

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

This chapter presents an overview of the research, covering the background, research questions, research objectives, scope of research and significance of study. Additionally, it includes the organization of the study and a clarification of key terms, which are discussed at the conclusion of the chapter.

1.1 Background of Study

The role of English teachers today differs significantly from the past. This aims to support increasing students' interest in being more involved, active, and effective in foreign languages, including English. In the modern era, English is the primary language used in books, newspapers, airports, air traffic control, worldwide business and academic conferences, science and technology, medicine, diplomacy, sports, global contests, popular music, and advertising (Nga, 2008). The demand for mastering English and soft skills in the 21st century also takes English as a medium to communicate for various purposes. For this reason, the role of the English teacher is to respond to the educational challenges in the 21st century. Moreover, teachers need to prepare students with learning that covers 21st-century knowledge, innovation skills, and career skills (Handayani, 2017). Along with the rapid progress of technology, students must also be balanced with outcomes that are useful in the 21st era. This is in line with the development of Indonesia's Ministry of Education and Culture learning paradigm, which focuses on students' capacity to collect information from various sources, create problems, think analytically, and work together and collaborate in problem-solving.

The traditional method, which focuses on the explanation from the teacher, is not appropriate in this era. In an EFL classroom, students' participation and their responses are needed to develop students' competencies. The students not only receive the material and understand language' rules, such as learning grammar and memorizing vocabulary, but they also need to take a big part in teaching and learning activities (Sawir, 2005; Suwartono & Aniuranti, 2018). Here, the teacher

takes responsibility for providing the learning process for foreign languages entertaining, practical, motivating, and ultimately ensuring success in mastering a foreign language.

Thus, the adaptation of the use of teaching methods to 21st-century curricula provides the opportunity for students. The model of this curriculum is implemented in Indonesia as an Emancipated Curriculum. This curriculum aims to give students more academic freedom, allowing them to learn at their own pace, develop empathy for others, build self-confidence, and adapt easily to changes in their environment (Halimatussyadiyah et al., 2022). Therefore, appropriate media and methods to increase student involvement, joy in learning, and effectiveness in education continue to be developed to this day.

Project-based learning in English is one way to make the learning and teaching process more effective and produce the results that are expected. Project Based Learning (PjBL) is now increasingly being used and is well-known among people in mainstream training (Greenier, 2018). By using PjBL, the learning process is expected to become more interesting and motivating for students. Designed projects encourage them to look at their interests and provide goals, making them more invested in the learning process. The development of students' complex skills, knowledge, and personalities is promoted by the integration of PjBL and the thematic teaching process (Yuliani & Lengkanawati, 2017). Furthermore, because PjBL is student-centered and focused on the result, it benefits students' language skill development. The process of creating the final product allows students to enhance confidence and independence. While working on a project, students must collaborate on different responsibilities in an authentic context.

In implementing project-based learning, teachers have an important role in the success of this approach. Project-based learning is one of the complex tasks that is also integrated with an Emancipated curriculum. It is based on challenging questions or problems that involve students designing the product until the evaluation of the project. Some research shows that many schools are not fully prepared to implement Project-Based Learning (PBL) due to teachers' lack of

readiness. Studies by Zhong (2023), Nyoman et al. (2020), and Lim et al. (2023) reveal that teachers need further training to successfully use PBL in EFL classrooms. Many still rely on traditional teaching methods where they make all the decisions, face challenges in creating effective lesson plans, and struggle to take on the role of a facilitator.

Well-trained teachers with the right knowledge and skills can effectively implement Project-Based Learning (PBL) in English language classrooms (Bhandari, 2023). Thus, guidance from the teacher is essential during the process of project-based learning, such as determining the theme and output of the project, constructing the project, analyzing the data, completing the project, presenting the project, and evaluating the project (Sheppard & Stoller, 1995 in Aubrey, 2021). Ravitz (2003) in Tamim & Grant (2013) argues that, although teachers express enthusiasm after attending professional development workshops, they may still face challenges in implementing PjBL effectively in their classrooms. It means that the teachers need to gain a deeper understanding of project-based learning and engage in continuous practice to successfully apply it in real-world settings. Hence, teachers' beliefs, opinions, and preferences regarding the role of content teaching significantly influence their instructional practices (Thompson, 1984).

The massive research has been carried out to explore challenges related to teachers' understanding of project-based learning. Most of the researchers have focused on the teachers at the primary, junior school, and tertiary levels. However, little has been conducted to investigate the teachers' understanding of project-based learning at senior high school level. In Pradana (2023), it was observed that active teachers offer advice, assistance, and guidance to their audience. When teachers actively take part in the process of imparting knowledge, students can receive a higher quality and more individualized education. Additionally, Nyoman et al. (2020) in their study highlight that teachers' understanding of implementing the emancipated curriculum remains at a moderate level and requires further development.

Based on the paragraph above, there are advantages and challenges of project-based learning. There has been a growing interest in exploring teachers' understanding and practices related to project-based learning in recent years. However, research on teachers' knowledge of project-based learning in English language education is still limited, especially in the Indonesian context with a specific emphasis on those enrolled in the English subject. Thus, to fill the gap, the present study is intended to uncover the teachers' understanding by looking at the lesson plan, the implementation of project-based learning, and the advantages and challenges faced by students and teachers based on Larmer, et al (2015) key elements of Gold Standard of Project-based learning, specifically in senior high school in the context of EFL.

1.2 Research Questions

Based on the background and thesis statement mentioned earlier, the problems were formulated as follows:

1. To what extent does the teacher understand the concept of PjBL and the plan for its implementation?
2. How was project-based learning implemented in an English class in a senior high school?
3. What advantages and challenges do the teacher and students face during implementing PjBL?

1.3 Research Objectives

Based on the research questions above, the objectives of this study can be stated as follow:

1. To investigate teacher's understanding of the concept of PjBL and the plan for its implementation in EFL classrooms.
2. To know how project-based learning is implemented in senior high school.
3. To investigate the teacher's and students' advantages and challenges during the implementation of project-based learning in senior high school.

1.4 Scope of Research

This qualitative research focuses on present research on how the teacher understands and plans for its implementation and how the teacher applies her understanding of Project-Based Learning (PjBL) in EFL classrooms. In addition, the benefits and challenges students and teachers faced in implementing project-based learning in the context of teaching as a foreign language. This investigation will take place at one of the state senior high schools in Bandung. The sample size for this study is relatively small, and the results may not be applicable to all potential English language teachers in Indonesia.

1.5 Significance of Study

In practical terms, this study aims to provide teachers, education practitioners, and readers with insights into the understanding and application of PjBL at the senior high school level. Consequently, the findings can offer alternative strategies for teaching and learning in an EFL classroom. In theoretical terms, the research seeks to contribute to the theory of literature on EFL teaching and learning, specifically regarding project-based learning, by enhancing the existing knowledge base from both cognitive and sociocultural perspectives. The findings of this study can also serve as a helpful reference for policymakers when considering the continuation of project-based learning. Additionally, future researchers can use the information from this study to explore related topics further.

1.6 Clarification of Key Terms

In order to avoid some misunderstanding, some terms that are used in this study are defined as follows:

- Project-Based Learning

In this study, Project-based learning is a structured teaching strategy centered on students that actively engages them in acquiring knowledge and skills through real-world projects and assignments, providing them with key 21st century skills (Bell, 2010). Fried-Booth (2002) stated that Project-based learning (PjBL) is an approach that encourages learner-centred education via exploratory, interactive, and creative activities that extend beyond the classroom. Moreover, Project-based

learning (PBL/PjBL) could be defined as a teaching method that focuses on students-centered with the role of the teacher as a guide and facilitator to reach the goals or outcomes.

- Implementation of PJBL

In this study, the implementation of Project-Based Learning (PjBL) follows the seven gold standards elements outlined by Larmer, et al (2015), which include: 1) challenging problem or question, 2) sustained inquiry, 3) authenticity, 4) student voice and choice, 5) reflection, 6) critique and revision, 7) public product. In this context, the EFL classroom involves both teacher and students who are non-native English speakers. It is crucial for this classroom to provide students with opportunities to practice English and enhance their ability to use the target language effectively outside of class (Harmer, 2007).

1.7 Thesis Organization

Chapter I presents an overview of the research, including background, issues, and problems.

Chapter II reviews the literature, outlining the theoretical framework relevant to the study.

Chapter III provides research methodology, detailing the research design, research participants and setting, data collection methods, and data analysis procedures.

Chapter IV is the presentation of findings and discussion, highlighting the results of data analysis.

Chapter V provides the conclusion, the limitation, and the recommendation of the research to improve the understanding and application of project-based learning in EFL contexts, as well as suggestions for future research.

1.8 Concluding Remark

This chapter provides an overview of the study, detailing the background, research questions, objectives, significance and scope. It also includes definitions of key terms and outlines the structure of the paper. In addition, the following chapters are organized as follows. Chapter II discusses related literature regarding

the theories that form the basis of this research. Chapter III explores the design, research methodology, participant description, data collection and data analysis. Chapter IV focuses on the study findings and discussion. Finally, chapter V presents the conclusion. The conclusion is followed by the implications of study, the limitations of study, and recommendations for future research.