

Implementing Project-Based Learning in Business Translation Course: An Exploration of Outcomes and Learners' Perceptions

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Abstract

This article aimed to (1) examine the outcomes of implementing project-based learning (PjBL) in the Business Translation course and (2) analyse the students' perceptions regarding such implementation. A purposeful sampling method was employed, involving the participants of 80 fourth-year English majors from the Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences at Thaksin University, Songkhla. The research utilised three data collection tools: observations, reflective writing, and semi-structured interviews. The observations were conducted to collect data on the outcomes of PjBL, and the reflective writing and the interviews were used to gather insights into the students' perceptions of this pedagogical approach. The collected data were analysed by using a thematic analysis. The research results were as follows: 1. The results concerning the outcomes of the PjBL implementation were organised into four main topics: seating arrangements, interactions between teachers and students, group collaboration, and student motivation to participate in learning activities. 2. For the students' perceptions regarding the implementation of PjBL, they identified both benefits and challenges. Regarding the benefits, the students reported that PjBL developed them in the following areas: critical thinking skills, motivation for learning, translation knowledge and strategies, and collaborative skills. It also helped them recognise their peers' strengths, increase interactions with their teachers, and be exposed to new digital technologies. The challenges highlighted by the students included avoiding asking questions due to fear of losing face and showing respect for the teacher, shyness in voicing their ideas during group discussions, a tendency to rely on traditional teacher-centred methods, perceptions of certain PjBL tasks as irrelevant to the translation course,

difficulties with time management, conflicts within groups, and an expectation for more guidance and information from the teacher.

Keywords: Active Learning; Business Translation; Project-Based Learning; Thai University Learners; Translation Pedagogy

Introduction

Of all learning management, active learning, which is learner-centred, is claimed to be the most suitable for fostering learners' knowledge and skills essential for success in the 21st century (Fayombo, 2012). In the sphere of translation instruction, despite active learning being endorsed, empirical evidence appears scant (Alkhatnai, 2017; Al-Sowaidi, 2021). Given the gap, research investigating such implementation in translation courses is needed. Moreover, as translation teachers should adopt the teacher-as-researcher role (Venuti, 2016), the research is argued to be conducted by the teachers themselves.

One of the active learning approaches broadly discussed is project-based learning (hereafter referred to as PjBL). Educational research shows that using PjBL substantially enhances university students' learning experience (Guo et al., 2020). In university-level translation courses, its benefits are noted. PjBL is claimed to be a type of learning in actual situations that helps learners associate their prior knowledge with what they are learning (Alkhatnai, 2017) and work collaboratively in brainstorming ideas, researching, and investigating issues before discussing them and drawing conclusions (Indarti, 2016). In this learning process, their multiple skills are claimed to be nourished. Such skills are, for example, learning motivation (Galán-Mañas, 2011; Zakiyyah et al., 2024), social learning interactions (Ravitz et al., 2012), self-efficacy (Al-Sowaidi, 2021), problem-solving skills, creativity, and criticality (Galán-Mañas, 2011). Kiraly (2005) similarly underlines these anticipatedly acquired assets, arguing that PjBL gives learners hands-on and meaningful translation learning and engages them in integrating different types of skills, such as communication, collaboration, critical thinking, and creativity, all of which are deemed key of the 21st-century success. With such integration, Kiraly maintains, learners can construct knowledge by themselves, the knowledge that may be the same as or different from what they have previously learned in class.

In the Thai educational sphere, research on PjBL seems to abound, particularly in teaching English as a foreign language. However, as evidenced in the literature, there remains a dearth of research on PjBL in translation classes. The current study therefore aims to address the gap by

investigating the implementation of PjBL in the Business Translation course enrolled by fourth-year English majors at a university from the Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences at Thaksin University, Songkhla. Arguably, the research findings can benefit translation teachers by helping them plan and design learning content and activities. They can also be used as evidence for translation curriculum developers to ponder whether the approach is applicable in translation instruction, particularly in Thai educational contexts.

Research Objectives

1. To examine the outcomes of implementing project-based learning (PjBL) into the Business Translation course
2. To analyse the students' perceptions regarding the implementation of PjBL in the Business Translation course

Literature Review

This section discusses related topics in the literature and the research gap intended to be filled. These topics include project-based learning (PjBL), PjBL in translation teaching, and related studies.

1. Project-Based Learning (PjBL)

Project-based learning (PjBL) is a teaching method that focuses on learner-centred and hands-on experiences (Markham et al., 2003). It is based on constructivist principles for context-specific learning and social interactions that promote knowledge sharing (Ravitz et al., 2012). Larmer and Mergendoller (2010) highlight essential aspects of PjBL, including the use of compelling questions, fostering a desire for knowledge, and engaging in inquiry. Blumenfeld et al. (1991) emphasise that students should seek problem solutions through questioning, discussion, and project creation. Barron and Darling-Hammond (2008) suggest that learners' enquiries should be reflected and accordingly processed among themselves and also when receiving peer and teacher feedback, engendering their project improvement.

PjBL has been claimed to contain many benefits. For example, van Rooij (2008) claims that PjBL allows learners to exploit multiple resources in their learning. Alkhatnai (2017) argues that PjBL affords learners opportunities to link what they have learned with what they are learning, possibly entailing meaningful learning and reinforcing the tendency for application in other contexts, including their real-life situations. Pellegrino and Hilton (2012) note that through PjBL,

learners are encouraged to actively explore real-world problems and challenges before endeavouring to come up with workable solutions, all of which can consolidate their deeper learning as well as the deeper learning process. PjBL is also argued to enhance students' learning motivation (Blumenfeld et al., 1991; Galán-Mañas, 2011), their self-regulation or autonomy (Ravitz, 2010), and their cognitive abilities, such as problem-solving skills, critical thinking, learning agility, creative thinking, analytical thinking, and decision-making (Blumenfeld et al., 1991; Condliffe, 2017; Indriyani et al., 2024; Li, 2023; Pellegrino & Hilton, 2012; Song et al., 2024; Tambunan et al, 2024). Nevertheless, not only are their cognitive learning domains claimed to be developed, but their intrapersonal and interpersonal skills can also be fostered (Pellegrino & Hilton, 2012). Particularly, the interpersonal skills developed through collaboration appear to be the most emphasised, given that in PjBL itself, collaborative learning aspects are considered key (Condliffe, 2017; Indarti, 2016).

Despite the positives of PjBL recognised in the educational sphere, some challenges are also posed. Some teachers and students familiar with the teacher-centred approach are not comfortable with the use of PjBL (Fleming 2000). Johnson and Delawsky (2013) mention the complicated nature of teamwork, arguing that differences in roles, ways of communicating, and personal conflicts can impact how well a team performs and how satisfied learners feel. For Parker et al. (2013), some learners' discomfort and frustration are caused by their expectation of teachers adhering to traditional pedagogies. This is possible because they may think they are left to explore learning and tackle problems on their own with teachers' minimal guidance. Edelson et al. (1999) point out the challenges concerning students' motivation and managerial skills. Such challenge, Edelson et al. claim, is less in traditional learning activities as these activities are already organised by teachers.

2. PjBL in Thai Educational Context

According to Vygotsky's (1998) sociocultural theory, learning is argued to be influenced by sociocultural conditions (Lantolf & Thorne, 2007). Because of this, it can be claimed that Thai cultural aspects can affect Thai education. Therefore, to study PjBL in the Thai educational context, Thai culture needs to be considered.

Komin (1990) examined Thai cultural values from a wide range of individuals, including both urban and rural residents of Thailand. Through this research, she identified nine distinct clusters of Thai cultural values: ego orientation, grateful relationship orientation, smooth interpersonal relationship orientation, flexible and adjustment orientation, religio-psychical

orientation, education and competence orientation, interdependence orientation, fun–pleasure orientation, and achievement–task orientation. It is important to note that these value clusters should not be used to oversimplify Thai culture or to make broad assumptions about Thai individuals. Komin recognised this, arguing that the values could vary among different people and depend on specific situations. Additionally, since her research was published in 1990, some cultural elements may likely have shifted due to globalisation and socioeconomic changes.

In relation to PjBL, it seems that some PjBL elements and some Thai cultural values are not in alignment. For example, in PjBL, collaboration, raising questions, and working on a project critically appear to challenge the Thai cultural aspects of ego orientation and smooth interpersonal relationships. Moreover, in Thai educational contexts, some Thai cultural aspects seem to hinder the implementation of PjBL. For example, concerning the cultural value of hierarchy, learners perceive themselves as being in a lower status, compared with that of their teachers. Because of this, respect for the teachers is highly expected. In the study conducted by Prommak (2019), one of her participants claimed that Thai learners, in general, were socialised and taught to trust their teachers completely, and it could be inappropriate to ask questions or express ideas that challenge their teachers since it could mean they were challenging the teachers, as opposed to the teachers' ideas. Kettanun (2015) similarly stated that Thai learners usually do not ask questions in class to avoid disagreeing with their teachers and tend to stay quiet when teachers are around. This behaviour, Kettanun claims, is intended to show respect to their teachers and prevent any offense. As a consequence of these, Thai learners appear comfortable with their teachers taking control and tend to favour a traditional, teacher–led classroom environment (Thongprasert, 2009). Nevertheless, as Thai learners tend to be attentive to follow all the instructions provided by their teachers, they often do not take the initiative in class; instead, they prefer to wait for guidance on what to do, and even when prompted to make a choice, they may just turn to the teacher for a decision, as they have a strong trust in their teacher's expertise (Raktham, 2008). With some Thai cultural features seemingly inhibiting the PjBL implementation, the current study is expected to be rewarding to provide insights into the issue.

3. PjBL in Translation Teaching

Venuti (2016) suggests that educational institutions need to develop translation courses in response to the changing world. Lafeber (2010) argues that in the translation teaching process, in addition to language and translation, learners also require “analytical, research, technological, interpersonal and time–management skills” (p. 108). A likely implication is that translation teaching

should incorporate pedagogical methods or approaches that facilitate these skills' development and that learner-centred pedagogies, which are considered effective in helping students tackle 21st-century challenges, should be adopted.

Kiraly (2000) proposes a social constructivist approach to translation teaching. For Kiraly, an ideal translation teaching can occur through social interactions that help stimulate knowledge construction and also through carrying out a project. Kiraly argues that PjBL allows learners to experience hands-on and thus meaningful translation learning, engaging them with a plethora of skills, particularly those contributing to 21st-century success, such as communication, collaboration, critical thinking, and creativity. Zheng (2017) also mentions PjBL benefits in translation courses, claiming that "Working on real-world translation projects enables students to gain an insight into the translation profession and hone their required competencies as future qualified translators" (p. 180). Zhang's notion indicates that PjBL equips translation learners not only with tools for solving problems in other areas of life but also with assets for being a qualified translator.

According to the literature, although related studies on the implementation of PjBL in translation courses prevail, very little research has been done on translation courses in the Thai educational context. Given that each country possesses different cultural contexts and that education itself is greatly fashioned by culture (Kapur-Fic, 1998), it could be interesting to examine the application of PjBL in the Thai education contexts and how Thai learners view it. This study therefore intended to address this gap.

Conceptual Framework

This research used Vygotsky' (1998) sociocultural theory to associate with the research objectives and form the study's conceptual framework. According to the theory, biological factors as well as sociocultural factors, particularly the interaction with more competent human others, influence human cognitive growth. This theory also highlights the role of the Zone of Proximal Development (ZPD) which is "the distance between the actual development level as determined by independent problem solving and the level of potential development as determined through problem-solving under adult guidance or in collaboration with more capable peers" (Vygotsky, 1978, p. 86). Vygotsky's ZPD indicates that learning is a social phenomenon in that ones' potential learning abilities within their ZPD, as opposed to their actual learning abilities, can be achieved with help provided by more capable peers or teachers. PjBL which is associated with such interactions can be claimed to be compatible with the theory (Polly et al., 2017). That is to

say, it is assumed that the students under study can learn from their peers with more competencies in certain abilities and also from their teachers.

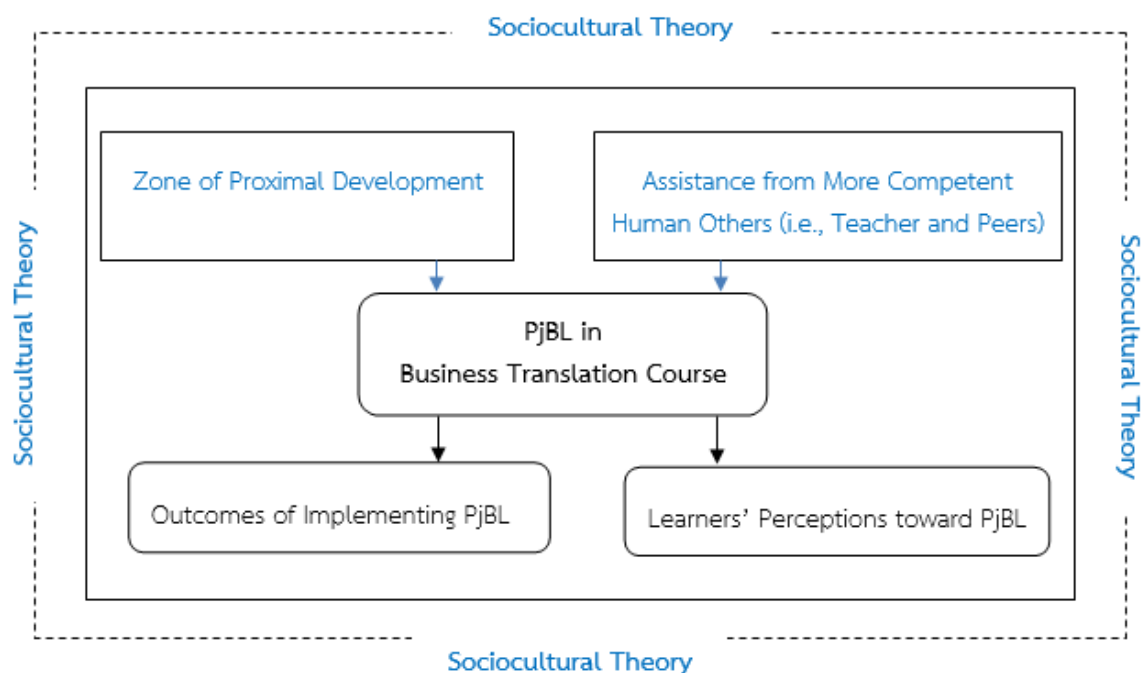


Figure 1 Conceptual Framework

Research Methodology

This research was supported by the funding allocated from the income budget of the Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences, Thaksin University, for the fiscal year 2024. The Research Ethics Committee of Thaksin University also approved that the study would be conducted in compliance with the international guidelines for human research protection. Using purposeful sampling, this qualitative study involved 80 fourth-year students majoring in English at the Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences, Thaksin University, Songkhla, Thailand. The students enrolled in Business Translation which was a compulsory course in the Bachelor of Arts Program in English in the first semester of the academic year 2024.

The study employed three research tools: observations, reflective writing, and semi-structured interviews. The observations were used to collect the data on the outcomes of applying PjBL with the researcher being also their teacher collecting such data. The reflective writing and the interviews were used to produce the data on the students' perceptions of the implementation of PjBL. Here, Thai was used for data collection to avoid any language barrier. The data collection process was undertaken by following these steps.

1. In the first period of the course, the researcher explained to the students, verbally and in written documents, the information on the research, its process, and their rights as the research participants. Importantly, it was made clear that the research participation was voluntary, and they could withdraw from the study at any time for any or no reason. In no way would their refusal or withdrawal affect their grades. Each student would be treated equally without any bias. To show impartiality and transparency, every grade and score was revealed, and the students could verify them or seek justifications. All 80 learners agreed to take part in this study. They signed a consent form acknowledging their approval.

2. The students were assigned to learn more about PjBL before discussing it together in class. They needed to understand the teacher's role and their role in learning through PjBL. After their comprehension was verified, the researcher illuminated how PjBL would be employed in the course and the details of their assigned group work project in which they were asked to find an English-written advertisement of their interest, translate the text into Thai, write a script for a situation concerning the advertisement and roleplay it using a video for recording it, and reflect on their work.

3. The students were assigned to work in groups of four. Each group set up a Line Application group as a communication channel for working and discussing their work together.

4. During the course, the students were asked to reflect on doing the project every time inside and outside the classroom in their reflective writing with the reflective questions given. The researcher had been observing the classes when they had worked on the project and also supervising them outside the classroom. The researcher wrote down everything observable with a list of topics to be observed as an observation guideline, for example, their interactions with their peers, their interaction with the researcher, their cooperation in groups, how they assigned certain roles among their group members, the researcher's roles when scaffolding, extroverted learners and introverted learners, learning atmospheres, and their motivation for learning. The researcher took notes when the learners learned in class, particularly when they worked in groups on the assigned project and also when they consulted the researcher for their projects outside the classroom. It should be noted that while recording the data, the researcher used both English and Thai to ensure her note-taking flowed smoothly.

5. In the seventh week of the semester, the students reported their progress to the researcher who then gave them feedback and suggestions, if necessary.

6. In the thirteenth week of the semester, the students were to present their work in front of the class with the researcher and their peers providing them feedback.

7. In the last week of the semester, the discussions on PjBL and their groupwork project were held.

8. After the students took the final examination, the interviewing process was arranged. Given that these 80 students were assigned to work in groups of four, the total number of the group was 20. One representative from each group was asked to be an interviewee. After explaining to them the interviewing process, their rights as the research interviewees, the use of the audio recorder while interviewing, offers of confidentiality and anonymity, and viable uses of the research results, these 20 students agreed to be the interviewees and signed the consent forms. It took about 15 minutes to interview each of them. The interview data recorded by the audio recorder were then transcribed. As follows are examples of the interview questions.

- Between PjBL and traditional learning, which one do you prefer to have in this course? Please justify your selection.
- What are the advantages of using PjBL in this course?
- What are the disadvantages of using PjBL in this course?
- How can you apply what you have learned through doing the group work project to real-life situations?
- What are the suggestions for using PjBL in other translation courses?

All the collected data were subsequently organised for ease of analysis and reference. The observational data were grouped as one set to answer the first research question “What are the outcomes of implementing PjBL in the Business Translation course?”. The reflective writing and the transcribed interview data were grouped as the other set to answer the second research question “What are the learners’ perceptions towards implementing PjBL in the Business Translation course?”. This study applied the thematic analysis steps suggested by Creswell (2013). The interpreted themes were described with their extracts as examples to be displayed in the research findings. The students’ extracts which were originally in Thai were translated into English by the researcher.

Research Results

Objective 1 . The findings on the outcomes of implementing PjBL in the Business Translation course were categorised into 4 topics: seating arrangement, teacher–student interaction, collaboration in groups, and students’ motivation for learning.

Concerning the seating arrangement, the classrooms under observation were characterised by a high–density seating arrangement oriented towards the whiteboard. This layout may have been influenced by the substantial number of students in the class, particularly in situations where space is limited and must be utilised effectively to accommodate every student. Nevertheless, the seating layout in the classes observed had its limitations. The researcher found it challenging to reach individual students, especially those seated in the back rows. As a result, most interactions between the students and her tended to occur during whole–class discussions. During project–group work activities, the students often felt a bit uncomfortable sitting together in their designated groups. Additionally, it was also difficult for the researcher as their teacher to move around the classroom to monitor and facilitate each group's progress.

For the teacher–student interaction, the researcher attempted to provide constructive facilitation and scaffolding assistance, particularly when the students were working on their projects. Despite the seating arrangement seemingly inhibiting the implementation of PjBL in class, the researcher tried to monitor the students by using questions to activate their learning. In the supervision outside the classroom, questions were also posed to stimulate the students to think by themselves and continue further learning. The students were also encouraged to ask questions. It should be noted that when in class, they rarely asked questions, compared to when under supervision outside the classroom.

Regarding the collaboration in the groups, the students appeared active, motivated, and enthusiastic during their PjBL activities. Each group's members assigned roles to one another. The groups included a mix of outgoing and reserved learners and students with varying levels of achievement. The research noticed that the students seemed more confident when working in groups. When faced with problems or confusion, they could ask their group members. In some cases, when the group members could not find the answers or the solutions to the problem, they then asked the researcher for help. It should be noted that they seemed more confident to ask as a group. Some students who appeared quiet and reserved in the larger classroom environment truly excelled in smaller groups, often stepping up to lead discussions. Although they might have seemed introverted to the researcher who was their teacher, they became quite expressive with

their peers, sharing ideas and steering the conversation. Conversely, some students who were more vocal in class tended to show less engagement during group activities. However, this was not a strict pattern, as many students remained quiet in both settings, while others continued to be talkative in their groups. However, the contribution level in group work did not always reflect how successful the work was. Some talkative members might only bring up unrelated topics, while quieter members might have valuable ideas when prompted.

Concerning the students' motivation for learning, certain students seemed eager to learn as they collaborated in groups where they felt safe from the fear of making mistakes and losing face. They were able to express their strengths and contribute meaningfully to the team. For instance, those proficient in computer and digital technology took the lead in those areas, while others who were good at creating role-playing scripts related to the translated work focused on their strengths. This environment allowed them to feel more confident, as they could engage in the activities that they were good at and felt comfortable doing. Since the project turned out to assess not only their translation skills but also other skills, such as research and role-playing, this made group work fun for some students as they worked together and figured out their roles. However, some students appeared bored and frustrated, probably because there were too many tasks to finish.

Objective 2 . The findings on the students' perceptions of using PjBL in the Business Translation course were grouped into two topics: the benefits of PjBL and its challenges. As follows are the benefits and the challenges they reported, accompanied by some examples of their extracts.

Table 1 Findings on the Students' Perceptions of PjBL Benefits and Some Students' Extracts

Development of critical thinking	<i>"We use our critical thinking skills from the reading course for the project. We examined the credibility of our sources by checking the authors' qualifications, the publication's reputation, and the evidence supporting the information. We looked for biases or propaganda. We avoided Wikipedia as a source because it isn't reliable; anyone can edit its content."</i>
Increase motivation for learning	<i>"When working on a project, we can manage our own time because we have flexibility. We can meet outside of class whenever is convenient for the group. This reduces stress and allows ideas to flow smoothly."</i>
Enhanced interactions with the teacher	<i>"In the classroom, the teacher finds it hard to give individual feedback due to many students and time limits. Feedback is mostly general and doesn't meet our specific needs. However, during group projects, we can consult her outside class for more detailed feedback, which encourages us to improve, even when we are off track."</i>
Exposure to new digital technologies	<i>"A group member taught me to use Story Planner for role-plays from translated works. I only knew about Canva before. Working in groups helps us learn new skills. The technological and other skills we gained during PjBL can be applied in other classes and everyday life."</i>
Recognition of peers' strengths	<i>"I was surprised. Working in a group showed me the potential of my friend. In class, he is quiet, but while collaborating, I noticed his creativity. He suggested interesting ideas. I realised I saw my friend in a new way and learned more about him."</i>
Deeper understanding of translation strategies and knowledge	<i>"In my group, I learned more about translation strategies. The teacher taught these, but I struggled and hesitated to ask. With my friends, I could ask questions and gain more knowledge."</i>
Improved collaborative skills	<i>"It helps me learn to collaborate and communicate. I don't like group work and prefer working alone. I feel sharing ideas can waste time. However, with PjBL, I enjoy working, especially on different tasks in the project."</i>

Table 2 Findings on the Students' Perceptions of PjBL Challenges and Some Students' Extracts

Avoiding asking questions to show respect for the teacher	<i>"I did not want to ask the teacher questions to avoid looking foolish in front of my friends. I feared she might become irritated, think I was disrespectful, or doubt her teaching skills."</i>
Shyness in voicing their ideas during group discussions	<i>"I hesitate to share my thoughts in the group due to skilled friends. I'm afraid of being seen as silly or foolish. If a friend thinks that, I'll feel embarrassed and stressed. It's best to stay silent and help with manageable tasks. I let talented friends handle translation work."</i>
A tendency to rely on traditional teacher-centred methods	<i>"I was confused why the teacher asked questions instead of giving direct answers. She explained that I would remember answers better if I discovered them myself. However, sometimes I want the right answer quickly because searching can be time-consuming."</i>
Perceptions of certain PjBL tasks as irrelevant to the translation course	<i>"The group project, although it involves translation, has some parts that are not related to it, such as role-playing. If we used the time spent preparing and designing the role-playing to study translation, we would probably gain more."</i>
Difficulties with time management	<i>"This semester has too many difficult subjects, making it hard to manage time for work. There are many assignments and projects, and group work can complicate things."</i>
Conflicts within groups	<i>"Sometimes, we must give the same answer. If some members give different answers, they can be left out. I faced this issue. I didn't know how to deal with others' negative reactions. It seems that to work well with others, I need to agree with the majority or the group leader."</i>
An expectation for more guidance and information from the teacher	<i>"I understand the assignment but need a clearer outline. It would help if she specified which text to translate. Choosing on our own can lead to disagreements. The role play needs a clear explanation about the type and situation. When she says we can create it freely, I feel lost."</i>

Discussions

1. The Outcomes of Implementing PjBL

The findings of the outcomes of implementing PjBL were categorised into four topics: the seating arrangement, the collaboration in groups, the teacher-student interactions, the collaboration in groups, and the students' motivation for learning.

Concerning the seating arrangements, they appeared to promote reliance on the teacher, leading to a more teacher-focused method of instruction. Given that a learner-centred approach

greatly enhances the success of projects, with teachers taking the active role as guides, monitors, coaches, and facilitators (Đerić & Đević, 2021; Fleming, 2000), it can be argued that the classroom layouts under observation tend to hinder the implementation of PjBL.

The teacher–student interactions and the collaboration in groups seemed to reflect the influence of Thai culture. Regarding the interactions, it was found that the students rarely asked questions in class. This can be attributed to the Thai cultural values identified by Komin (1990), which emphasise ego orientation and the importance of harmonious interpersonal relationships. They might avoid losing their faces and attempt to save the teacher's face and maintain smooth interpersonal relationships with her. Namely, in this context, the students might perceive that posing questions could portray them as lacking intelligence in the eyes of their peers. There may also be apprehension regarding the teacher's standing; if she is unable to address their questions, it could be perceived as a sign of disrespect, leading to a loss of face for her and potentially jeopardising the positive rapport they have established.

The findings on the students' motivation for learning are twofold: being motivated and demotivated to learn. The ego orientation concept identified by Komin (1990) may be used to explain the motivation the students have enhanced. When collaborating in groups, they might feel safe from the fear of making mistakes and losing face. This safe environment possibly allowed them to feel more confident, as they could engage in the activities that they were good at and felt comfortable doing. For those demotivated to learn, this may be due to their lack of understanding regarding the nature of PjBL since this approach differs from traditional teacher–centred methods, which they may be more accustomed to.

2. The Students' Perceptions of Using PjBL

The students reported both PjBL benefits and its challenges. The benefits they claimed align with those mentioned by several scholars. For example, they noted that PjBL developed their critical thinking skills (Condliffe, 2017; Kiraly, 2000; Pellegrino & Hilton, 2012), enhanced their learning motivation (Galán–Mañas, 2011), encouraged them to use various resources in their learning process (van Rooij, 2008; Kiraly, 2000), and enhanced their collaborating skills (Condliffe, 2017; Guo et al., 2020; Indarti, 2016; Kiraly, 2000; Pellegrino & Hilton, 2012).

The challenges they mentioned concern personal factors and cultural factors. The personal factors included their managerial skills and their familiarity with the teacher–centred approach. For the managerial skills, Edelson et al. (1999) similarly claim that students have to be responsible for handling complex and lengthy tasks that involve not just resources and time but also collaboration

with others, and this level of challenge is lessened in traditional learning settings, where teachers have already structured the activities. For their familiarity with the teacher-centred approach, this is consistent with the notions of Raktham (2008) and Thongprasert (2009). Regarding the cultural factors, these echo some scholars' notions. The factors included avoidance of asking questions for fear of losing face and showing respect to their teacher (Kettanun, 2015; Komin, 1990; Prommak, 2019), and the need to conform to the majority in groups (Komin, 1990; Prommak, 2019).

The findings imply that the effective incorporation of PjBL within translation courses in Thailand relies not only on instructional methodologies but is also significantly influenced by the individual characteristics of both students and teachers, along with the prevailing cultural environment. Recognising these factors is crucial for the successful application of PjBL and for improving the educational outcomes in Thai translation curricula.

Knowledge from Research

The findings in this study showed that the PjBL implementation in the Business Translation course in Thailand was shaped by the students' sociocultural factors, as shown in the following figure.

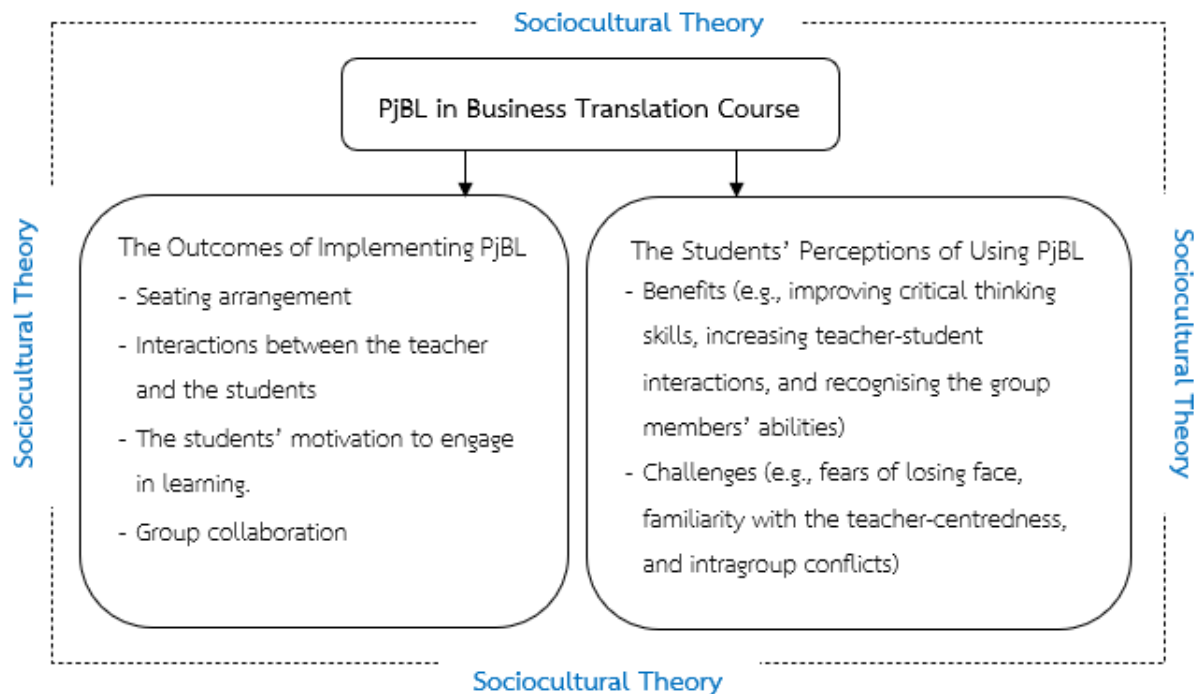


Figure 2 Knowledge from Research

Conclusion

The research revealed that the outcomes of the PjBL implementation and the students' perceptions of this approach were shaped by a combination of external and internal factors. The external influences included such aspects as the seating arrangements, the teacher's roles, their interactions with peers, the group conflicts, and the assignments from other courses. The internal factors encompassed, for example, the students' fears of losing face, their shyness, their expectations for teacher-centred instruction, and their difficulties with time management. These two categories of factors are intricately connected and mutually influential. This supports Vygotsky's (1998) sociocultural theory, which served as the conceptual framework for the study, indicating that sociocultural elements significantly impact students' cognitive development during PjBL. It implies that when implementing PjBL in any classroom context, sociocultural factors need to be taken into account.

Suggestions

1. Practical Implications

With the benefits the students mentioned and the outcomes the researcher reported, the paper argues that PjBL should be applied in business translation courses. This study's findings showed that the students avoided asking questions in class due to their fear of losing face and their desire to show respect to their teachers, leading to less effective PjBL. To improve this, teachers should encourage questioning by providing students who ask with positive reinforcement, promoting a culture of inquiry, and explaining that their questions indeed show respect as these reflect their attentiveness and engagement in the learning process.

During external supervision, it was found that the students were more likely to ask questions and engage in meaningful interactions. They felt calmer and less anxious, receiving more precise feedback, especially in large classes with limited time. Therefore, it is beneficial for teachers to provide external supervision for students on projects in PjBL.

In this study, some students preferred traditional teaching methods, with one suggesting that project work in the translation course should focus only on translation. Understanding PjBL and its benefits is thus important, and it can be done through class discussions. This will potentially help students understand and recognise the importance of PjBL, making them more open to it.

One of the research findings revealed that the students felt uncomfortable while seated in their groups, and this seating layout also made it hard for the teacher to monitor their progress.

This suggests that university authorities may benefit from redesigning classroom seating to better support PjBL implementation.

It is recommended that the gradual implementation of PjBL in conventionally organised courses be promoted. Additionally, small group mentorships may be necessary to assist reserved students in participating more actively. It may also be beneficial to create teacher training programs for the integration of PjBL and to implement hybrid models that combine PjBL with organised lectures. Moreover, AI-powered translation tools can be utilised in PjBL settings or in conjunction with Learning Management Systems (LMS) to enhance collaborative projects.

2. Recommendations for Further Research

This study used a qualitative research design to gather data through observations, reflective writing, and semi-structured interviews. Future studies can combine both qualitative and quantitative methods. The quantitative methods, for example, can include structured surveys and experiments to analyse data, discover relationships, and extend findings. Using both approaches is argued to provide deeper insights.

The course under study was the Business Translation course. Future studies could include other translation courses to see whether the results are similar or different. More research should also look at PjBL in translation courses in various countries to understand the cultural impacts of its use. By examining these cultural factors, teachers can adapt PjBL methods to better meet student needs and enhance learning outcomes.

Future research should explore the long-term impacts of PjBL on translation proficiency and assess student engagement in PjBL compared to traditional translation instruction.

Given that the research involved university students enrolled in the Business Translation Course as its participants, it would also be valuable to investigate the cognitions of business translation teachers on the implementation of PjBL. As Borg (2003) puts it, teachers' cognitions encompass “what teachers know, believe, and think” (p. 81), and these cognitions significantly influence their teaching methodologies. Because of this, the translation teachers' cognitions of PjBL warrant further examination.

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