

Chapter 1: Introduction

This chapter presents the study which consists of the background of the study concern with the brief outline of project-based learning in teaching writing. Besides that, this chapter also provides research questions, objectives of the research, the significance of the research, the scope of research and the definition of key terms. All the issues are presented in the following sections.

Background of the study

Curriculum 2013 is a currently curriculum that is used in Indonesia education system. According to Law Number 20 Year 2003, curriculum is a set of plans and arrangement of the objectives, content, learning materials, and the way used as guidelines for the organization of learning activities to achieve the goals of education (as cited in Agustini, 2017, p. 1). In implementing curriculum 2013, the teaching and learning process at classroom should be interactive, inspirative, enjoyable, challenging and be able to motivate the learners to be active participants and give them opportunity to develop their initiative, creativity, and independence based on their interest and talent.

One of the main characteristics of curriculum 2013 is the use of scientific approach. According to Suharyardi (2013) in Agustini (2017), scientific approach is defined as the process of finding out information in science, which involves testing ideas by performing experiments and making decision based on the results. Scientific approach is particularly relevant to several teaching methods such as inquiry learning, discovery learning, problem-based learning, project-based learning, contextual-based learning, and cooperative learning. In reaching the

goal of curriculum 2013, it is so important to implement these teaching methods in order to engage the students, give opportunities for students to learn by doing and allow the students to be active learners during the teaching and learning process. Felder et al. (as cited in Agustini, 2017) argues that project-based learning moves students from passive to active learning and is able to improve knowledge retention and the learners ability to apply prior knowledge in creating their final product. In project-based learning, the students learn by themselves but still in teachers' guidance. They can construct new understanding by doing a project. Learning by doing is the essence of project-based learning.

In project based learning, the teacher gives opportunity for students to increase their critical thinking and problem-solving skills in which it will affect their lifelong learning positively (Thomas, 2000) in Agustini (2017, p. 5). Larmer (2015) in Agustini (2017, p. 5) also believes that project-based learning is a powerful teaching method because it is able to motivate students, prepare students for college, careers, and citizenship, help students to do well on tests that ask students to demonstrate in-depth knowledge and thinking skills, and allow teacher to teach in more satisfying way. When teacher applies project-based learning in the classroom, the teacher will give opportunity for students to make a project by themselves in which it enables students to express their idea and it can lead them to think critically and creatively. In addition, when students have opportunity to make a project by themselves, their learning motivation will be increased and they will be able to show enthusiastic and active participation during teaching and learning process. Learning by doing also helps students to gain a deeper

understanding about the material. Therefore, project-based learning is the teaching method that is suitable to be applied in the classroom in order to improve the students and let them to be active learners.

Project-Based learning is the learning process that emphasizes more on problematic solutions that occur every day through the experience of practical learning directly in the community (John, 2008) in Murniarti (2014, p. 372). Project-based learning has also been called other names, such as project based teaching, experienced based education, authentic learning or anchored instruction (Arends, 1997) in Murniarti (2014, p. 372). Gijbels (2005) in Murniarti (2014) states that project based learning is the most important way to approach the instruction of anchor of learning and teaching concrete. The reason why the project-based learning is better than other methods, because this method give opportunity for the students to make a project based on their ideas. It can make the students to be creative in teaching and learning process.

English is one of foreign language taught at school. English generally has been learned by students since they were in the basic level of education. The purpose of teaching English is being able to make the students be able to use and communicate the language for meaningful process. When students learn English, they should be able to use this language to express their idea and also to deliver their idea to other. In addition, learning English aimed at improving students' competence in English so that they communicate actively by using the language and understand English script to enrich their knowledge. There are four primary

skills that should be mastered by students when they learn English, namely listening, speaking, reading, and writing.

Writing is one of language skills that should be mastered by the student. Writing is a difficult skill to be learnt for many students (Byrne, 1988). It is because students are required to write and compose their writing by using their own choice of sentence structure and organize their own ideas in such a way that can be understood by the readers. It is difficult for the students to choose the appropriate diction, to write appropriate spelling of the words, and to use the correct grammar in order to make the readers understand their writing clearly. Harmer (2001) states that an issue that makes spelling difficult for some students is the fact that the correspondence between the sound of the word and the way it is spelt is not always same. Therefore, innovative teaching method in teaching writing is needed in order to make the students have good writing skill. By implementing innovative teaching method which is student-centered, the students are expected to have good writing ability.

State University of Gorontalo is one of university in Gorontalo that uses Curriculum 2013 as their guidance in conducting teaching and learning process in conducting teaching and learning process. This study is conducted in order to figure out are the students more interested with project-based learning method or not and also to investigate students' perception towards project-based learning method. The researcher chose project-based learning method, because PBL is one of learning method which is success in the implementation, it has proved by some research, for example, in Abigail and Alacapinar's research. Moreover, that

makes the researcher interested on PBL method is because PBL generally conducted in group of students. It can be easy for the students to work the task and it makes them to be more active and confident in the classroom. In addition, while the implementation of project based learning has been conducted in numerous studies, there is a lack of study on investigating the effect of project-based learning that focus on the sixth semester students' writing ability. Therefore, this study conducted in order to investigate students' perceptions toward the implementation of project-based learning at English Department. The researcher took this study is because the researcher wonder about students' perspectives in project-based learning method.

Research Question

Based on the phenomenon above, the researcher tried to answer this research question, as follows:

What are the students' perceptions toward the implementation of project-based learning related to their writing ability?

Objectives of the Research

According to the statement of the research question stated previously, the purpose of this study was to investigate students' perceptions toward project-based learning method related to their writing ability. The result was seen from the outcome of interview section with the students.

The Significance of the Research

Theoretically, the research was expected to give contribution to explore students and the lecturers' knowledge about learning method, specifically about project-

based learning method. The students and the lecturers can explore more about the implementation of project-based learning method. Moreover, the research also considered as the reference for those who are interested to do a study in the same field.

Practically, the research aimed to give information to the students and the lecturers about the steps of the implementation of project. In addition, this research provided information about the advantages and the disadvantages of project-based learning, so the lecturer can be anticipated the disadvantages of PBL method.

The Scope of the Research

This study was restricted to investigate students' perceptions toward project-based learning method related to their writing ability. This research focused on students' writing skill. It is limited for one group of sample on the sixth semester English Department students at State University of Gorontalo.

Definition of Key Terms

In order to make the readers understood about this research, the researcher provided some key terms, those are:

Perception. According to Rahmat (2015), "Perception is the experience of objects, events, or relationship obtained by deducing information and interpreting the message" (p. 50) as cited in Baso (2017).

Project Based learning. According to Nanang and Cucu (2009), "Project Based Learning method is a learning approach that allows students to work

independently in constructing their learning and minimize it in real products” (p. 30) as cited in Lestari (2015).

Writing. According to Harmer (2004) in Larasati (2015), “Writing is the only skill which enables learner to produce a real product, in which the product is touchable, readable, as well as keep able for a long period of time.”