

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

This chapter provides background of the study, statements of the problem, aims of the study, research design, research hypotheses, data collection, data analysis, significance of the study, and clarification of the key terms.

1.1 Background

One of the critical issues in English language education in Indonesia is the lack of school graduates' skills in communicating in English. This is supported by some reports indicating that many school graduates failed to enter work field due to the lack of English language mastery. One of the reports comes from the local Education Department in Pontianak. The report described that many of the fresh graduates from vocational schools in Pontianak were hampered to fill positions in some foremost industries because they did not meet the requirement of English language competence in the employment test (www.smksanggauledo.dikti.net). Some experts believe, if this condition remains unchanged, the nation's economy will suffer because the labor are not skillful enough to compete in global business.

The lack of students' English language skills is likely caused by the misconception of English language instructions in the classroom. Many instructions tend to be grammar-oriented and not put the communicative skills as the core of learning.

Therefore, the instructions are likely to generate graduates with the grammar mastery only, not the ability to perform effective communication in everyday life.

The demand of providing better learning for English language learners leads to the need to change conception of the instructions carried out in the classroom. Teachers should put communicative skills as the main goal of their instructions. In addition, learning communicative skills requires meaningful use of language (Brown, 2001), so that teachers should search a more appropriate methodology which utilizes meaningful contexts for the learners.

Project-based Learning (PBL) is considered promising by many experts to provide meaningful use of language. PBL is a method that enables students to learn and use the language through learning projects (Thomas, 2001). The learning project should be as authentic as possible to the real-world project in which students will possibly take part. Thus, the project includes learning activities which represent real-world tasks. In addition, the learning activities should contain learning core standards so that the learning is still in line with the national curriculum. The example of the learning project is students prepare and conduct a simulation of tourism exhibition at school. The students perform their English speaking ability to describe some interesting tourist objects in Indonesia to the visitors who can be their peer students, teachers, or foreign people.

Year by year notable research investigating PBL has been conducted and it showed satisfactory results. The results include significant improvement in students' test scores on standardized tests of academic achievement (ELOB, 1997; 1999a, cited in Thomas, 2000; Vu, 2010). Mathematics performance of students engaged in Project-based Learning was proven to result in greater success than that of students who did not

participate in it (Grant & Branch, 2005; Horton et al., 2006; Johnston, 2004; Jones & Kalinowski, 2007; Ljung & Blackwell, 1996; McMiller, Lee, Saroop, Green, & Johnson, 2006; Toolin, 2004, cited in Yetkiner, et. al., 2008). The dramatic gains are added by the finding that showed students were able to improve in not only one subject matter, but in almost every subject matter, as reported from schools in Iowa, Portland, Colorado, Decatur, Georgia, Cincinnati, Ohio, Memphis, Tennessee, and New York City (ELOB, 1999a, 1999b, cited in Thomas, 2000).

Technology has been proven to elevate learning quality in PBL. It is suggested to be in the forms of computers and internet access to conduct investigative activities during the project learning and an online learning platform that serves as a collaborative learning environment. The latter form of technology needed is now provided by Oracle Education Foundation (OEF) with the name *ThinkQuest*.

As the need to incorporate PBL with technology arises, *ThinkQuest*-based Project Learning was introduced by OEF to meet the need. *ThinkQuest*-based Project Learning is an instructional method that utilizes PBL as well as *ThinkQuest* in the learning process. *ThinkQuest* is employed for storing ideas, drafts, record of activities and products during the project learning. The content of *ThinkQuest* allows for collaborative review and critique, internally and internationally, since the content is published through internet. In addition, *ThinkQuest*-based Project Learning has been welcomed warmly in more than fifty countries all over the world.

ThinkQuest-based Project Learning and its potentials to improve English language learning have led to the need of proving its effectiveness. Thus, this study will investigate the method's effectiveness through an experimental study. In order to provide complete

picture of the method's implementation, this study will also investigate the method's strengths and weaknesses.

1.2 Statement of Problems

The study states the following problems:

1. Is *ThinkQuest*-based Project Learning effective in teaching writing procedural texts?
2. What are the strengths and weaknesses of *ThinkQuest*-based Project Learning method?

1.3 The Limitation of the Study

Many kinds of variations of Project-based Learning can be used in teaching procedural texts. The study will focus on the applying *ThinkQuest*-based Project Learning in teaching procedural texts in tenth grade of high school student level.

1.4 Aims of the Study

The aims of the study are as follows:

1. To find out whether or not *ThinkQuest*-based Project Learning is effective in teaching writing procedural texts.
2. To find out strengths and weaknesses of-based Project Learning method.

1.5 Significance of the Study

The study is likely to have implications to improve teaching method carried out in the English classroom. This study is expected to be a reference for English teachers to develop an innovative teaching method that is used in classroom.

This study can also be a useful and helpful source for the teacher in teaching English through Project-based Learning and *ThinkQuest-based Project Learning*. This study may also inspire other researchers to research issues which are related to implementation and development of Project-based Learning and *ThinkQuest-based Project Learning*.

1.6 Population and Sample

Population, as defined by Best (1981), is any group or individuals that have one or more characteristics in common that are of interest of the researcher, while samples are a small proportion of a population selected for observation and analysis. Since quasi-experimental design does not include random selection of subjects, the sample of this study was chosen purposively, based on the same number of students and absence of significant difference between scores of the two groups. The difference was determined by independent t-test.

The population in this study was first grade students of SMAN 22 Bandung, whereas the samples were only two classes, namely X-7 as the experimental group and X-6 as the control group.

1.7 Research Methodology

1.7.1 Research Design

Quantitative method in the forms of quasi-experimental design was employed in this study, with nonrandomized or non-equivalent pre-test and post-test groups. The design was used because, as suggested by Nunan (1992), the condition of the study did not allow the rearrangement of students into different groups or classes at will. Furthermore, the

design allows for attempts to fulfill standards of the true experimental design as closely as possible (Hatch and Farhady, 1982).

The quasi-experimental design using nonrandomized control group pre-test and post-test design can be depicted as follows:

Group	Pre-test	Treatment	Post-test
Experimental	O ₁	X	O ₂
Control	O ₃	-	O ₄

Note:

- X represents the exposure of a group to an experimental variable
- O refers to the process of observation or measurement

(Campbell and Stanley, 1963, as cited in Cohen and Manion, 1994:169)

A variable can be defined as an attribute of a person or of an object which varies from person to person or from object to object. In research, variables can be classified as dependent and independent variables. The independent variable is the variable which is selected, manipulated, and measured by the researcher, while the dependent variable is the variable which a researcher observes to determine the effect of the independent variable (Hatch and Farhady, 1982). The independent variable of the research is ThinkQuest-based Project Learning method and the dependent variable is the procedural text writing scores.

Hypothesis is defined as a formal affirmative statement predicting a single research outcome, a tentative explanation of the relationship between two or more variables. It also limits the focus of the investigation to a definite target and determines what observations are to be made (Best, 1981). However, the most common hypothesis is the null hypothesis which states that there is no difference between the outcome of experimental and control groups (Hatch and Farhady, 1982). Therefore, the hypotheses of this study are as follow:

- H_0 = There is no significance difference between students' post-test scores in the experimental group and students' post-test scores in the control group.
- H_A = There is a significance difference between students' post-test scores in the experimental group and students' post-test scores in the control group.

1.7.2 Data Collection

Data in this study were collected through several ways, such as pre-test, post-test, and interviews. Pre-test were administered to both groups prior to the treatment and post-test were administered to both groups after the treatment. In addition, interviews were collected from students from experimental group only.

This study was supplemented by interviews in order to elaborate, enhance, and illustrate the results from one method, by using another method (Creswell, 1994). Interviews were conducted to several students who provided the best insights by being typical of representativeness, such as the most active students and the most passive ones, or the students who attained high scores and low scores in the post test. The interviews aim to find out further explanation about dynamics of behavior in the classroom during

the experiment. Interviews were used because they are a powerful means in obtaining information about attitudes, opinions, perspectives, and meanings (Hannan, 2007). The procedural of this study comprised several steps. The first was organizing teaching procedural texts in experimental and control groups. The experimental group was given a treatment in forms of *ThinkQuest*-based Project Learning method while the control group was given conventional teaching method, or considered had no treatment. The second was organizing the research instruments, they were procedural texts writing test and interviews. Previously, procedural texts writing test was pilot-tested and analyzed in order to find out the validity of the instrument.

The third step was administering pre-test to both groups. It was aimed to find out students' initial ability of writing procedural texts. The fourth step was organizing the lesson plans and conducting teaching experiment using *ThinkQuest*-based Project Learning method in experimental group. The fifth was administering post-test to both groups in order to find out whether or not there is a significant difference between the two groups. Interviews with several students from experimental group were carried out to explore the method implementation deeper. The last was analyzing the data. All data which were obtained from pre-test, post-test, and interviews were analyzed through data analysis procedural.

1.7.3 Data Analysis

Quantitative approach was utilized to analyze data in this research. The data from pre-test and post-test were analyzed using SPSS 16.0 for windows. The procedural of analyzing the data of students' scores comprised two steps. The first was analyzing test of

normality distribution and homogeneity variances taken from students' pre-test and post-test scores. It was done as requirements to conduct independent sample t-test in SPSS 16.0. It was aimed to find out the degree of significance of students' ability in writing procedural texts of both groups whether in pre-test or in post-test. Paired sample t-test was also employed to see a progress between scores from pre-test and from post-test in both groups. Then data obtained from questionnaires were analyzed by calculating the frequency of students who choose the items given. Answers of interview were sorted into analytical categories in order to undertake content analysis of the different points made. After that, the findings of the research were summarized to determine the effectiveness of applying *ThinkQuest*-based Project Learning method in EFL classrooms and its strengths and weaknesses from students' point of view.

1.8 Clarification of terms

To refrain from misinterpretation, several terms are clarified:

1. *ThinkQuest*-based Project Learning method comprises 'Project Learning' or special term from OEF which refers to a variety of the original PBL and *ThinkQuest* online learning platform. 'Project Learning' is defined as a systematic teaching and learning method that engages students in learning knowledge and skills from a series of complex tasks, including design and planning, decision making, product and artifact creation, and the communication of the results. The method is employed in conjunction with *ThinkQuest* for storing ideas, drafts, record of activities during project execution, and media products, and dynamically publishing the records to the internet.

2. A *procedural text*, is a text that is designed to describe how something is achieved through a sequence of actions or steps.

1.9 Paper Organization

The organization of this paper is started with chapter I, introduction. This chapter introduces the problem discussed in this paper. It consists of background, statement of problems, aims of the research, significance of the research, scope of the research, subject of the research, clarification of terms, and paper organization. Chapter II is theoretical foundation which explains related theories and literature. Chapter III is methodology, explains the methodology or research design used by the researcher. Following is chapter IV, findings and discussion, explains the findings of the research and the discussion. And the last is chapter V, conclusion and suggestions. Conclusion of the research is described in this chapter. It also contains some suggestions that is fully hoped to assist anyone dealing with this study.