

Chapter One

Introduction

This chapter presents the background of the research, statement of the problem, limitation of the problem, research questions, the objectives of the research, the significance of the research, and the organization of the research.

Background of the Research

Problem-based Learning (PBL) is one of approaches used in teaching and learning. Based on Pijl-Zieber (2004) PBL is a learning approach in which students learn through several real-problems that happen in their daily life. By using real-world problems, PBL is expected to be able to encourage students to develop several skills such as problem-solving and critical thinking skills (as cited in Birgili., 2015). In addition, in line with Ali (2019), PBL has several characteristics such as independent and self-directed learning, individual or group learning with the teacher as the facilitator, group learning about motivation and teamwork by the students, problem-solving practices, and engaging with the task's material used for learning such as data, photographs, and articles.

As a learning approach, PBL can be used in various subjects. In the application of PBL has a certain focus in the teaching and learning process. Baden (2000) argues that the focus of using PBL in language learning lies in how PBL develops students' skills, especially in developing content, language learning, and social development. In addition, PBL also focuses on the process of understanding students who do not only learn about the material provided by the teacher. According

to Blundell and Berardi (2016) Class meetings in PBL focus on how to explain to students how this approach will help the student to learn not only the material but to apply it to other problem areas as well.

Several criteria must be acknowledged by the teachers to create an ideal utilization of the PBL. Delisle (1997) stated that there are three main criteria need to be met in order to create an ideal PBL approach's utilization. First, the teachers must be able to connect the problems used in the learning process with students. The teacher's role is to encourage students to feel that the given problems that are used in the learning process are interesting or new for them. Second, teachers must make sure that their students have enough understanding of the problems given in the PBL learning process, then students will be guided to create proper structures to solve the problem. The guided structures are an important process in the PBL approach. Third, the teacher must review the student's understanding of the given problems during the learning process by asking them for their own opinions, and writing a summary of their comprehension of the problems.

There are a few main advantages showing that PBL is an effective learning approach. PBL helps students to construct flexible knowledge. Based on Hmelo-Silver (2004), students will develop their knowledge when they apply their understanding in multiple problem situations. In addition, Hmelo-Silver (2004) declared that the PBL approach helps students find creative new ways to gain new knowledge, solve problems, and evaluate their learning. Larson (2001) stated that the learning process with the PBL approach is beneficial for students in developing problem-solving skills, and students will also have more opportunities to practice

their target language for authentic communication. Barron (2002) added that the PBL approach requires teachers to actively asking students about their judgment on problems used in the learning process. This activity would help students to be better in expressing their opinions, resolving differences, taking necessary action to solve problems, and making agreements (as cited in Hmelo-Silver., 2004).

PBL also has several obstacles in the implementation. According to Dolmans et al. (2005), teachers sometimes only give simple problems that the students already know the answer and this could lead to less constructive students with a lack of critical thinking ability. Hendry, Ryan, and Harris (2003) added that another problem that could occur is the possibility of teachers who are still dominant. During the application of the PBL approach, the students are still directed or assisted in solving problems and this does not mean to make teachers become as dominant (as cited in Dolmans et al., 2005).

There are previous studies done to find out the results of PBL implementation. The first study was conducted by Carrió et al. (2016) aims to compare between H-PBL approach and lecture-based learning (LBL) approach. To gained the data, this research used questionnaire and 85 students (with 46 using LBL and 39 using PBL) as the participants. This research also used assessment with two parts (part one: assessed factual knowledge and part two problem-solving skills). The finding of this study is H-BL can improve student learning outcomes such as long-term knowledge acquisition, problem solving-skills and generic competences.

The second study was done by Erdogan and Senemoglu (2014). This study analyzes the effects of PBL on academic achievement and self-regulated learning

skills together. This research also aims to undertake self-peer assessments. This research used quantitative method. An achievement test, an open-ended-application exam, a scale on self-regulation in learning, and self-peer assessment forms were developed and used to gather quantitative data for this study. There were 36 students from English Teaching Department as the participants. The finding in this study is PBL is effective on student academic achievements, but had no significant achievement in self-regulated skills. The different result were obtained in their self-assessment that lower than their peer-assessment. Based on the two previous studies, the researcher hopes this research is able to add or improve research findings on PBL.

English Language Education Departemen (ELED) of a private university in Yogyakarta has a course named Curriculum Design. The lecturer of this course applied PBL in teaching and learning activities. Based on prior interview with the lecturer, the implementation of PBL in this class is by giving problems or topics for discussion. The next activity is presenting the results of the discussion about the solution to the problem given or through a debate session. The objectives of the class have not been achieved, class activities do not run smoothly, and learning outcomes are not satisfactory is the result of implementing PBL with these activities in this class which is less effective. Therefore, this research aims to investigate the implementation of PBL in language teaching and learning.

Statement of the Problem

In ELED of a private university in Yogyakarta, the PBL is applied in one of courses which is named Curriculum Design. The implementation of PBL in this class

is reflected by activities done by giving a problem or a topic to be discussed by students. The students discussed the given problem in a group and they were asked to share how they would solve the given problem. The lecturer also applied debate session between groups. Based on prior interviews with the lecturer teaching the course, the implementation of PBL in this class is somewhat ineffective such as the objectives of the class have not been achieved, class activities do not run smoothly, and learning outcomes are not satisfactory. Thus, the researcher was interested in investigating the application of the PBL approach in language teaching and learning. Therefore, this research is necessary to be conducted in order to find out students' voices about the implementation of PBL in language teaching and learning.

Delimitation of the Problem

The researcher focused on investigating the students' perception in the implementation of PBL approach in the ELED of one of the private universities in Yogyakarta. The data for this research was taken from four students who took courses applying PBL as their learning approach. The purposes of this research are to find out the advantages of the implementation of PBL in soft skills and to discover the challenges in the implementation of PBL based on students' point of view.

Research Questions

The following are the research questions used as a guideline to conduct this research. The research questions are presented below:

1. What are the advantages of Problem-based Learning implementation as perceived by the student?

2. What are the challenges of Problem-based Learning implementation as perceived by the student?

Objectives of the Research

Based on the research questions, the objectives of this research are:

1. To investigate students' perceptions about the advantages of Problem-based learning approach at English Language Education Department of a private university in Yogyakarta.
2. To explore students' perceptions about the challenges of Problem-based learning approach on at English Language Education Department of a private university in Yogyakarta.

Significances of the Research

The researcher hopes this research will be beneficial for some parties such as the students, the teachers, and the future researcher. The explanation is presented below:

The students. This research focuses on the advantages and the challenges faced by students in implementing PBL in their learning process. This study provides knowledge for students regarding the PBL approach, such as the integration of PBL in teaching and learning, the strengths and the weaknesses that can be obtained from courses that utilize the PBL learning approach.

The teachers. The results of this study can help teachers to gain knowledge in applying the PBL approach in teaching and learning process. This research can also be used as a reference for blending teaching approaches and evaluate the application

of PBL in classrooms. The teacher is able to know students' responses and opinions about the PBL approach.

Other researcher. This research can inspire future researchers to further explore the issues on PBL approach in teaching and learning. The future researcher can use the results of this study for future reference to their research. Moreover, the main objective of this study is to assist in the implementation of PBL in the teaching and learning process.

Organization of the Research

The organization of the research provides the information of every chapter in this research. The organization contains five main chapters. There are chapter one, chapter two, chapter three, chapter four, and chapter five. The explanation is presented below:

Chapter one, the researcher focuses the background of the research, the research questions, the objectives of the research and the advantages of the research.

Chapter two, the researcher presents the literature review used to develop research on the PBL approach. This chapter also presents several theories from experts to support the ideas.

Chapter three, the researcher explains the method used for collecting the data. There will be several main points in this chapter that includes the research design, the research setting, the research participants, data collection technique, data collection procedure, and data analysis.

Chapter four, the researcher explores the finding and discussion about the research. The finding and discussion present the point of view of the participants' regarding to this research. Also the comparison between their points of view and literature from the experts to complete the explanation. In-depth discussion is also provided to make this study are easy to understand.

Chapter five is the final chapter of the research. This chapter consists of the conclusion and the suggestion. The conclusion explains and concludes the result of the research. Then, the suggestion gives some advices for teachers, students, and future researchers who will deal with the result of this research.

