英语项目学习模式对学习动机的影响因素探究

——一项网络环境下基于东北大学的实证研究

王勃然 著

高等教育出版社

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前　言*

鉴于急剧增长的学生入学人数、相对有限的教育资源和快速发展的信息技术，《大学英语课程教学要求》(2007)（以下简称《教学要求》）建议建立一种新型的语言教学模式，来代替现有以教师为中心的单一教学模式。新模式应融合实用性、知识性和趣味性等原则，激发教师和学生的动机，并特别重视学生的主体地位，以及教师在教与学中的指导作用。通过充分利用计算机和互联网的特殊功能，新模式应让学生根据自身的特定需求来选择合适的材料和方法，获得学习策略方面的指导，逐步提高他们的自主学习能力，并达到最佳的学习效果。

项目学习模式效果显著，能促进语言、内容和技能的同步习得。这种有创新、有实证研究支撑的教学法，基于真实、长期、跨学科和以学生为中心的学习活动，能充分调动学生的兴趣与动机。当我们把项目学习模式的特质和动机构念进行比对的时候，发现它们之间似乎存在着某种密切的关联，由此我们得出一个谨慎的推论：项目学习可能是二语或外语课堂最为理想的模式之一，几乎满足了《教学要求》提出的所有要求。在这样的背景之下，本研究以认知和社会建构主义为理论基础，利用三方论证的研究方法，旨在确定基于网络的项目学习模式中的动机因素，探究项目学习与学习成就之间的关系，并建立一个网络环境下英语项目学习的动机模型。

以往的相关研究给我们留下的一个印象是：尽管有大量的资料、模型、框架和理据证实了项目学习的诸多优势，基于项目的二语和外语教育方面的实证研究依然严重缺乏 (Beckett, 2006; Stoller, 2006)，在二语/外语教育中以科学理论为指导的模型研究更是稀缺，而从学生的视角着手的项目学习实证研究极为有限 (Land & Greene, 2000; Wu & Krajcik, 2006)。更为重要的是，技术支撑的语言项目学习模式中的学生动机尚未成为一个关注的中心课题，故急需开展相应的研究，以明确项目学习在二语或外语课堂中的真实状况，以及它如何激发学生的学习。

由于它提供的强大行为指标，对动机加以描述并不太难，但是要对诸

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如为什么在面对某个特定的任务或身处某个特定环境，有些人的动机被激发而有些人的动机却缺失加以解释，就困难重重了。虽然新近的动机研究越来越重视学习环境所发挥的作用，它们的成果却往往不能直接应用于语言教学。举例来说，Gardner的社会教育模式关注的重点不是激活和维持动机的真正原因，而是由于动机影响产生的可能后果。在他看来，一旦动机被激发，其原因并不重要。然而对于语言教师而言，如果一种语言活动的动力来源无从考究，就把它运用于实际教学之中，未免过于冒险和草率。正如Oxford和Shearin (1994) 所言，“对于希望激发学生动机的老师，动机的来源具有非常重要的现实意义。如果不知道动机的根在哪里，教师又如何浇灌它们？”

本研究基于认知和社会建构主义的观点，旨在确定网络项目学习模式中影响内在动机构念的特质。根据我们的假定，网络项目学习模式中的重要特质和内在动机构念应该共同作用，一起提高学生的学习成就。具体来说，本研究提出的4个研究问题分别是：1) 网络项目学习模式的哪些特质，能对学生的学习动机产生影响？2) 网络项目学习模式的这些特质，对学生学习动机的影响有何差异？3) 学生的性别或专业能在多大程度上影响网络项目学习模式的这些特质和学生学习动机之间的关系？4) 通过网络项目学习模式，学生认为他们获得了哪些方面的学习成就？

网络项目学习模式在笔者所在的东北大学已实施了三年有余 (2008、2009、2010)，对象是所教授的大一和大二非英语专业的学生。这些参与者凭借他们在大学生活第一周参加的英语分班测试成绩，被分在英语三级班。由于2008级学生人数较少和笔者的经验短缺，最终决定本研究只选取167名2010级的学生作为对象加以研究。为了从不同角度来获取大家对于研究结果的认同，也为了达到更深入、更深刻了解语言学习环境的目的，本研究采集了多种数据，以满足三方论证的需要。考虑到本研究的实证性，数据来源包括自行设计的调查问卷、采访和学生的电子文档 (主要是他们的自我总结报告)。

在对问卷调查、采访和学生自我总结报告进行分析和讨论之后，我们肯定地得出如下结论：网络项目学习模式极大激发了学习者的内在动机，而不是外部动机。其九个特质对本研究选取的七个动机构念有着程度不一、效果明显的影响。依据项目学习九大特质对于学习动机的不同贡献，本文作者试图把它们划分为两类：一类是主要动机因素，包括合作性、自主性、累积性、探究性和脚手架作用，剩下的为次要动机因素，包括真实

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性、反思性、交叉性和技术性。主要和次要因素共同作用，对自我效能、焦虑、自信、归因、期望–价值、目标和自我决定等内在动机构念发挥影响。通过分析和讨论调查问卷及学生的自我总结报告，我们认为，网络项目学习模式可以促进学生的多元化学习成就，这包括语言能力、学科知识及21世纪技能。此外，我们还惊喜地发现，学习者在网络项目学习模式中能够实现的学习成就非常符合美国外语教学理事会 (ACTFL, 1999) 提出的外语教育标准。

与以往有关项目学习和动机的研究相比，本研究具有如下创新：

● 理论创新

鉴于大多数的前人研究所采用的都是Gardner的社会教育模型，包含的动机构念比较有限，本文作者试图依据认知和社会建构主义的观点，将七个动机构念纳入到此研究之中。此外，参照Williams和Burden的社会建构模型以及Dörnyei的外语/二语学习动机模型，该文作者试图建立一个专门用于网络项目学习、基于学生视角的动机模型。从这个模型中，我们不仅可以证明网络环境下英语项目学习能够提升学生的内在学习动机以及他们的学习成就，而且可以确定项目学习模式中能够激发学习动机的主要或次要因素。因此，这个模型一方面告知我们项目学习动机所产生的结果，另一方面还阐明了项目学习动机的来源。

● 研究方法创新

从以往的动机研究文献中不难发现，它们中的大多数都是定量研究。通过某些统计软件分析数据，然后生成一些表格或图表，并由此得出相应结论。这种单一的研究方法似乎更适合自然科学，而不是社会科学。本文作者在研究方法上采用定量和定性相结合的混合法，选择三方论证——选用两个以上数据源，通过交叉验证来确保数据的效度。通过多种途径 (如问卷调查、采访和自我总结报告等) 来收集数据，达到从不同来源验证同一现象的目的。此外，本文作者制订了用于探究项目学习、学习动机和学习成就之间关系的调查问卷。该问卷通过前期试验研究加以修订，又在本研究中显示出上佳的信度和效度。对于从事此类实证研究的研究人员来说，此调查问卷具有一定的参考价值。

● 教学法创新

依据研究结果，本文作者建议：为了给学生营造一个最佳的学习环境，设计和实施网络项目学习活动的教师应尽力突显该模式的主要动机因

素，并改善其中的次要动机因素。这样，学生就可以有更多的机会来激发他们的学习动机，获取更多的学习成就。当然，项目学习也不是万能的。早在1931年，Dewey就坚决反对把项目学习当作解决教育困惑的唯一出路。相反，它仅仅是诸多教学法之一，故而一个更为合理的解决方案是将网络项目学习模式融入到更为传统的教学之中。

由于研究对象的数量、研究时间的限制以及研究者的经验问题，该研究存在一定的局限性。然而，由于评估网络项目学习模式对于语言学习动机影响的实证研究匮乏，该研究仍有可能提供一些有关项目学习、学习动机及学习成就之间关系的有用信息，具有一定的借鉴价值。

本研究尚处于起步阶段，还有很大的发展空间。在未来的相关研究中，我们需要继续完善本文提出的英语项目学习动机模型，深入研究项目学习模式中某一特质对于某个特定动机构念的具体影响，以及探索为了维持项目学习动机而引进策略培训的可能性。此外，为了保证研究结果的可靠性，应该鼓励更多的教师开展合作式研究。

Abstract

In view of the dramatic increase in student enrollments, the relatively limited educational resources and the fast development of information technology, the College English Curriculum Requirements (2007) recommends that a new language teaching model be set up in place of the existing teacher-centered pattern of language teaching. The new model should integrate the principles of interest, knowledge and practicality, stimulating the motivation of both teachers and students, and give priority to students' central position and teachers' guiding role in the teaching and learning process. By taking advantage of the special functions of computers and the Internet, the new model should allow learners to select appropriate materials and methods based on their personal needs, obtain guidance in learning strategies, gradually improve their autonomous learning ability and achieve the best learning effects.

Project-based learning (PBL) is an effective approach to promoting the simultaneous acquisition of language, content and skills. It is an innovative and empirically proven instructional method built upon student-centered, authentic, interdisciplinary and long-term learning activities that enhance student interest and motivation. When we compare the key features of PBL model with the constructs of motivation, there seems to be a strong connection, by which we tend to conclude cautiously that PBL might be one of the ideal models in the L2/FL classroom, which meets almost all the requirements proposed in the Requirements. Under such a background, this study, based on the cognitive and social constructivist perspectives, applied methodological triangulation with a view to locating the motivational factors of the networked PBL model, finding out the relationship between PBL and learning achievement and setting up a networked PBL model of motivation.

A review of previous studies left us an impression that despite the large number of resources, models, frameworks and proofs claiming the benefits of PBL, there is a severe shortage of empirical research on project-based L2 and FL education (Beckett, 2006; Stoller, 2006), especially research-based models

built upon sound L2/FL learning theories. Still limited empirical research has presented PBL in the student perspective (Land & Greene, 2000; Wu & Krajcik, 2006). What is more, students' motivation of project-based language learning with technology has not yet become a central concern. Research is, therefore, urgently needed to investigate what PBL actually looks like in the L2 or FL classroom and how it motivates student learning.

Considering strong behavioral indicators PBL offered, motivation is easy to describe but much more difficult to explain, for example, why people are motivated or demotivated at a specific task or in a specific context. Although the recent motivational studies have gradually attached importance to the role of a learning context, they can't be applied directly to language teaching. For instance, Gardner's socio-educational model focuses not on the real causes of activating and sustaining motivation, but on the possible learning outcomes affected by motivation. To him, once motivation is triggered, the causes are unimportant, but to language teachers, it is too risky an attempt to implement a language activity if its sources of motivation are nowhere to track down. Just as Oxford and Shearin (1994: 15) maintain, "quite possibly the source of motivation is very important in a practical sense to teachers who want to stimulate students' motivation. Without knowing where the roots of motivation lie, how can teachers water those roots?"

This paper, based on cognitive and social constructivist perspectives, aims to track down the key features of the networked PBL model that affect the internal motivational constructs. It is hypothesized that both the key features of the networked PBL model and the internal motivational constructs work together to improve learning achievements. Specifically, the four research questions formulated are: 1) Which key features of the networked PBL model could affect students' learning motivation? 2) To what extents do these key features of the networked PBL model affect students' learning motivation? 3) To what extent does gender and major affect the relationship between the key features of the networked PBL model and students' learning motivation? 4) From students' perspective, what learning achievements might the networked PBL model lead to?

The networked PBL model was carried out over three years (2008, 2009 & 2010) at Northeastern University (NEU), targeted at the author's first-year and second-year non-English majors. These participants were admitted into Level 3 English classes based on their performances on the English Placement Tests taken in the first week of their college life. For the present study, only the 167 students of Grade 2010 were taken as participants due to the comparatively small size of Grade 2008 participants and the researchers' inexperience in the years of 2008 and 2009. In order to obtain confirmation of findings through the convergence of different perspectives and arrive at a deeper and more complex understanding of the language learning context, a range of data sources was employed here to provide opportunities for triangulation in what was essentially an empirical study. Sources included self-designed questionnaire, interview and students' e-portfolios, in particular their self-reports.

Based on the analysis and discussions of the questionnaire, the interview and the students' self-reports, it could be safely concluded that the networked PBL model tends to significantly enhance students' intrinsic motivation rather than extrinsic motivation. The nine key features of the networked PBL model have varied but marked effects on the seven motivational constructs selected for the present study. Given the different contributions of the PBL features to learning motivation, the author of the paper tentatively divided the nine key PBL features into two categories. One is the primary motivational factors that include collaboration, autonomy, accumulativeness, exploration and scaffolding while the other is the secondary motivational factors that comprise authenticity, reflection, integrativeness and technology-enhancement. Both the primary and the secondary factors work together to impact such internal motivational constructs as self-efficacy, anxiety, self-confidence, attribution, expectancy-value, goals and self-determination. Based on the analysis and discussions of the questionnaire and the students' self-reports, we concluded that the networked PBL model is likely to promote students' multiple learning achievements including language proficiency, subject content and 21st century skills. Also, we amazingly found

that what learners could achieve in the networked PBL model fits well with the Standards for Foreign Language Education raised by the American Council on the Teaching of Foreign Languages (ACTFL, 1999).

Compared with the previous research on PBL and motivation, this study has the following innovative points:

- **Theoretical innovation**

Considering that a large majority of previous research is based on Gardner's socio-educational models including a rather limited number of motivational constructs, the author of the paper attempted to take both cognitive and social constructivist perspectives, adding a total of seven motivational constructs into the present study. Moreover, with reference to Williams and Burden's social constructivist model as well as Dörnyei's models of FL/L2 learning motivation, the author of the paper attempted to set up a motivational model specifically designed for networked PBL and almost exclusively from the learner perspective. From this model, we can not only prove that networked PBL activities enhance learners' intrinsic motivation as well as their learning achievements, but also find out the features of PBL that play a primary or secondary role in motivating learners. Thus, this model, on one hand, informs us about the outcomes of PBL motivation, and on the other hand, explains clearly the sources of PBL motivation.

- **Methodological innovation**

From a review of the previous research on motivation, it is not difficult to find that most of them are on the whole quantitatively designed. After an analysis of some or many data with the aid of some statistical tools, several tables or figures were worked out and conclusions were drawn accordingly. This unitary method seems more appropriate for research on natural sciences rather than social sciences. For the present study, the author of the paper methodologically attempted to apply triangulation, a way of cross-checking the validation of data from more than two sources. By using a mixed research method to gather both quantitative and qualitative data, such as questionnaire, interview and self-report, he tried to cross verify the same

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phenomenon from several sources. Moreover, it is the author of the paper who formulated the questionnaire used to check the relationship between PBL, motivation and learning achievement. Undergoing a careful revision in the previous pilot study, it performed satisfactorily in the testing of reliability and validity for the present study. Thus any researcher who wants to do some empirical research in this area could refer to it as well.

● **Pedagogical innovation**

It was suggested by the author of the paper that in order to create an optimal learning context for students, teachers designing and implementing their own networked PBL activities are encouraged to make salient the primary motivational factors and make improvements on the secondary motivational factors. If so, students may have more chances to become motivated and gain more learning achievements. However, PBL is not a panacea. As early as 1931, Dewey opposed firmly the idea that PBL is the only way out of the educational confusion. Rather, it is simply one of the many teaching methods. A reasonable solution is to integrate the networked PBL model into the more traditional teaching.

Limitations of the study do exist due to such factors as sample size, time constraints and researcher's experience. However, since there is rather scarce empirical research available evaluating the influential factors of the networked PBL model on language learners' motivation, the present study may still provide valuable information about the relationship between PBL, motivation as well as learning achievement.

Considering that this study is rudimentary in nature, there is much more for improvement. More future work needs to be done on improving the networked PBL model of motivation, checking the effect of a specific PBL feature on a certain motivational construct as well as introducing strategy training to sustain learner motivation. In order to guarantee the reliability of future research, investigator triangulation is also strongly recommended.

Key words: PBL (project-based learning); motivation; key feature; influential factor; model of motivation; learning achievement

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List of Abbreviations

PBL	project-based learning
L2	second language
FL	foreign language
L1	first language
TL	target language
EFL	English as a foreign language
ESL	English as a second language
SLA	second language acquisition
CALL	computer-assisted language learning
ZPD	zone of proximal development
PPT	PowerPoint
CET	College English Test
IS	interviewed student
ISQ	interviewed student's quote
NEU	Northeastern University
BB platform	Blackboard platform
BIE	Buck Institute for Education
SPSS	Statistical Package for Social Sciences

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