

**The Students' Perception about The Implementation of Project Based Learning in A
Material Design Course at English Language Education Department in a Private
University in Yogyakarta**

Dzakiyyah Nur Rahmah

English Language Education Department

Universitas Muhammadiyah Yogyakarta

Email: nurrahmahdzakiyyah@gmail.com

Indah Puspawati, S.Pd., M. A. (Supervisor)

Lecture of English Language Education Department at Universitas Muhammadiyah

Yogyakarta

indahpuspawati@umy.ac.id

Abstract

Project based learning is a teaching model that organizes learning around projects. Material Design course at a private University in Yogyakarta used Project based learning as a teaching method. The research aimed to investigate students' perception on the implementation of PBL in Material Design course. This research has two objectives. The first objective was to find out the benefits of the implementation of Project based learning in a Material Design course. The second objective was to find out the challenges students faced in the implementation of Project based learning in a Material Design course. To answer the research question, the researcher employed a qualitative research methodology. An interview was used as an instrument to gather the data. The research involved four students of batch 2015 as the participants. The findings revealed that the benefits implementation of Project based learning in Material Design course includes improving students' language skill, helping

students to understand the material better, increasing students' creativity and critical thinking, improving students' team work, and improving skills needed for future job. In addition, the other finding shows the challenges implementing Project based learning in Material Design course comprises students' confusion on how to do the project, lack of team work and limited time allocation. In summary, besides giving benefits, PBL in Material Design course also has challenges for the students.

Keyword: Project based learning method, material design course, EFL learner.

1. Introduction

Student Centered Learning is a teaching approach used by teachers. Student centered learning is known as learner centered education. SCL is the teaching method that shifts the focus of teaching from teacher to student. According to Nanney (2004), students centered learning (SCL) is a broad teaching approach that encompasses replacing lectures with active learning, integrating self-paced learning program and/or cooperative group situations, ultimately holding the students responsible for his (or her) own advances in education. According to Emiliana (2017), the teachers' roles are more than of facilitators than instructors. (p.61). Teacher became students' facilitators and instructors, giving support and guidance for students and also teacher learning together with students. The students are active participants in the learning process. There some teaching methods used in SCL: Small Group Discussion (SGD), Role-Play and Simulation, Discovery Learning, Self-Directed Learning, Cooperative Learning, Contextual Learning (CL), Problem Based Learning (PBL), Collaborative Learning (CbL), Project Based Learning (PjBL).

Project based learning is also known as a teaching method that focuses on students. According to Bell (2010) "Project based learning is a student driven, teacher facilitated approach to learning". (p.39). Coufalová (as cited in Kalabzová, 2015), enforced the motto

“learning by doing”. In PBL students learn by doing, in which they do something in learning. They are not just learning from teacher’s explanation, they also do some activities in learning. This is the students work on the project, instead of lecturing. “PBL presumed realization on project work” Kalabzová (2015, p.6). According to Kalabzová (2015), PBL provides contacts with reality and can apply the knowledge they have learnt theoretically and the students can try to solve practical problems. Students are challenged to do something in learning.

In English Language Education Department in a Private University in Yogyakarta, some courses used Project based learning in teaching and learning. One of them is Material Design course. Material Design course is the course that the students learn about designing teaching material. In Material Design course, the students are expected to be creative and know how to make material for teaching. Teaching material is a key component in most language programs. Besides, the students also provide ideas on how to plan and teach lesson. Svobodová et al. as cited in Kalabzová, (2015) claimed that Project based learning supports the development of creative thinking. The students are in the control of the project development and with the help of teachers they decide how to achieve the set goals. In Material Design course, the students are expected to learn to make teaching material. The materials provide the basis content of lessons, balance of skill taught, and kind of language practice which the students take part in. As ELED students of a private university in Yogyakarta, they should learn how to create material for teaching before teaching practice. In order to make teaching material, the students should have enough pedagogy in the course. As mentioned in UU number 14 2005 of section 1 number 10, the competency is a set of knowledge, skill, and behavior which must be possessed, lived, and mastered by the teachers or lecturers in performing the duties.

Based on the background above, the researcher is curious to find out the benefits and the challenges students faced when the teacher use Project based learning in Material Design

course based on the students' perception. This research can help the students and the teachers know about the benefits and the challenges the use of Project based learning in Material Design course.

2. Literature Review

Project Based Learning

Project based learning (PBL) is one of teaching method used by teachers involving in project rather than isolated activities targeting specific skills. The project based learning is called as learning by doing or project. This is the students work on the project, instead of lecturing. PBL presume realization on project work (Kalabzová, 2015). According to Thomas (2000) (as cited in Kalabzová, 2015), project based learning is a teaching model that organizes learning around project, and it specifies projects as complex tasks which are based on challenging questions or problems, involving the students in design, problem solving, decision making, or investigating the activities, giving the students the opportunity to work relatively autonomously over extended periods of time, and culminating in realistic product or presentation" (p.3). According to Kalabzová (2015) the students contacts with reality and can apply the knowledge they have learn theoretically and the students also can try to solve practical problems.

According to Pakhomova (2004) as cited in Bondara et al., (2016) said that the main objective of PBL could be considered as providing self-service learning, developing the students creativity, developing the skill to debate, defending own point of view, being respectful, forming of attitudes towards such values as responsible decision-making, tolerance, compromising, commitment to self-education and willingness to improve social life. Besides, the project method can be considered as self-service learning which students can solve practical task or problem with their creativity potential of students. In project based learning, the teacher role as coordinators or an additional source of information and a mentor.

Hence, the teacher acts as a coordinator who gives the students the additional source of information and mentoring them.

In addition, Bell (2010) stated that PBL is not a supplementary activity to support learning, but it is the basis of the curriculum. Mostly, the projects include reading, writing and mathematics by nature. Many inquiries are science-based or originate from current social problems. Thomas (2000) emphasized that project based learning rely on the curriculum. Additionally, it is a teaching and learning model which includes the curriculum development and instructional approach emphasizing the students-centered instruction by assigning the projects (p.3).

PBL in English Language Teaching

In the language instruction, PBL is a teaching method that allows many skills to be developed in an integrated, meaningful, and ongoing activity. Beckett as cited in Lam (2011) stated that the project is thought as a long-term activity which is a part of instructional method promoting the simultaneous acquisition of language, content, and skill. A purpose of Project based instruction is comprehensible output which generally occurs during the project and the project as the final product of the project.

Realizing great potential of PBL method in ELT for EFL, the learners can improve not only through their motivation in learning but also the proficiency in mastering the language. According to Kodriyah (2017), it is suggested for Indonesian the teacher to apply this method during classroom instruction. Many researchers showed that PBL is an effective method to improve students' motivation in English. Ruby (2014) as cited in Kavlu (2015) had investigated the implementation of PBL in English language tourism classroom in a Thai university. From his investigation, PBL could enhance students towards English language proficiency and their learning skill and self-confidence. The result showed that PBL statistically had given significant effect on the development of low and medium achievement.

According to Beckett (2002) as cited in Kalabzová (2015), in the second language (L2) context of the education, PBL has several of terms such as project work, project method, project approach, project-oriented approach or project based instruction. He claimed “this method was firstly applied in L2 setting more than 20 years ago in order to provide learners with chance to interact and communicate one another and with native speakers of target language in authentic context” (2002. P.54). Beckett also argued that compare with general education, most of the researchers seldom conducted the research on PBL in L2 education. He alerted that in opposite to teacher from general education, L2 teacher evaluate PBL process with mixed feelings.

In addition, implementation of PBL in L2 education, it shows that it get increased tension of the students. Beckett pointed out that although the teacher evaluates this method positively because of the effective integration of content of subject matter in the language skills as social and cognitive skills, some students expressed the dilemmas and frustrations. Based on his views of stated from cultural, philosophical, and linguistic perspectives with recommendation to L2 teachers, he acknowledged that even though PBL has a deep potential for teaching and learning functional language, the teachers should shows the strength benefits for the students through an accepted the systematic framework. Besides, it allows the students to see the possibilities of learning the language through this method. Otherwise, the students may get more desire with traditional learning from the teacher-centered learning approach.

Benefits of Using Project Based Learning in English Classroom

Research indicates some of advantages of using Project based learning (PBL) in the classroom. Those advantages includes improving students’ language skill, developing students’ problem solving and critical thinking, increasing students’ motivation and interest,

and developing students' social network. Therefore, each advantage of using Project based learning in English classroom is explained in the following paragraphs in detail.

The Difficulties Using Project Based Learning in English Classroom

There are some of difficulties concerned in implement PBL in classroom. Those difficulties are lack of students' responsibility, students' unfamiliarity in group project, students did not use target language and accepting the role of teachers as facilitators. Thus, for more detailed information, each difficulty of using project based learning in classroom is explained in the following paragraphs.

Review of Previous Studies

The researcher relates some studies to this current research. There are two previous studies which present the similar topic about the implementation of project based learning in EFL course. Hence, the researcher provides the summary of the previous researches which each research is explained in the following paragraphs in detail.

The first research is about the implementation of Project Based-learning (PBL) in EFL classrooms in Fezalar Educational Institutions (Iraq) conducted by Kavlu (2015). In this research, the researcher investigated about the implementation of PBL in EFL classrooms in Fezalar Educational Institutions (Iraq). According to Kavlu (2015), a teacher centered learning approach was dominant in Iraq. Fezalar Educational Institutions tried to improve the education system by using piloting PBL in primary school and TTC (Teacher Training Courses). The research data were taken through interview with the initiator of PBL approach in Fezalar Educational Institutions. The researcher used qualitative instrument- semi-structured interview.

In addition, the research showed that the implementation of PBL was successful in Fezalar Educational Institutions Primary and Secondary Schools. The teachers reported that

the students not only could enhance their language skill but also their social communicative skill. Fezalar Institution cultivated the learners not only improve English Language skills but also improve important abilities such as the planning ability, start, systematically do, fulfill the task, and be able to demonstrate in a proper way.

The second research was conducted by Poonpon (2001) entitled enhancing English skills through project based learning written. The research of study aimed to investigate opinions of Thai learners of English toward the implementation of PBL in the form of an interdisciplinary-based project in a language class and their opinions about how PBL can increase their English skills. The participant of this research was undergraduate students majoring in Information Science and enrolled in an English course at a Thai university during the second semester of the 2009 academic year. Accordingly, this research adopted the semi-structured interview as the method to collect the data, and the type of interview used was series of open-ended questions.

The results showed the students found balanced use of their language skills, knowledge of about Information Science and information technology skill in their project. However, this study had been unable to demonstrate a good implementation plan. The findings showed that the students needed better preparation for English presentations. Even though the students practice their English skill in classroom, they were still unfamiliar doing an English presentation in the class.

Regarding the similarity of two previous studies and this current study, all researches purposed to find out the implementation of Project based learning in EFL classroom. The participants of the second previous study and this study had the similarity in which the researchers used the undergraduate students as the participants. In regards to the differences of the first study and this current study, the researcher of the first research used the primary

and secondary school students as their participants, but this research took undergraduate students as the research participants.

Both first and second researches had the different results. The first research showed the implementation of PBL was successful in Fezalar Educational institutions primary and secondary schools. However, in the second research, it showed that PBL had the balanced use of their English skill, but it was unable to demonstrate through a good implementation plan. Also, the students needed better preparation for English presentations. Therefore, those two previous researches mentioned do not form the basis of my research, but those are useful supplementary information for my research on paying structure.

3. Research Methodology

This research employed a qualitative research design. Qualitative research design is suitable for this study since it investigated students' perception about the implementation of Project based learning in Material Design class. According to Creswell (2012), a qualitative research is to address a research problem in which you do not know the variables and need to explore (p.16). The research was conducted at English Language Education Department (ELED) of a private university in Yogyakarta. The participants for this study were ELED students of a Private University in Yogyakarta batch 2015. In 2015 there are A, B, C, and D classes but in this study, the researcher chose some of students who had good, average, and low grade received after joining the Material Design course. For the reason, the research wanted to know from the students' perception that had good and low score on the implementation of Project based learning in Material Design course. Besides, it was to know the students' perception from low and good score because the researcher wanted to get comprehensive data so that the researcher got the students' perception in equal. The technique sampling was used in this study was purposive sampling. According to Cohen, Manion, and Morrison (2011), in the purposive sampling, the researchers hand-pick the cases

to be included in the sample on the basis of their judgment of their typicality or possession of their particular characteristics being taught. Hence, the researcher chose the participants who had been determined based on the purpose of study. This study was used interview as method to collect the data. The type of interview used in this research was standardized open-ended interview. Patton (1980) said “in the characteristic of standardized open-ended interview as the type of interview, the exact wording and sequence of the questions are determined in advance, and the interviewees are asked the same question in the same order” (p.413). That way, the type of interview used in this research could help the researcher to organize the questions. In addition, open-ended question was used for schedule construction. According to Kerlinger (1970) as cited in Cohen, Manion, and Morrison (2011), open-ended item defines as the supplying frame of references for the participants’ answer but puts the minimum of restraint on the answer. In doing open-ended item, the researcher got depth and rich information from participants. Oppenheim (1992) as cited in Cohen, Manion, and Morrison (2011) stated “the interview has a higher response rate because the researchers become involved and motivated, and it enabled the research for handling the difficult questions through open ended questions” (p. 412). The researcher could manage the answer from participants, so the researcher was able to get the information which was appropriate with the purpose of the study. Then, the information can help to find the results of the study.

4. Findings and Discussion

Benefits of Using Project Based Learning in Material Design Course

The first aim of this finding was to find out the benefits of using Project based learning in a Material Design course. The researcher found some benefits of using Project based learning in a Material Design course. The findings of benefits perceived by the students after being taught using Project based learning in Material Design course. Based on the experiences of the participants, the researcher found some benefits in using Project based

learning in Material Design. The benefits obtained in using Project based learning in Material Design were improving students' language skill, helping students to understanding the material better, increasing students' creativity and critical thinking, improving students' team work, and improving skills needed for future job.

Improving students' language skill. Based on the experience of the participants, using Project based learning in a Material Design course brought the benefit to improve students' language skills. The finding showed that students' language skills get improved when teacher used the Project based learning in a Material Design course. Using Project based learning could improve students' language skill especially in their reading and writing skill. This finding was supported by Levin (2004) who stated that the students' language skills get improved because the students take part in purposeful communication to complete authentic activities – the tasks with real world relevance and utility, and the students have the opportunity to use language in a relatively natural context. While they worked on the project, they also could use specific target language in the learning process.

Helping students to understand the material better. Based on the experience of the participants, they could understand the material better when teacher used Project based learning as the teaching method in a Material Design course. They could understand material better because they explored in the learning process. This finding was in line with Kavlu (2015) who stated that Project based learning is an effective way to help students to understand, apply and retain the information. The students who works on the projects showed that they incresed their motivation and engagement in their studies.

Increasing students' creativity and critical thinking. Using project based learning in Material Design course could increase the students' creativity and critical thinking. In Material Design course, the students learnt how to create a textbook, so it could increase the students' creativity and critical thinking. It could also increase the students' creativity and

critical thinking because in PBL, the students took a part in learning process. While learning to create a textbook, they also could develop their creativity and talent by designing books to be interesting. They also had to think critically to determine the topics related to the curriculum. The finding was similar to Allen (2004) as cited in Kodriyah (2017) who stated that PBL develop the students' problem solving and higher order critical thinking skill. PBL also provides the contact with the reality, and the students can apply the knowledge that they have learnt theoretically and the students can try to solve practical problems in the learning process (Kalabzová, 2015, p.6). In PBL students, there were involved into the learning process while working on the project which they also learnt to develop their creativity and critical thinking.

Improving students' team work. Based on the finding, using Project based learning in Material Design course could improve the students' work in team especially on the responsibility and time management. Because, they worked on the project, they also learnt to work in a team. As they worked in team, they also should have a sense of responsibility. They had to be responsible to their work and finish the project. Besides, they had to manage their time to complete the project. The finding was supported by Kavlu (2015) who stated that PBL can build the students' team skill. Besides, the students are able to observe how their idea, plan suggestions, and carryout the projects as the fulfillment. Henze and Nejdil (1998) as cited in Kavlu stated that as work project, it is often done in teams, and the learners practice their capabilities for team work and collaboration. Thus, using PBL in classroom could train the students to be responsible and work in team.

Improving skills needed for future job. The use of Project based learning in Material Design course could be useful when the students became the teacher. Also, they already learnt to make and design a textbook in the college. The project based learning of teaching method could be considered for the student as a teacher use in teaching. The finding

was in line with Lam (2011) who stated that PBL was able to help the students to be well-prepared in the future in terms of both English and social skill. They could be evaluated not only on their outcome but also on their collaborative, negotiating, planning, and organisational skills.

The Challenges Students Faced in the Implementation of Project Based Learning in Material Design Course

The next objective of this study was to find the challenges faced by the students when teacher implemented the Project based learning in Material Design course. After conducting the interview, the researcher found some challenges faced by the students when implementing the Project based learning in Material Design course. Therefore, the challenges faced by the students in the implementation of Project based learning such as the students' confusion how to do the project, lack of team work and limited time allocation.

Students' confusion on how to do the project. The challenges when implementing project based learning in Material Design classroom was using project which could be confusing. Using Project based learning could be confusing because of the lack of explanation from teacher or lack of students' knowledge about the project. When using Project based learning in Material Design course, the teacher did not give the example to do the project and explanation from the textbook. The finding was in line with Scardanakua (1989) as cited in Tally (2015) stated that the students are now expected to be responsible on their own learning and employ the reflective and critical thinking skills. Also, the students may be raised in a traditional classroom, so when teachers use PBL in classroom, they will face the difficulty and confused.

Lack of team work. Material Design course are conducted in groups. There could be many problems faced by the students when working the project in groups. Working on project made the group member not to have the major contribution on doing the project. The

finding mentioned was in line with Kavlu (2015) who stated that as PBL requires teamwork, some dispute or clashes may happen. Also, it may be difficult for teachers to realize these features in the PBL implementation. Also, it was hard to assess how much each learner contributed to a group project while some students learnt and tried to work. Additionally, PBL could be difficult for students if some students might not have equal work contribution in doing the project. Some of the students might have big contribution while others were not. Regarding the problem mentioned, it could cause heavy burden for the students who had big contribution working on project.

Limited time allocation. Doing a project could take a lot of time. Besides, it sometimes did not take a lot of time if in Material Design course, the students have to make a textbook on time. They had to find out the learning material, edit the context, design the cover, and print the book. In addition, when students work on the project, usually there was the time when students could do the consultation with teacher about the project which they were working on. Based on the statement mentioned, the consultation time in Material Design course was too short to discuss the material well. According to Bell (2010) asserted that at the end of each work session, the students report on whether they have met their goals for the day. Besides, the students had to use their work time effectively and stay focused on-task to succeed. Hence, goal setting could also help the students to learn in managing their own time.

Implementing the Project based learning in Material Design course had given the benefits to the students. The benefits of using PBL could develop many helpful skills for the students such as improving students' language skill, helping students to understand material better, increasing students' creativity and critical thinking, improving students' team work, and improving skill needed for future job. Besides, there were also some challenges faced by the students faced when teacher implementing PBL in Material Design course. Therefore,

using PBL was difficult for the students when they did not really understand about the project itself and when teacher did not explain the project in detail. From the statements mentioned, it led to the difficulty to work in team, and the time was short to finish the project.

5. Conclusion

This study investigated the students' perceptions about the implementation of Project based learning in a Material Design course at English Language Education Department in a Private University in Yogyakarta. This research has two objectives. The first objective is to find out the benefits of the implementation of Project based learning in a Material Design course. Second objective is to find out the challenges students faced in the implementation of Project based learning in a Material Design course. To answer the research question, the researcher employed a qualitative research methodology. An interview was used as an instrument to gather the data. The interview guideline was created by researcher related to the theory and the aims of the research. The researcher involved four students batch 2015 of English Language Education Department in a Private University in Yogyakarta as participants.

The first objective is to find out the benefits of the implementation of Project based learning in a Material Design course. The result showed the implementation of Project based learning in a Material Design course gives benefits for students. The benefits of Project based learning such as can improve students' language skill, students can understand material better, can increase students' creativity and critical thinking, improving students' work in team and improving skills needed for future job. They know how to make a textbook and can create lesson material that appropriate for students.

The second objective is to find out the challenges students faced in the implementation of Project based learning in a Material Design course. Based on the result, there are some challenges that students faced when the teacher implements Project based learning

in a Material Design course. The challenges students faced when teacher using PBL are the students' confusion on how to do the project, lack of team work and limited time allocation.

In conclusion the implementation of Project based learning in a Material Design course give benefits for the students. Besides PBL giving benefits for the students, PBL in Material Design course also has challenges for the students. The challenge comprises students' confusion how to do the project, lack of team work and limited time allocation.

References

- Allen, R. E., & Wiles, J. L. (2016). A rose by any other name: Participants choosing research pseudonyms. *Qualitative Research in Psychology*, *13*(2), 149-165.
- Bell, S. (2010). Project-based learning for the 21st century: Skills for the future. *The Clearing House*, *83*(2), 39-43.
- Birt, L., Scott, S., Caver, D., Campbell, C., & Walter, F. (2016). Member checking: a tool to enhance trustworthiness or merely a nod to validation?. *Qualitative health research*, *26*(13), 1802-1811.
- Bondar, I. A., Kulbakova, R. I., Svintorzhitskaja, I. A., Pilat, L. P., & Zavrumov, Z. A. (2016). *Project-Based Method as an Effective Means of Interdisciplinary Interaction While Teaching a Foreign Language. International Journal of Environmental and Science Education*, *11*(8), 2123-2133.
- Cohen, L., Manion, L., & Morrison, K. (2011). Qualitative research data gathering technique: interview. *Research Methods in Education*, 409-443.
- Creswell, J.W. (2012). An introduction to education research. *Educational Research: Planning conducting, and evaluating quantitative and qualitative research*, 2-28.

Katz, L. G., & Chard, S. D. (1992). *The Project Approach. ERIC Development Team.*

Retrieved from: www.eric.ed.gov

Kavlu, A. (2017). Implementation of Project Based Learning (PBL) in EFL (English as a Foreign Language) Classrooms in Fezalar Educational Institutions (Iraq). *International Journal of Social Sciences and Educational Studies*, 4(2), 67-79.

Lam, N. T. V. (2011). Project-based learning in teaching English as a foreign language. *VNU Journal of Science, Foreign Languages*, 27, 140-146.

Milena Kalabzová. (2015). *The Application of Project Based Learning In The English Classrooms. University of West Bohemia.*

Nanney, B. (2004). *Student-Centered Learning. Retrieved from:*

<http://www.gsu.edu/~mstsw/courses/it7000/papers/student-.htm>

Polit, D. F., & Beck, C. T. (2014). *Essentials of nursing research: Apprasing evidence for nursing practice (8th ed).* Philadelphia, PA: Wolters Kluwers/Lippicontt Williams & Wilkinks.

Ramsden, P. (1992) *Learning to Teach in Higher Education. Routledge, London.* ISBN 0-415-06415-5.

Strauss, A., & Juliet C. (1998). *Basic of qualitative research: technique and procedure for developing grounded theory.* California: Sage.

Tally, T. (2015). *The challenges of implementing project based learning in the 21st century classroom. Department of Curriculum and Instruction, University of Victoria.*

Tirtoni, F. (2015). Penerapan Metode Quantum Learning Berkarakter Pada Pembelajaran Pendidikan Kewarganegaraan (PKn) Siswa Kelas VI A SD Al-Falah Tropodo.

PEDAGOGIA: Jurnal Pendidikan, 4(2), 161-167.

Thomas, J. W. 2000. A review of research on PBL. *Retrieved from:*

[http://www.bobpearlman.org/BestPractices/PBL Research.pdf](http://www.bobpearlman.org/BestPractices/PBL%20Research.pdf).

Tsiplakides, I., & Fragoulis, I. (2009). Project-based learning in the teaching of English as a foreign language in Greek primary schools: From theory to practice. *English Language Teaching*, 2(3), 113.

Republik Indonesia. 2005. *UU No. 14 tahun 2005 tentang Guru dan Dosen*. Jakarta:

Republik Indonesia.