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# Students' Perception Toward the Implementation of Project Based Learning for EFL Vocational High School.

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**Abstract**—This study focused on the students' perceptions toward the implementation of Project Based Learning in learning English as a Foreign Language that was conducted in one public of vocational high school in Surabaya Indonesia. The research was mixed method that used quantitative and qualitative data. The instruments were questionnaire, observation sheet and interview to examine the students' and teacher's perception. The participants included one teacher and 45 students aged between 15 and 16 years old. This research was conducted for 3 months in which the teacher implemented 3 projects in one classroom. The results showed that the teacher had a positive experience implementing Project Based Learning in teaching English as foreign language. Moreover, the teacher also found that Project Based Learning was an effective way to teach English since the teacher can motivate the students to learn English. Furthermore, the students also supported that they were happy and enjoy when they learned English. They felt that Project Based Learning was an effective way to learn English. In sum up, Project Based Learning was the solution to make the process of learning English more effective and meaningful for vocational high school students.

**Keywords**— perceptions, project based learning, effective

## I. INTRODUCTION

In Indonesia, many English teachers still use traditional teaching strategies when they are teaching English as Foreign Language (EFL) in their classrooms. Some research administered in Indonesia found the use of traditional teaching strategies that never help students develop collaboration, creativity, communication, and critical thinking. When conventional teaching method is implemented, it will cause students to have less motivation and creativity in doing their work since it tends to be textbook oriented in the process of teaching English [1]. The students will wait what kind of knowledge to be filled by teachers so that they become unmotivated as the result of the small amount activities that students' attracted with [2]. Those students who experience learning in such situation and condition will tend to have low learning achievement. It is in line with behavioristics theory that students are empty accounts where teachers make deposits. It also indicates that teacher-centered classrooms fail to educate students in a lasting and meaningful way. In this

process of teaching learning using teacher-centered, the learners are still learning in the level of lower order thinking. The students are only able to mention, to explain and to implement. However, they are not able to analysis, evaluate or create. [3] Bas say by implementing teacher-centered approach the students do not able to develop their multiple intelligence such as interpersonal, intrapersonal, kinesthetic, spatial, musical, existential, and naturalistic skills. In this increasing globalized world, students face challenges that necessitate a variety of skills and the ability to adapt.

The empirical evidences presented above indicate that the process and result of learning are highly related with the teachers' teaching strategies[4]. If teacher wants their students participate and create their own thought, he/she must implement attractive strategy in learning process.

Students will respond to the learning positively if they believe on the process of learning itself [5], otherwise it causes some disadvantages on the learning process. Most of public schools in Indonesia still implement teacher-centered learning in their practices. Teacher usually uses and provides text book as learning materials and students mostly are asked to work on the provided tasks in the textbook. As the consequence, students were unmotivated and demonstrated low enthusiasm to participate in learning activities in the classroom. Based on questionnaire, it was found that the students generally had lack of motivation towards learning and most of them felt that it is such monotonous learning activities. The result of the interview with the teacher showed that teachers have the preference of using lecturing, direct-instruction and answer-questions strategies to teach the students. It would make students passive and reluctant to work on their own. Moreover, the strategy that is fully directed by the teacher will not teach students to be responsible to their own learning [6].

Research indicates that Project Based Learning (PjBL) is an innovative learning model in the process of teaching English so that it can be more effective teaching strategy than traditional methods [7]. It means that Project-based learning is an instructional model that is based on the constructivist approach to learning such as discovery

learning, zone of proximal development, scaffolding, cognitive apprenticeship, coaching, context, collaborative learning, and the nature of assessment. Here students try to learn how to construct knowledge and entail the construction of knowledge with multiple perspectives and within a social activity. Furthermore, students learn primarily by constructing knowledge and making meaning through interactive processes of questioning, active learning, sharing and reflection. The learning environment offers interdisciplinary situation, collaborative learning and integrated with real-world issues and practices. Students are able to move from novices to experts in the domain of knowledge [8]. Teachers help students to enlarge their critical thinking abilities, their presentation skills, their communication skills, and their ability to work effectively. In addition, PjBL also enables teachers to teach skills beyond the content, make learning more personalized and more varied, and teach academic content more effectively [9]. Additionally, students value the fact that their projects are situated in real-life contexts [10]. Through PjBL, students can practice and continue to develop their multiple intelligence because students are required to read and write. It is expected that it draws upon all aspects of a student's soft skills [11]. Students have opportunity to practice their skills so that their soft skills can improve [8].

Knowing the importance of teaching and learning English using Project Based Learning, this study focuses on the students' and teacher's perception. It is assumed that their perception during the implementation of Project Based Learning will give contribution to their success. If teachers believe PBL is too challenging then a project may be doomed to failure before even beginning. Several studies address the perceptions of PBL from teacher and students. In one study, [12] Farouk used PjBL to discover how students learn a foreign language, what language skills EFL students might acquire, and what effects PjBL might have on the willingness of EFL students to communicate. [12] He posited that because PBL is collaborative and communicative in nature, students will increase their willingness to communicate. [12] He also used a questionnaire to gather data on the perceptions and experiences of the participants. Many students agreed that PBL increased their confidence levels, alleviated anxieties, and grew their intrapersonal skills all of which improved their willingness to communicate. According to the questionnaires, students learned English mostly through in-class activities, collaboration with peers, dictionaries, and the internet. Most of the students agreed that receptive and productive skills were enhanced. Students also developed technological skills such as software skills, photo editing, and more precise informational gathering on the internet. In this study students' perceptions of PBL were mostly positive.

[13] Habók and Nagy conducted a study to determine teachers' perceptions of PBL. A total of 109 teachers completed a questionnaire that gathered data on the preference for using PBL and how teachers' perceive their role in the classroom. The researchers' analysis determined that teachers prefer to use methodologies such as PBL because it is collaborative in nature. The researchers also found that teachers perceive themselves as motivators, personality shapers, and value transmitters. This is

important when considering the teacher's role in PBL as a facilitator and guide, not a ruler as is the case in most traditional classrooms. Overall, the students and teacher in these studies had positive perceptions of PBL as a language learning methodology. Likability of PBL, one important aspect of student and teacher perceptions is the likability of the methodology being used. Research studies have addressed the likability or the perception of positive attitudes toward PBL. A 2014 study conducted by Hsu incorporated a cultural study of the target-language country with Project Based Instruction in an EFL setting. [14] Hsu outlined the various benefits that have been cited in recent research concerning Project Based Instruction such as motivation, self-efficacy, leadership, and increased language and personal skills. This study's aim was to determine the effectiveness of cultural studies and PBL. Thirty-four college-aged freshman students participated in the study. Their levels ranged from intermediate to upper-intermediate. The project was an integration of cultural festivals from around the world. The findings from this study suggested that in general the students liked the project and agreed that it enhanced the course. The participants did, however, indicate that the project was time-consuming and that they lacked sufficient time management skills for completing it. The results did suggest that students like the autonomy that PBL provided and that it increased their reading and writing skills. Although there were some mixed reviews about this particular project, and definite ways of improving it, participants generally agreed that the overall benefits outweighed the challenges. It also seems to be a positive enhancement for teaching cross-cultural studies.

In a descriptive qualitative study with 25 students and one teacher, [15] Rochmahwati implemented PBL in a level one TEFL course designed to train teachers in EFL methodologies. From interview and observational data the researcher found that the students had "significantly positive" attitudes to PBL [15]. The data further concluded that there were significant advantages to PBL that could be perceived. Two of the advantages were increased class participation and learning doing. This supports the claim that students like PBL. Based on the background of the study, the aims of the research are to determine and examine students' and teachers' perceptions of PjBL in Indonesia.

## II. RESEARCH METHOD

The research was mixed method that used quantitative and qualitative data because the research question is "How is the students' perception toward the implementation of teaching English using PjBL? ". [16] According to Burke Johnson and Onwuegbuzie, mixed method research incorporates the strengths of the qualitative and quantitative methods without being hindered by their weaknesses. The setting of study was in one of public vocational high school in Surabaya in which students participated in this study, and the total number of participants were 45 students aged between 15 and 16 years old. This research was conducted for 3 months in which the teacher implemented 3 projects in one classroom. While the teacher and discipline were selected was chosen at random and he/she should fulfill the requirements such as,

12 he/she has been teaching English for minimum 10 years and she has got English professional certificate. The instruments were questionnaire, observation sheet and open-ended interview to examine the students' and teacher's perception.

The procedures for collecting data could were systematic and confidential. The first, it was got permission from school to conduct this study. Next, when teacher taught English using PjBL, it was observed to describe the process of teaching learning. For the first time, the learners and teacher make an agreement and decision about the theme or topic of the project and the method of solving the problem. They decide to create 3 projects that were video, invitation letter and wall magazine. After that, students made group consisting 3-4 members and started to design the project by enquiring information related to the project, the plan, and the objective of the project. When students finished to design the project, they collected, analyzed and organized data to answer the problems or the tasks. They created the project based on the application of the knowledge they achieved through the process of enquiring. Then, students defined the essential point of the project and plan the presentation method. The last step, students presented their project by using their communicative skills and evaluated their learning. By implementing this process of teaching learning, students were trained to become an active and creative thinker and were involved in collaborative learning to work on the group project. The questionnaire was distributed to participants when the process of teaching learning was ended. Moreover, it was done interview. The questionnaire data were analyzed statistically while the interview data were analyzed descriptively.

III. FINDING AND DISCUSSION

2 The purpose of this study was to determine and examine the students' and a teacher's to determine and examine students' and teachers' perceptions of PjBL in Indonesia. The results in this study provide into the challenges and achievement EF: students and educators faced when implementing PjBL in vocational High School. The result of the students' perception to 11 d the implementation of Project Based Learning could be seen in the following table 1.

**Table 1** Students' perception in implementing PjBL

Statement	Percentage
They enjoy to learn English	80,43
They can communicate in English	70,34
They prefer to learn in group	84,78
They can use critical thinking	79,89
Their creativity is improved	67,8
Their anxiety is reduced	87,5

Based on the table above, it showed that almost 80.43% students state that they feel enjoy to learn English using Project Based Learning (PjBL). It was also supported from the interview they also stated that PjBL model always motivate them to learn and study again for the following material. Moreover, vocational high students are also very

enthusiastic in learning English since they have a challenge to learn English and improve their competence. It is expected after they will graduate from their Vocational High School they will work in their field of expertise. It is supported by the results of interviews with students:

- R : How do you feel when you learn English using the PjBL model?
- S1 : I fell happy because the teacher uses interesting media, that is, graphic organizer. In addition we can also learn English as we are in real situation. It means that we practice our English to communicate to others.
- S2 : It is challenging. It is known that the teacher gave a problem that made us challenged how to solve the problem. So that it makes us be able to explore our English knowledge.
- S3 : I am happy to study English since the teacher also gives us more opportunities to communicate in English. Although I am not very fluent to speak English, I am very happy when I am asked by the teacher to present our results or our work both individually or in groups.

Based on the interview, it can be explained that the PjBL model can make students more active in communicating English. Indeed, in reality they still use bilingual in which the percentage is between 70% comparing 30%. Mostly students prefer to use English rather than their mother tongue. It means that students are interested when they finished their project.

However, there are still 19.47% students who stated that they dislike English to study English in vocational high school. Below, the results of interview to support that few students dislike English.

- R : Explain some factors that make you dislike English!
- 10 S4 : I think I'm not smart so I don't like English, especially when I was asked to solve a problem. I prefer that the teacher explains and I answer and do the exercises.
- S5 : I am nervous when teacher asks me to speak English. I don't like it the most. Even though I have discussed in my group, I am still not confident. In this case I always feel inferior about my English ability.

Another result showed that the PjBL model could also build students' characters building that is in line with Communication, Collaboration, Critical Thinking and Creativity (4C) which is very compatible with 21st century development. Here, it would be focused on the students' perception toward collaboration and communication aspect. Based on the interview result, it can be said that PjBL makes students be motivated to practice their English. They are very enthusiastic to learn English and they always wait when they English lesson begin. In this process of teaching learning using PjBL, students must work in group to finish their project. They must communicate their ideas to make their project well. It is supported by the result of questionnaire that says 84.78% of students answered that they liked to study in group. They would know their friends well. Moreover, they also tried to learn how to appreciate others if one of them had different

opinion. They learned how to solve problems faced by their member. Moreover, they also learned to be responsible and discipline person since there were many steps that must be passed by them to finish their project. It is also supported by the interview that said:

R : What kinds of characters that have been developed by you when you are learning English using PjBL model?!

S6: There are many characters that we can develop such as responsibility and appreciate each other.

S7: We can also be a discipline person. Since we must submit our project on time. Moreover, we will be more confidence since we are enough brave to present and communicate our ideas, opinion and project among our friends.

S8: I can also improve my writing since I can make a note everything that I have got during the process of finishing the project.

The next perception is about the students critical thinking aspect. The results showed that only 79.89% students said that model PjBL can improve their critical thinking. Based on the observation in the classroom that the students are able to classify parts of the letter so that they are able to differentiate between two letters. If the students are able to classify, it is hoped that they are able to analyze and evaluate. However, the result of interview showed that most of the students got difficulty to analyze and evaluate.

Based on teacher's perception it can said that implementation of PjBL model give positive effects and negative effects. Starting from the positive sides, it can be described that this model is very useful for the students. The students have had more opportunity to practice their English since the teacher's role is as facilitator. Here, teacher helps students to guide them in finishing their project. It is expected that the students could master English competence. Moreover, teachers find sustained students engagement challenging. Before the students joined in the class, they must read materials sources so that they were ready in the process of teaching learning. It means that those activities would reduce the students' anxiety. They said that they did feel anxiety when they studied English since they had prepared all the materials before the class started. 87.5% answered that Pjbl could reduced their anxiety when they learned or communicated in English. They usually express their ideas in group or there was no stress from the teacher. They felt free when they wanted to show their ideas and creativity. All their ideas and creativity could be released in the form of project.

Although, the implementation PjBL had a lot advantages from students' and teacher's persecution, there also had negative sides. It was showed that the process of teaching learning English using PjBL model takes more time. There were many steps that must be done by the teacher. It was started by planning, designing, monitoring, finishing and presenting the project and the teacher must check every step and it would need more time. Next, the teacher felt that implementation of PjBL was quite difficult for her. She felt that she has inadequate teacher training, lack of resources, and differences between local cultural expectations and the PjBL approach.

Based on the findings it can be discussed that the most of the students and teacher said that PjBL model

can motivate students to learn and practice their English inside and outside classroom. It is in line with constructivism theories which is addressed to describe the learning process according to 21st century learning foundation. PjBl is one of teaching model that is good to be implemented because of the importance of reflection on experiences towards the quality of learning [17]. The students behave as if they were creator so that they will create their own concept and beliefs towards knowledge based on their prior knowledge [18]. Meanwhile, the teacher, as a facilitator, should provide opportunities for collaborative works and authentic tasks which enhance students' problem-solving skills[19]. The students are encouraged to engage in a collaborative learning situation since the teachers' role is limited in the constructivist learning. It means, instead of focusing on teacher, learning should occur in students-centered learning activities.

#### IV. CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATION

It can be conclude that the students feel enjoy when they learn English using PjBL. The students also indicate that PjBL can enhance their enthusiasm, confidence, critical thinking, creativity, collaborative learning and self-directed ability. Learning English using PjBL also reduces their anxiety when they speak English. However, based on teacher's point of view, it can be said that the use of PjBL can improve students-learning quality and motivate teacher's motivation and satisfaction in teaching. It is recommended that PjBL should become a choice or alternative EFL model for English teachers. This teaching method can also promote the teaching and learning quality which has valuable contribution to student learning and support the 21st century learning.

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