover, it is also found that it gives the opportunity to experience with real-life world. Belwal et al. (2020) has found that implementing PBL helps the teachers to present the students with a situation where they can learn things from an out-of-the-box context while maintaining professionalism at fulfilling the aims and objectives.

These research has found the advantages of PBL and these are- communicative and interactive, student centered and make students more active through analytical projects. On the other there are some disadvantages also found and these are- time consuming, lack of resources and incorrect evaluation.

## **Chapter 6**

### **Conclusion**

The main agenda of this thesis was to find out the stage of students in Project Based Learning in the Bangladesh educational context. The thesis tried to draw a line of difficulties of the students in learning English language by doing PBL. Bangladesh do still need to learn the importance and impact of PBL, introducing in the classroom. Teachers need to realize if this modern method is inevitable for the students and act according to it. Starting with the students from Bangla medium to English medium, even in the Universities, students when they first get to know about PBL, this thesis showed that they were more eager to learn language by using Project Based Learning.

The main aim of this thesis was to find out the advantage and disadvantage and the real life implications of Project Based Learning. It needs to be said that if our teachers of school and colleges are being taught about PBL for English or any other language learning then it can be beneficial for the students too as we've already seen students objecting on suddenly get to know the PBL method in the higher studies. For this most of the students find it difficult in the first to third semester. As long as the students are aware of the method and its initial goal, they will be able to participate in the method without being nervous. As we are living in the world of English language, these types of methods need to be introduced more in the institutions as this includes peer-talk, technology usage, crisis management, group based study talk and so on.

To improve the implementation of PBL, teachers need to focus on some issues for effectively improving student's skills. These are-

- time management- teachers need to give flexibility to the students so that they can finish the project before deadline. Another important thing teacher should make the students understand about time management.

- Students grouping- The focus is on determining the best grouping structure, encouraging full involvement, and maintaining monitor of each group's development through discussion, observation, and documentation of progress.
- Making the most of technical resources, such as determining the project's eligibility for employing technology, making effective use of the internet by being encouraged to make educated decisions when researching relevant websites, and establishing capacity for critical thought.

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## Appendix- a

### Survey Questions

Where did you get acquainted with Project Based Learning?

- School
- College
- University
- Somewhere Else

Do you think Project Based Learning is beneficial?

- Yes
- No

If yes, Project Based Learning is beneficial in which of these following areas-

- Getting students interested in learning
- Analytical thinking stimulation
- Interaction amongst students
- Enhancing the teaching standards
- Something else

If no, conducting project-based learning is difficult because:

- Time consuming
- Assessments are difficult
- Lack of authentic resources
- Difficulties in classroom management
- Something else

PBL has helped me to improve my language learning skills while coming up with new ideas

- Strongly disagree
- Disagree
- Neutral
- Agree
- Strongly agree

Students that struggle with the experiment and data gathering will have a difficult time.

- Strongly disagree
- Disagree
- Neutral
- Agree
- Strongly agree

Each project should consist of a mixture between good and weaker students in group projects.

- True
- False

Do you think it's more difficult for teachers to evaluate a group, as well as to find out each team member's contribution?

- Yes
- No

When each group is given a separate topic, it is expected that students would not fully comprehend the concept.

- Yes
- No

I feel Project Based Learning has taught me to be original and present my weakness for improving my English language skills.

- Strongly disagree
- Disagree
- Neutral
- Agree
- Strongly agree

PBL has taught me to present my language learning input and receive others' opinions to correct my weakness and improve language skills as strengths.

- Strongly Agree
- Agree
- Neutral
- Disagree
- Strongly Disagree

PBL has taught me to communicate in English in a professional manner through continuous self-assessment and self-improvements.

- Strongly Disagree
- Disagree
- Neutral
- Agree
- Strongly Agree

What aspects of working on any project did you like the most?

- Collaboration in Groups

- Producing the final product
- Presenting Concepts
- Looking for new ideas
- Something else

What aspects of working on any project did you dislike the most?

- Working together
- Finding authentic research material
- Time consuming
- Difficulty in creating the report
- Something else

Please right three most essential things that you think is best about Project Based Learning-

Please right three most difficult things that you find difficult about Project Based Learning-

## **Appendix- b**

### **Interview Questions**

1. Which background are you from English medium or Bangla Medium?
2. Did you have difficulty coping up English study materials in your undergrad degree?
3. Do you think PBL is student centered or teacher centered?
4. Do you think PBL is time consuming? if yes, then why do you think so?
5. Are you able to find resources and gathering data? Do you think there are enough authentic resources available in our country?
6. To what extent did PBL projects help you to improve your English language skills in academic arena?