

## An Investigation into Project-Based Learning in Higher Education: The Case of EFL in Moroccan Universities

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<b>Received:</b>	<b>Abstract</b>
30/04/2024	<p><i>Project-based learning has gained immense popularity as an innovative method that reinforces learners' critical thinking, autonomous learning and collaboration. It is basically founded on constructivism and experiential theories wherein students learn by doing. The objective of using this method is to enable learners to construct knowledge through meaningful learning experiences using real-life themes. It is an expedition of discovery where learners are often required to choose, prepare and present a project about a given course-related topic. This study aimed to reveal Moroccan English majoring students' perceptions towards the implementation of the Project-Based Method in learning English as a Foreign Language. 1857 B.A. students from various colleges of Arts and humanities were involved in responding to a questionnaire to collect quantitative and qualitative data. The descriptive statistics, after analysis, showed that project work develops several language and life skills, especially oral communication, vocabulary and creative-critical thinking. It also found out that using projects plays a focal role in enhancing learners' sense of responsibility and confidence, motivation, and autonomous learning and provides a positive learning environment. However, the participants mentioned a variety of challenges to implementing projects at the university level, namely stage anxiety, scarcity of relevant information, and time constraints. Overall, the findings of the study suggest several pedagogical implications to better integrate project work at the university level taking advantage of the positive attitudes learners hold towards this learning approach.</i></p>
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### 1. INTRODUCTION

It is generally believed that the main goal of education is to provide learners with the necessary skills to keep up with the new needs of the 21st century. Skills such as critical-creative thinking, problem-solving and learner autonomy are of paramount importance to excel both at school and at work. Kozinsky (2014) states that the citizens of the 21st century are required to enjoy critical and creative thinking, collaboration, digital literacy and leadership skills. Similarly, Beers (2011) indicates that the objectives of teaching, in this era of globalisation, is to aid learners in learning how to think, inquire, question, solve problems and use these skills in different situations with new information. To meet the 21<sup>st</sup> century learning needs, Project-Based Learning is one of the innovative methods of learning that aims to enhance these skills in addition to others. Project-Based Learning or PBL is defined by

Moss and Van Duzer (1998) as an instructional approach that contextualizes learning by providing learners with problems to figure out or ideas to extend. It is a model of learning that involves complex tasks to answer challenging questions. This way, learners are allowed to think creatively, act critically, discover autonomously, and investigate meticulously. This method is a shift from the traditional teacher-centred approach to a more learner-centred methodology of constructing knowledge through investigation. Project-based learning relies on developing multiple skills through ongoing activities during a period of time that can reach weeks. According to Beckett (2002), the projects are mostly carried out as long-term (several weeks) tasks to acquire new linguistic skills as well as develop organizational and managerial competencies. In the same vein, Cooper and Murphy (2016) assume that the teacher is required to create a classroom culture of creativity and engagement in which the students share their work and reflect on the processes they use to create and complete their projects.

Given the assumption that Project-Based Learning is considered to be a practical approach that relies on learning by doing, it might be agreed that it probably provides a suitable learning environment in which different skills are the target goals, namely language and life skills. Therefore, the main concern of this study is to investigate learners' perceptions towards the use of project-based activities to foster language and life skills along with increasing students' motivation, interest and self-confidence. The study also expands its scope to investigate the limitations facing learners while carrying out project work. To attain these goals, the authors focus on answering the following research questions:

1. What are learners' perceptions towards the use of project work at university?
2. What kinds of skills and abilities do learners improve thanks to project work?
3. What challenges do learners confront while implementing projects as a method of learning?

Prospective findings will serve as empirical evidence for professors in integrating and devising more appropriate project activities for English language learners to enable them to better their language abilities as well as their 21st century skills in a globalized world.

## **2. LITERATURE REVIEW**

### **2.1. Definition of Project-Based Learning**

As described by the Buck Institute for Education (BIE), PBL, in the classroom context, is "a teaching method in which students gain knowledge and skills by working for an extended period to investigate and respond to an authentic, engaging, and complex question, problem, or challenge". This approach is student-centred wherein learners are required to work collaboratively towards achieving pre-set shared goals through experiential learning using their engagement and active reflection (Helle et al. 2006). Historically, the use of projects in education dates back to 1908, when Rufus Stimson, who was a teacher in Massachusetts, created the notion of "home projects" that revolved around instructing students to enact the school's activities in their homes (Colley, 2008). This practice was further modified and developed by constructivists under the approaches of "learning by doing" and "active learning" (Dewey, 1938). Throughout time and practice, Projects-Based Learning has come to describe a strategy where learners work collaboratively to produce tangible and fine products which can be presented to the audience via a presentation (Galvan, 2014). Hedge (1993) presents several characteristics for project work in the EFL classroom, namely using original materials, providing a student-centred classroom, lending a scaffolding hand when necessary and having tolerant students who accept taking responsibility for completing the project in and outside the classroom context. This process of learning enables learners to create knowledge through transforming experience into concrete meaningful ideas (Kolb, 1984).

Besides, Thomas (2000) suggests five criteria of project work; namely centrality, driving questions, constructive investigations, autonomy, and realism. These criteria are elaborated as follows:

- a. PBL projects are central to the curriculum. Their use in the educational program should be regular and organized throughout the whole syllabus.
- b. PBL projects are built upon questions or problems that “drive” learners to face new concepts and standards of a subject.
- c. PBL projects enable learners to construct knowledge through a process of investigation.
- d. PBL projects are greatly learner-driven, oriented, and centred.
- e. PBL projects are realistic because they touch upon real-life topics.

That being said, PBL enjoys more common features as assembled by Railsback (2002):

- a. PBL is student-centred and directed.
- b. PBL revolves around meaningful and observable project content.
- c. PBL is based on pre-determined steps of the project (beginning, middle and end).
- d. PBL is driven by real-life questions.
- e. PBL should be culturally sensitive and appropriate.
- f. PBL should set specific goals that relate to the curriculum.
- g. PBL’s final product should be presented to the audience.
- h. PBL is subjected to feedback, revision and assessment.
- i. PBL provides opportunities for learners to self-assess and reflect on their learning.
- j. PBL links academic outcomes with real-life skills and transfers knowledge to wider contexts.

Another characterisation is proposed by Larmer and Mergendoller (2010) who think that the key components of PBL are as follows: important content, curiosity to know, a triggering question, student voice and choice, 21<sup>st</sup> century skills (communication, collaboration, critical thinking and the use of technology), innovation and inquiry, feedback and revision, and public presentation of findings.

## **2.2. Steps of Implementing Project Work**

According to Stoller (1997), certain steps should be carried out in classroom project implementation. Firstly, the teacher and his students agree and decide about a certain theme or topic for the project as well as the method of treating it. Secondly, students design an outline for the project by investigating information about the project, deciding about the objective of the project, and setting a deadline for the work. Thirdly, the students collect precise, organized, and authentic data related to the topic to answer the problem and figure out tasks. Fourthly, the students opt for the method of presenting the solutions to the project questions. Fifthly, the students design a presentation by focusing on the main points of the project’s final product. Next, the students present their outcomes using the necessary communicative skills. Finally, the students evaluate their knowledge either by self-assessment or by their peers’ and teacher’s feedback. Throughout this process of investigation, students are expected to develop their 21<sup>st</sup> century skills; especially their communication skills thanks to the activities they engage in such as information sharing, project discussion, assigning tasks to group members and project presentation (Guyen, 2014)

Following Nguyen (2011), six factors should be considered while implementing a school project. The first factor is the project goal and activities. They should be stated and agreed upon at the beginning so that the final project can meet the standards defined in the curriculum. The second factor is the time frame and materials to guarantee a deep understanding and commitment on the part of learners. The third is collaboration; learners should be allowed to acquire collaboration skills and patterns. The next factor is student-centeredness. The projects' activities should focus mainly on the learner; both as an individual or in a group. The learners should be given the ability to define the project in their terms in accordance with the course content, of course. Another factor is the real-world connections. This designates that the project should bridge the gap between school and real-life contexts. It is important for students to tackle real-life problems in their projects and come up with clearly defined solutions subjected to revision and reflection. Last but not least, assessment. Learners' knowledge and competencies should be evaluated at the end of the project to verify whether the learning goals have been attained.

### **2.3. Benefits of PBL in Foreign Language Learning**

PBL has gained a great reputation in the last few years given its benefits. It is a method of learning that boosts learners' confidence, motivation and autonomy. Fried-Booth (2002) asserts that students who undergo a project learning process demonstrate increasing self-esteem and a positive stance towards learning. When students are actively engaged in choosing the topics of projects and constructing knowledge by themselves, they tend to be more responsible and independent (Skehan, 1998). They even improve their linguistic skills through authentic tasks and activities according to Levine (2004). Obviously, when students engage in meaningful learning tasks using original materials, they are given the chance to experiment natural use of language with full integration of different skills (Stoller, 2006). In fact, it is a dynamic approach through which students explore real-life problems and challenges that grant them the chance to build meaningful knowledge (Molina, 2017). Thanks to this possibility of integrating skills during project work, Laverick (2018) stresses that PBL perfectly matches CLT wherein, according to Littlewood (1981), learners focus on real, original, functional and natural use of language. Additionally, the similarity between the two notions extends to the role of learners who become the centre of the learning process. It is, hence, a means to develop their communicative form of language beyond the academic context and meet the linguistic demands in their community (Eyring, 1997)

Another benefit discussed by Lee (2002) is the enjoyment that students have during carrying out project-based activities. When the students are given the chance to be themselves in choosing the topic of the project, plan the tasks at their own pace, collaborate with their peers, and resort to their resourcefulness techniques in a stress-free environment, they are inclined to be more motivated to learn. PBL helps students make connections with the outside world by transferring their learned knowledge to real-world contexts. Through this authentic learning experience of carrying out a project, students are more motivated to increase their English language proficiency as well as trigger their autonomy and life-long learning (Levine, 2004).

In addition, Coleman (1992) states that PBL enhances students' interpersonal skills; adopting projects in learning develops the students' social skills as they acquire the necessary skills of negotiation and cooperation which they may transfer from the classroom to the outside world. PBL also allows students to get feedback on their products which increases the possibility of improvement. This practice triggers their sense of sharing and exchange with their peers and tutors. This aligns with Khoiri et al. (2013) who claim that learning in groups trains students in collaboration and social responsibility. In the same vein, El Bakkali (2020) asserts that PBL helps learners accept responsibility for their learning works and outcomes, especially in challenging and complex tasks. Also, it improves their creative and critical thinking,

problem-solving, communication skills, adaptability and self-assessment. Moreover, Ellis (2003) asserts that group work, which is a characteristic of PBL, “increases language practice opportunities, it improves the quality of student talk, it helps to individualize instruction, it promotes a positive affective climate, and it motivates students to learn” (p.598).

Likewise, Allen (2004) advocates that PBL plays a role in developing problem-solving and other high-order thinking skills. These are the long-life, transferable, and 21<sup>st</sup> century skills that every learner needs to have in and outside the classroom. In addition, because PBL activities are mostly carried out in groups, students develop essential skills such as decision-making and leadership. This learning model increases students’ sense of initiative and innovation through all the stages of the project, from choosing the topic of the project, outlining its components, producing the relevant ideas to finally presenting the results. Throughout all these steps, learners develop the spirit of teamwork, tolerance, and responsibility. The PBL model can also enhance both the fluency and the accuracy of the learner’s language. It can also build life skills such as self-confidence, problem-solving, decision-making, and collaboration skills (Little, 2009; Beckett & Slater, 2005)

Another benefit of PBL is assessment. Learners, thanks to PBL projects, are granted the opportunity to evaluate their improvement either by peer assessment, teacher feedback, or reflection (Larmer and Mergendoller, 2015). Utilizing PBL enables students to raise their awareness of their learning styles and techniques and opt for the role that fits their potential in the project team. Assigning roles in projects depends on learners’ abilities, preferences, and task requirements. Therefore, the teacher should take into account these criteria before distributing the roles to every project’s group member.

As a matter of fact, PBL is more effective than traditional methods where the teacher is the mere source of knowledge. According to Grant (2005), PBL draws from the Constructivist theory where learners are the builders of knowledge rather than its receivers. They move from consumers to producers of knowledge by questioning, autonomous learning, sharing and reflection. Hammond (2010) affirms that, through PBL, learners develop their multiple intelligences because they are required to read, write, speak, and listen. The practice of these primary skills will lead them to improve their soft skills as well. Moreover, PBL can improve students’ curiosity, experience, and involvement in learning by taking part in every stage of the project (Rambocas & Sastry, 2017).

Due to all these benefits, applying Project-Based Learning allows students to strengthen their abilities and learn at their own level and pace. It provides teachers with the opportunity to apply differential learning instruction in the classroom as well as use students’ multiple intelligences in designing and carrying out learning activities (Bell, 2010). In addition, teachers can encourage their students to use their high-order thinking skills like, predicting, analysing, justifying and augmenting for their ideas. Teachers can also achieve this by involving their students in activities such as debating, analysing and hypothesizing. These skills are inevitably transferable to real-world contexts (Brooks and Brooks, 1993).

In a nutshell, thanks to the aforementioned advantages, it could be induced that PBL is greatly beneficial to both teachers and students to help them achieve their optimum goals of teaching and learning. Nevertheless, what shortcomings is this method of learning subjected to?

#### **2.4. Limitations of PBL**

Marx et al. (1997) declare six problems that deprive teachers of a perfect enactment of PBL in the classroom. These imperfections are listed as follows:

**Time:** projects usually take longer time to conduct. Thus, teachers go through hard times incorporating projects into their teaching activities regularly.

**Classroom management:** teachers are required to maintain order while allowing their students to work collaboratively to produce their projects. Balancing the need of students to work on their own and maintaining classroom order can be challenging at times.

**Control:** while teachers should grant their students the opportunity to build up their knowledge, they expectedly tend to control the information in the classroom. This paradoxical situation hardens the shift towards a more learner-centred approach.

**Support student learning:** giving students too much independence or too little modelling or feedback can result in ambiguity about the way the teacher should deal with supporting students' learning.

**Use of technology:** teachers encounter difficulties integrating technology into their classroom activities, especially when learners are to present their final products to the audience. Learners lack digital literacy which in turn affects their presentation of the project's final product.

**Assessment:** teachers face challenges in designing assessment activities to check their students' understanding. Assessing project work can sometimes be difficult due to the variety of activities carried out throughout the extended time of the project's implementation.

Similarly, Galvan (2014) mentions twodefects which professors encounter when using this style of teaching. The first weakness is that students lack an understanding of creativity. Teachers find it difficult to describe the notion of creativity to students who may be reluctant to participate in the creative process (Zhou, 2012). The second weakness is that teachers often find Project-Based Learning tasks "messy" and "unorganized" because they aren't an integral part of the school curricula. In their say, PBL activities are as little as extra-curricular activities teachers can do without. In order to solve this issue, Rosenfeld & Rosenfeld (2006) propose encouraging teachers to participate in project-based workshops to help them use and fit PBL in their classroom environment.

### **3. METHODOLOGY**

This study employed mixed methods to describe students' perceptions of PBL implementation. It focused on collecting, presenting and analyzing both quantitative and qualitative data. The two types of data were gathered during the same study and were meant to answer the above-raised research questions.

#### **3.1. Questionnaire and Participants**

The questionnaire is composed of several multiple-choice choices and one open-ended question. It is divided into four parts. The first part collects information about the respondents' sex and level. The second part deals with questions that elicit information about the skills related to project work. The third part is meant to see the perceptions of the informants about the use of projects at the university. The last section collects data about the limitations of carrying out projects within the university context. The items included in the online survey were designed and adapted from the literature review provided earlier. The questionnaire was piloted with 120 students to ensure validity, reliability and clarity of the content and language used.

1857 respondents from 12 public colleges of Arts and Humanities filled out the survey using the service of Google Forms to provide their answers. All the participants are enrolled in First, Second or Third year BA as English majors in the English departments. The answers were collected anonymously and the informants were all notified about the confidentiality of their answers. The questionnaire allowed the participants to report their answers providing data about their experiences and attitudes towards the use of project work in EFL.

## **4. FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION**

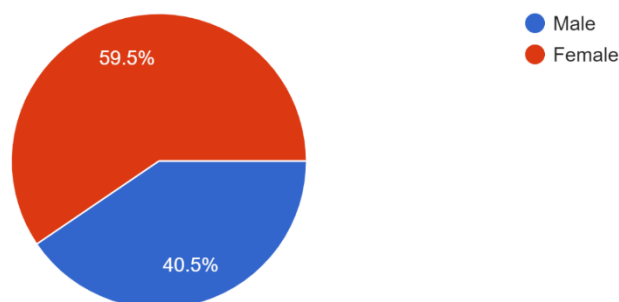
### **4.1. Demographics of the participants**

**Figure 1.**

*Gender of the participants*

1- I am:

1,857 responses



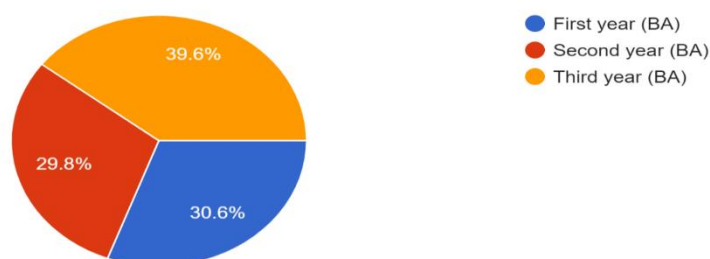
As the graph shows, the distribution of the participants in terms of gender is not balanced. Female students represent (59,5%) of the informants whereas male students make up the rest (40,5%)

**Figure 2.**

*Level of the participants*

2- I am in:

1,857 responses

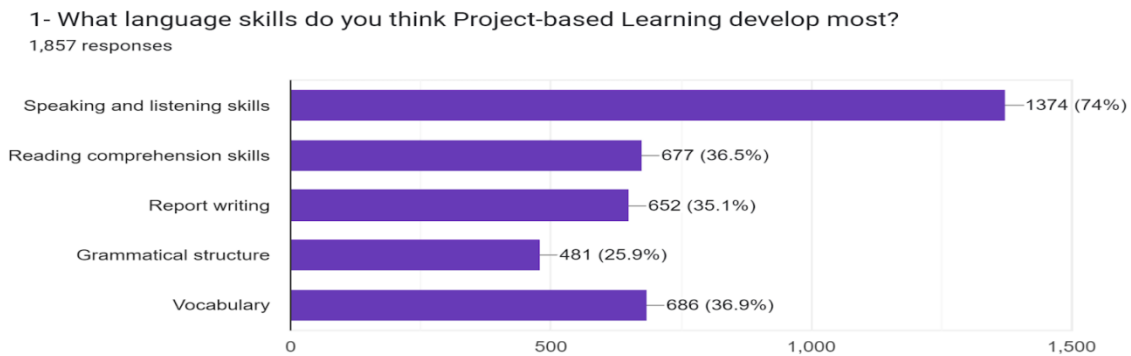


The figures in the above pie chart show that 1<sup>st</sup> year students represent (30,6%) of the participants whereas 2<sup>nd</sup> year students account for (29,8%). The remaining (39,6%) is represented by the 3<sup>rd</sup> year students.

### **4.2. Skills developed thanks to PBL**

**Figure 3.**

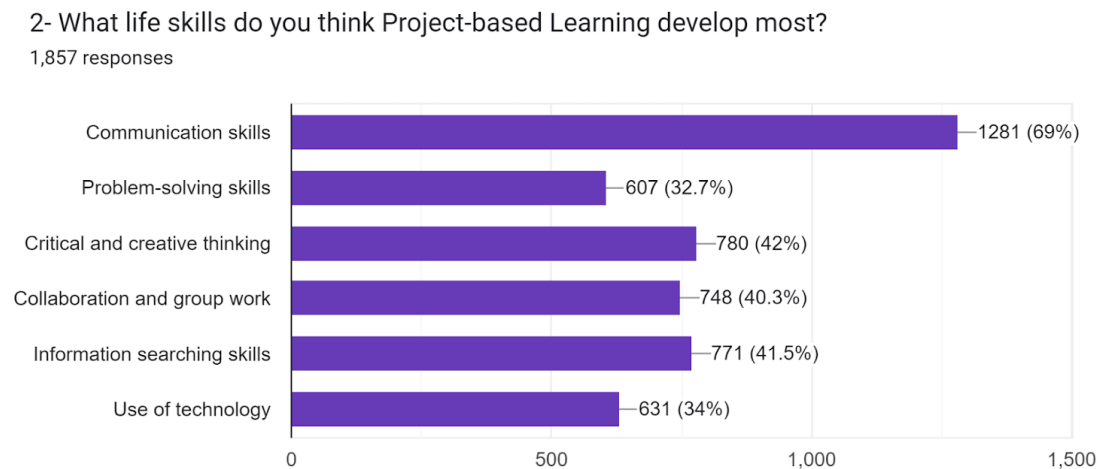
*Language skills developed thanks to PBL adoption*



The results presented in Figure 3 indicate that the majority of respondents (74%) think that project work is likely to develop their speaking and listening skills. This finding goes in line with Eyring (1997) who believes that project work is primarily meant to help learners meet the linguistic requirements of their community outside school. In addition, around (36%) of the informants believe that their reading comprehension, vocabulary and report writing skills could be enhanced thanks to carrying out projects at university. This resonates with Hammond (2010); Levine (2002) and Stoller (2006) who think that PBL allows learners to develop their linguistic abilities through full integration of skills in real-like language situations because they are required to read, write, listen and speak during the same project experience. However, only (25%) of the respondents feel that their grammar knowledge could develop because of Project-Based Learning. This last finding should not be a surprise given the fact that group projects focus more on communication and functions rather than on grammar or structure. This is consolidated by Laverick (2018) who quoted Littlewood’s claim that CLT and project work mainly focus on the spoken form of the language.

**Figure 4.**

*Life skills developed thanks to PBL adoption*





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It must be emphasised that the highest value in Figure 4 refers to the respondents (69%) who think that project work develops their communication skills the most. This strongly matches Guven's (2014) claim which advocates that through project work, learners are inclined to develop their negotiation and communication skills thanks to taking part in the activities of exchanging and sharing knowledge, discussing common topics and presenting the final product of the project to the audience. The graph also shows that around (40%) of the participants agree that using projects is responsible for making their critical-creative thinking, collaboration and information-searching skills better. This goes in line with Coleman (1992) who states that using projects in learning is likely to improve students' social skills make them more tolerant towards feedback and increase their sense of sharing and exchange with their peers and teachers. Additionally, around (33%) of the participants think that project work can help them improve their technology and problem-solving skills. In similar words, Brooks and Brooks (1993) advocate that projects promote students' use of high-order thinking skills such as critical thinking and problem-solving which they don't only need to study, but also to live and work in the 21<sup>st</sup> century era.

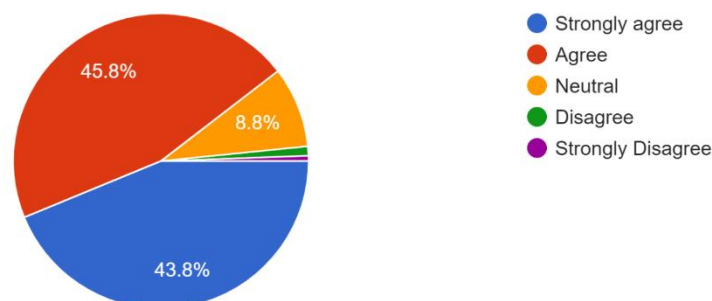
#### 4.3. Respondents' perceptions towards PBL

**Figure 5.**

*PBL and Students' confidence and responsibility*

1- Working on projects develops my confidence and sense of responsibility.

1,857 responses



Referring to the above data, the vast majority of participants (around 90%) agree that taking part in projects helps develop their confidence and sense of responsibility. This goes in accordance with Fried-Booth (2002) who states that PBL enables learners to acquire a high degree of self-esteem and responsibility which they also make use of outside the academic context. Skehan (1998) also emphasises how PBL can be effective in making learners responsible by involving them in selecting the project topic and objectives, setting deadlines and assigning roles to every member of the project group.

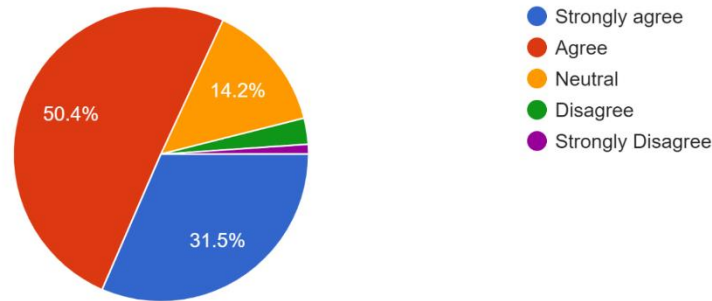
Through this authentic learning experience of carrying out a project, students are more motivated to increase their English language proficiency as well as trigger their autonomy and life-long learning (Levine, 2004)

**Figure 6.**

*PBL and learner motivation*

2- Projects increase my enthusiasm and motivation for participating in class activities.

1,857 responses



When Figure 6 is examined, it can be seen that around (82%) of the participants confirm that projects could boost their enthusiasm and motivation to be more active in learning. This is consistent with Lee’s (2002) claim that PBL provides a comfortable environment for learners to enjoy the learning experience in a meaningful way. In other words, learners tend to be more motivated thanks to the authentic materials and situations they employ during the project journey. Levine (2004) also believes that PBL triggers learners’ motivation because it helps them get more proficient in the language through the life-long skills they have acquired.

**Figure 7.**

*Learning environment in PBL classroom*

3- Project work develops a positive learning environment.

1,857 responses

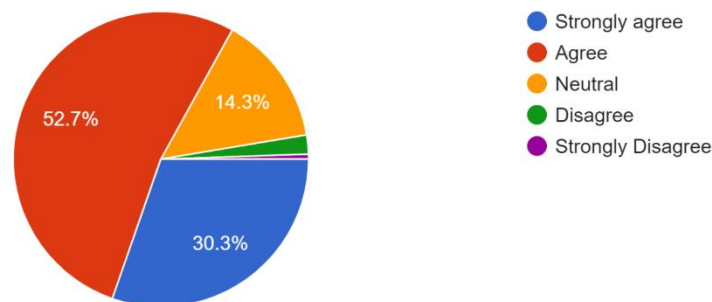


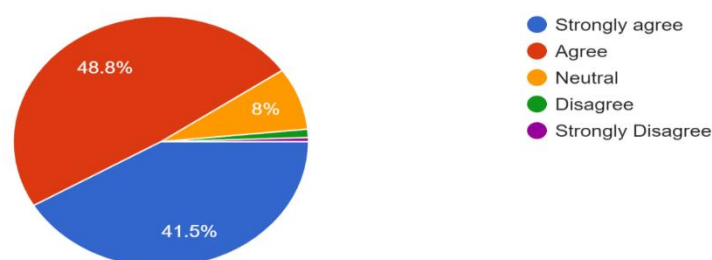
Figure 7 displays results concerning whether working with projects provides a positive environment for learning. (83%) of the informants give credit to PBL for providing an appropriate learning environment. According to Ellis (2003), group project work provides a positive effective environment for learning and encourages learners to take initiative and cease learning opportunities in secured circumstances. In addition, Lee (2002) stresses the prominence of an enjoyable learning environment where learners are at ease, learn collaboratively at their own pace and feel that their decisions and choices are taken seriously consideration in building the project objectives and activities.

**Figure 8.**

*PBL's effect on presentation skills*

4- Working on projects develops effective presentation skills.

1,857 responses



The statistics relating to Figure 8 suggest that more than (90%) of respondents think that projects can develop their presentation skills. This conforms to Larmer and Mergendoller (2010) who assert that one of the key elements of project work is the public presentation that the project group members should give to display the final product of their work. To present this fine and tangible product to the audience, learners engage in a series of practice and rehearsal to master the skills of oral presentation and speech delivery (Galvan, 2014). The final oral product is usually accompanied by a written report or a poster realia to back up the spoken form of the presentation.

**Figure 9.**

*Students' autonomy in project work*

5- Projects help me be an autonomous and an independent learner.

1,857 responses

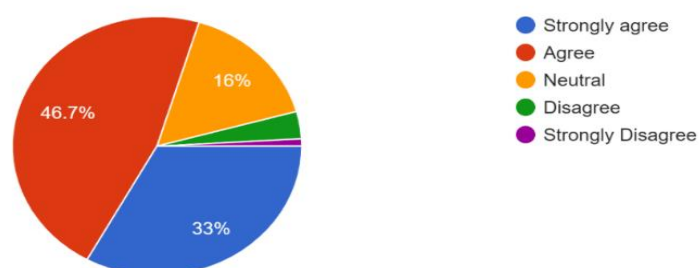
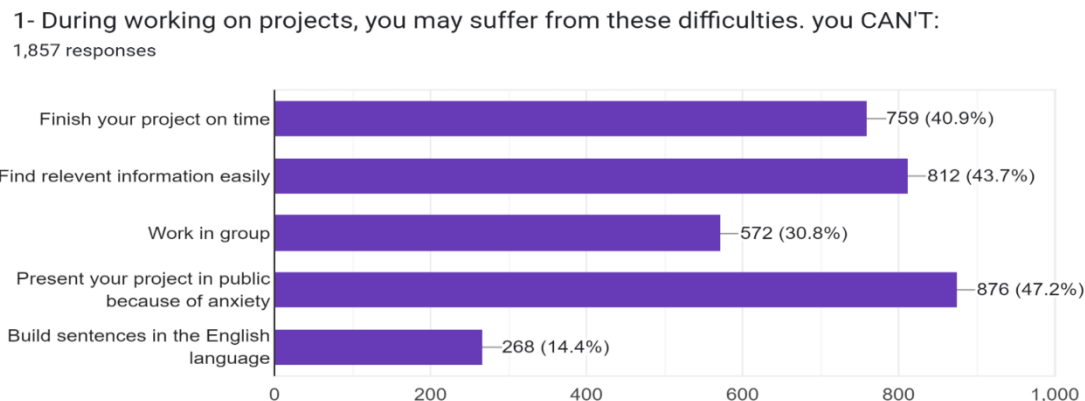


Figure 9 summarises the responses of the participants towards the influence of PBL on their learner autonomy. More than (79%) of them believe that projects could develop their autonomy skills. This aligns with Levine (2004) who asserts that the project experience increases learners' language proficiency and boosts them into becoming more independent learners who can carry on lifelong learning autonomously. Following Holec (1981) who thinks that learner autonomy means taking charge of one's own learning, PBL could serve as a perfect model of learning wherein students participate in setting their learning goals and activities, present the final outcomes of their learning investigations and reflect on the learning strategies they have used to rectify any loopholes in future project works.

#### 4.4. Difficulties facing PBL implementation

**Figure 10.**

*Challenges facing PBL implementation*



Given that the challenges facing the implementation of the project being discussed in the literature review are mainly teachers' perceptions, it is worth finding out about learners' views towards the difficulties they encounter in PBL. The above figures show that more than (47%) of the respondents declare that they suffer from stage fright or anxiety while presenting the final products of their projects. Around (43%) admit that they have difficulties finding relevant information to prepare for their projects. Almost the same percentage cannot finish their projects in due time. More than (30%) don't feel comfortable working in groups whereas (14%) have challenges in forming sentences in the English Language. A short comparison between learners' (in the above graph) and teachers' answers (in the Literature Review section) shows that they differ in their views towards the limitations of PBL implementation.

To make up for these defects, the informants in the questionnaire were asked to supply suggestions to cope with the limitations they have provided. 973 answers were given by respondents. This is a sample of the replies provided by the informants. This sample was chosen to be included in the research because it suggests applicable recommendations to cope with the shortcomings reported by the questioned respondents.

#### **“2- What suggestions can you give to overcome the limitations/difficulties of Project-based Learning?”**

*“The professor must supervise the groups often to make sure the burden of research and writing doesn't fall on one person only and that everyone is doing their part. They also must consider that not everyone is tech savvy due to their personal situation and limitations.”*

*“Be more careful with time and you must learn how to be a disciplined person and take your projects seriously and also try to have fun while you're working so you can be more creative and that helps to give a great result.”*

*“My suggestions that may help to overcome the difficulties of Project-based Learning. First, clearly define learning objectives: clear objectives provide students with a sense of direction and purpose, helping them stay focused throughout the project. Second, scaffold the learning process: provide a structured framework. For example, offer resources, checkpoints, and regular feedback to keep the students on track and prevent them from feeling overwhelmed.”*

*Third, form diverse and balanced groups: strive to create diverse and balanced groups with students of varying abilities and strengths. This helps foster collaboration and ensures that all team members contribute to the project”*

*“I believe that to overcome these difficulties, professors should include more group projects in their sessions, especially in Public Speaking, Study Skills, Business communication...(modules in which presentations are acceptable, not in Spoken English or Guided reading!!!). Those in charge of adding or removing modules can probably add one where students learn how to overcome certain obstacles such as anxiety, fear, and inability to make groups or cooperate”*

*“Give students substantial hints on how collaboration between them should look like. Other than that; it could be more adding to assist students with preliminary background info on the topic of interest or research so that they don't get lost in the middle of nowhere”*

*“Choose the members of your group carefully i.e., the members that you can easily reach a middle ground with. Also, improve your searching skills so that you become able to collect sufficient and relevant information to enrich your project and make it credible. Most importantly, remember it is group work that requires great communication and listening skills to reach the final product smoothly.”*

## **5. CONCLUSION**

Based on the discussion elaborated in the previous section, it can be concluded that learners hold positive perspectives towards the use of Project-Based Learning. They reported that this method creates a cooperative and stress-free learning environment. Furthermore, using projects could enhance their confidence and self-esteem, motivate them to take part in group activities and help them attain their learning goals.

PBL would also substantially promote language skills such as listening, speaking, vocabulary attainment and reading comprehension skills. As for 21<sup>st</sup> century skills, Project-Based Learning enables learners to promote their communication skills, creativity and critical thinking. Likewise, the regular and consistent integration of project-related activities provides suitable opportunities for learners to build up their autonomy skills to use the language in meaningful situations.

Additionally, It is worth noting that learners confront several challenges while carrying out projects at university. However, learners show considerable awareness of these limitations and recommend feasible actions to make PBL a perfect method to acquire the language and meet the learning goals of the 21<sup>st</sup> century.

On the whole, along with the beneficial pedagogical implications this study offers to course designers and professors at university to better make use of PBL in their methodologies, it will also open doors for future research to investigate and evaluate the impact of PBL on learners' proficiency and performance in EFL.

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