

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

This chapter illustrates the introduction of the research, including the background, research questions, research aims, research significance, and research scope. The research organization and the clarification of the terms are also explained at the end of this chapter.

1.1 Research Background

The 21st century demands the explicit integration of mastering English and soft skills. English plays an essential role as an indispensable part in social participation, workplace success, and in the context of global competition (Doghonadze & Zoranyan, 2021; Lengkanawati, 2015). Schulz (2008) argues that the workplace in the 21st century is seeking graduates with soft skills such as accountability, self-assurance, social and team-working, flexibility, a good work ethic, and self-management. Thus, the importance of studying English and mastering soft skills is not merely for its function in knowledge but also in economic activities and professional advancement (Gunantar, 2016). For this reason, English teachers, as the spearhead of education, play a vital role in educating students in the 21st-century world (Suherdi, 2012). Particularly for English teachers in Indonesia as a non-English speaking country, the teachers teach English as an additional language or as a Foreign Language (EFL).

The role of an EFL teacher in the past differs from being an EFL teacher in the 21st century. In the past, EFL teachers in senior high schools in Indonesia used to be the center and the source of all information in the classroom, while students were only the recipients. The teaching and learning activities in this EFL classroom tended to emphasize understanding the language's rules, such as studying grammar, reading English text, and memorizing vocabulary, instead of emphasizing communicating in English (Sawir, 2005; Suwartono & Aniuranti, 2018). Meanwhile, in the 21st century, English language teaching and learning have changed rapidly due to globalization and digitization (Faulkner & Latham, 2016; Suherdi, 2012). Consequently, it has been suggested that EFL teachers not only focus on grammar, memorization, and basic

language skills but also develop students' competencies and skills known as 21st-century skills that help them succeed in different spheres of life (Eaton, 2010). Therefore, EFL teachers need to consider, study, and develop 21st-century skills in learning activities as an effort for students to face the challenges of the 21st century.

In the educational system, teachers lead an important role in developing and facilitating students to have 21st-century learning and innovation skills (Guo, 2014; P21, 2011; Woon Chia & Goh, 2016). Teachers need to adapt their teaching strategy to 21st-century curricula and provide the opportunity for students to improve their 21st skills. However, little guidance exists to show them how to efficiently integrate their teaching strategy with 21st-century skills to fulfill students' needs (Abkary & Purnawarman, 2020; Ginting & Kuswandono, 2020; Markham, 2012). Therefore, in Indonesia, The Ministry of Education and Culture (Kemendikbud), through the 2013 Curriculum, emphasizes the importance of 21st-century skills and suggests Project-Based Learning (PBL) as one of the teaching methods and an alternative that is expected to shape 21st-century skills (Almanar, 2018; Hamidah, Rabbani, Fauziah, Puspita, Gasalba & Nirwansyah, 2020). Buck Institute for Education (BIE) in 2016 revealed that PBL could direct students to achieve 21st-century skills, namely 4C skills (Communication, Collaboration, Critical Thinking, Creativity, and Innovation), character values, and higher-order thinking skills.

Given the arrival of a digital world, Project-Based Learning (PBL) or Project-Based Language Learning (PBL) in the language education context has become the preferred teaching method worldwide because it teaches doing as well as knowing (Markham, 2012). According to Thomas (2000), PBL integrates challenges that focus on authentic (not simulated) problems or questions, and the solutions can potentially be implemented in real-life. Moreover, PBL offers the teacher the opportunity to teach, observe, and measure the growth of real-world skills (Markham, 2012). Therefore, this research implements PBL as a teaching method to improve students' learning outcomes and 21st Century skills.

The 21st Century skills in this current research are defined as 4Cs skills. 4Cs skills are learning and innovation skills to prepare students for more complex life and work

environments in the 21st century (P21, 2009). 4Cs skills are consisted of: (1) Critical Thinking and Problem-Solving Skills. According to Levy (1997), critical thinking is an active and systematic cognitive process used to investigate, evaluate, comprehend, and make conclusions based on valid arguments and facts. (2) Communication Skill is the ability to express, exchange, and present information and ideas through oral and written communication to others (Hadiyanto et al., 2013; Washer, 2007). (3) Collaboration Skill is the ability to interact competently and respectfully, responsible for the team, and be willing to achieve a common goal (Washer, 2007). (4) Creativity and innovation Skill is the ability to create new and useful ideas and analyze, revise, and evaluate ideas to improve problem-solving efforts (P21, 2009). According to Bell (2010), these skills could be developed through PBL because PBL is a method to engage students in real-world tasks that involve necessary skills in the 21st century.

PBL has been applied and considered student-centered, autonomous, and collaborative learning and has now become part of the English language curriculum (Du & Han, 2016; Hedge, 1993). PBL is an extended task that integrates four language skills (listening, reading, speaking, and writing) through several activities to achieve the goals (Hedge, 1993). These skills need to feature in lesson plans and ensure that each student does not neglect the development of any skills. Therefore, this PBL is synthesized with a Genre-Based Approach (GBA) to match the language teaching approach. This implication was aimed at language learners to learn not only English grammar and vocabulary but also other linguistic competencies. This integration demands a teacher be aware of the nature of language acquisition and development.

According to Flemming (2000), PBL requires higher-order thinking skills, technologies, and complexity that make it different from traditional projects. Moreover, PBL has proven effective and beneficial in developing learner autonomy, motivation, and 4Cs skills (Ghobrini, 2020; Gibbes & Carson, 2014; Kartika, 2020). To put it another way, PBL can be an alternative teaching strategy for integrating and developing language skills and 4Cs skills. Consequently, there is a need for consideration for promoting the implementation and quality of PBL to support EFL students' 4Cs skills.

Nabila Saniya Abkary, 2022

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Several studies on PBL in EFL classrooms have been conducted in different contexts and topics. Somani and Rizvi (2018) researched PBL over the traditional language teaching method by a quasi-experiment design in EFL classrooms. The result demonstrates that, compared to the conventional language learning technique, PBL is a more effective method of instruction for enhancing the narrative writing skills of Grade 8 students in a private school in Karachi. Meanwhile, research on authenticity in PBL in an EFL context was conducted by Stockwell (2015). The research revealed that appropriate authenticity should be planned at the PBL cycle's input, task, output, and audience stages. Another research about ICT and PBL in a Rural School in an EFL Context was conducted by Santhi, Suherdi, and Musthafa (2019). The research revealed that learning using PBL integrating with ICT was developing students' creativity, stimulating their minds, motivating, and improving their English.

However, previous studies (Santhi, Suherdi, & Musthafa, 2019; Somani & Rizvi, 2018; Stockwell, 2015) do not specifically propose analyzing the implementation of PBL and its quality to students learning outcomes. According to Guerriero (2017), teachers should understand how to actively participate in PBL because the learning process and outcomes are closely tied to the teachers' instructional practices. Consequently, to enrich teachers teaching methods and students' learning outcomes, EFL teachers need to evaluate what the 21st century movement offers critically.

Therefore, this research attempts to fill the gap by analyzing the implementation of PBL to EFL students' 4Cs skills concerning the aspects of High-quality PBL. The rationale is that the HQPBL Framework helps teachers with difficulties applying 4Cs skills into practice by providing a systematic and convenient design that teachers can implement (Mergendoller, 2018). The framework also enables the students to work on meaningful and pertinent projects to their culture, lives, and future that can develop their life skills (Mergendoller, 2018).

Furthermore, Ravitz (2010) addresses that researcher need to expand new approaches to evaluate student achievement in PBL-instructed classrooms, arguing that standardized tests are inadequate for capturing all potential outcomes. There may be other outcomes that can only be measured by investigating students' perceptions,

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insights, and PBL experiences. In addition, VanderJagt (2013) mentions that teachers and researchers frequently do not provide chances for students to reflect on and express their perceptions of the teacher's new strategy. Due to these rationales, the current research focuses on further understanding the outputs, as broadly defined, by examining students' perceptions of PBL. Briefly, this research aims to describe teaching practices and students' perceptions of PBL to identify students' learning outcomes empirically and conceptually.

1.2 Research Questions

Based on the explanation in the research background above, the research questions can be formulated as follows:

1. How is the implementation of PBL in an EFL high school classroom?
2. How do high school students develop 4Cs skills in an EFL classroom?
3. How do high school students perceive the implementation of PBL?

1.3 Research Aims

From the research questions mentioned previously, the research aims are:

1. To analyze the implementation of PBL in EFL high school classroom
2. To find out the development of high school students' 4Cs skills in an EFL classroom.
3. To find out the high school students' perception of the implementation of PBL.

1.4 Significances of the Research

Practically, the results of this research can inform teachers, education practitioners, and readers about the implementation of PBL that encourages the students to learn English, gain 4Cs skills and utilize multiple media and technologies. Thus, this research can inform alternative learning strategies for teaching and learning in an EFL classroom. *Theoretically*, this research is expected to support the theory of literature on EFL teaching and learning regarding PBL, especially enriching the literature concerning PBL integrated with 4Cs skills. Moreover, for policy makers, the findings of this research can be a consideration for continuing the implementation

of PBL and future teacher training. Finally, the information from this research can be used by future researchers to investigate related research.

1.5 Scope of the Research

This qualitative research was focused on the process of implementing PBL in the EFL classroom. To measure the effectiveness of the PBL, the researcher used students' perceptions, including investigating their 4Cs skills. The observation was conducted to find out how the teacher implemented the PBL. In addition, the researcher collected the document analysis (students' perceptions and 4Cs skills survey rubric) and interviewed the students to strengthen the existing data.

1.6 Key Terms

- **Project-Based Language Learning (PBL)**

PBL, or PBL, is a systematic teaching method and student-driven approach that engages students in knowledge and skills through authentic projects and tasks to help students succeed in the 21st century (Bell, 2010; Markham, Larmer, & Ravitz, 2003). PBL is an extended task involving various collaborative activities that involve planning, research, and reporting using authentic language (Beckett, 2002; Hedge, 1993). Moreover, PBL has proven to be effective and beneficial in developing students' critical thinking, collaboration, creativity, and communication skills (4Cs), which are essential skills in the 21st century (Ghobrini, 2020).

- **Implementation of PBL in an EFL classroom**

The implementation of PBL in this research was divided into eight steps by Flemming (2000) and Larmer and Mergendoller (2010). There are (1) choosing a focus for the project, (2) identifying essential knowledge and skill, (3) introducing the project and driving question, (4) selecting a balance of teacher-led and student-centered activities, (5) establishing project timelines, (6) monitoring student progress using planning, reporting, and feedback tools, (7) publicly presented product, and (8) evaluating and reflecting on project impact and learning results. Meanwhile, the EFL classroom in this research refers to both teachers and students as non-native speakers. This EFL classroom needs to give students opportunities to practice English and help them perform the target language effectively outside the classroom (Harmer, 2007).

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- **Aspects of PBL**

This research draws from the High-Quality Project-Based Learning (HQPBL) framework by Buck Institute for Education (BIE) (2017) to frame the analysis in implementing the PBL. The High-Quality PBL Framework describes six criteria that need to be minimally implemented for a project to be called "high-quality." The six criteria are intellectual challenges, authenticity, public product, collaboration, project management, and reflection.

- **4Cs Skills**

The Partnership for 21st Century Skills demonstrates the 4Cs of communication, collaboration, creativity, and critical thinking as the central learning and innovation skills in the 21st Century. These four skills are essential to prepare students for their future and success in school and the workplace.

1.7 Organization of the Research Paper

Chapter I introduces and discusses the background of the research, including the issue and the problems.

Chapter II is a literature review that explains the theoretical foundation related to the research.

Chapter III is a research methodology that illustrates how the researcher conducted this research, including research design, participant and site, data collection technique, and data analysis procedure.

Chapter IV is the findings and discussion section. The results of the data analysis are also presented in this chapter.

Chapter V presents the conclusion, the implication, and the recommendations of the research for improving the teaching of PBL in EFL contexts and for further research.

1.8 Concluding Remark

This chapter has elaborated on the research background that illustrates the problem and the reason for filling the research gap. This chapter also revealed the research questions, aims, significance, and scope of the research. Further, the next chapter will discuss the theoretical framework related to this research.