

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

This study is intended to investigate the students' attitudes towards project-based learning used in the English instructional context at IAIN Kendari on fifth-semester students in English education department. This chapter depicts the background of the study, the scope of the study, the research questions, and the purpose of the study. Moreover, it includes the significance of the study and the definition of the key terms used in this study.

1.1 Background of the Study

The study which discusses project-based learning has taken place in the past ten years (Thomas, 2000), even though it is still in the developmental stage (Baş, 2011). Based on evidence gathered over the past years, many studies indicated that project-based learning appears to be a fruitful model for producing gains in academic performance (Baş, 2011; Yalçın, Turgut, & Büyükkasap, 2009; Nassir, 2014; Sylvester, 2007), attitudes (Baş & Beyhan, 2010; Chu, Tse, Loh, & Chow, 2011; Çiftçi & Baykan, 2013), high-order cognitive skills (Pinho-Lopes & Macedo, 2014), and students' self-directed learning skills (Bagheri, Wan, Abdullah, & Daud, 2013), creativity (Isabekov & Sadyrova, 2018), in educational settings (Abdul Khalek & Lee, 2012; Gültekin, 2005; Holm, 2011), also motivation (Koparan & Güven, 2014). Bottoms & Webb (1998) cited by Baş (2011) point out that project-based learning is a compatible method to use in the

classroom because it increases the quality of learning and directs to higher-level cognitive development by means of the students' engagement with complicated and novel problems (Bottoms & Webb, 1998). Further, project-based learning plays a significant role not only in improving students' language skills and makes them autonomous learners (Wongdaeng & Hajihama, 2018), it also enables students to gain self-esteem, enjoyment and awareness (Bradley-Levine, Sever, Berghoff, Seybold, Blackwell, & Smiley, 2010).

A considerable amount of literature has been published on project-based learning used in foreign language and second language learning (Fragoulis, 2009; Lam, 2011; Simpson, 2011). Fragoulis, (2009) in his study discusses the implementing of project-based learning in foreign language context which proved that project-based learning method improved the language skill of student because they engage in purposeful communication to complete authentic activities, they allow to use language in a relatively natural context (Haines, 1989) and participate in meaningful activities which entail authentic language use (Duman & Yavuz, 2018). It is in line with Simpson's (2011) study that examines student's learning skills and their self-confidence in project-based learning (PBL) implementation in the English Foreign Language (EFL) learning context. The study indicated that PBL increased students' skills such as higher-order thinking, presentation skills, language skill, and teamwork also it enhanced students' self-confidence. Zapata (2016) stated that the process leading to the end-product of project work enables students to extend their confidence and independence also reinforce students' social relationships (Lam, 2011).

Several studies explore project-based learning application in English classes has also been done (Aghayani & Hajmohammadi, 2019; Wu & Meng, 2010; Zhang, 2015; Balagiu, Maruntelu, Patesan, & Zechia, 2014). Poonpon (2018) stated that students can increase any skills in English through project-based learning. It related to (Balagiu et al., 2014) study which examines whether project-based learning (PBL) is compatible in learning speaking. PBL is a suitable teaching method in order for EFL students to have an opportunity to practice their speaking because PBL provides an opportunity for students to interact in a real-life situation and provide learners feedback therefore caused self-evaluating (Zare-Behtash & Sarlak, 2017). Zare-Behtash & Sarlak (2017) claimed that the splendid characters of the PBL method such as enhancing vocabulary, grammar, pronunciation, grammar, fluency, organization, make PBL as a useful method to develop students' speaking ability. Another study conducted by Wu & Meng, (2010) investigated PBL affect in developing students' reading ability. PBL appropriate teaching tools that connect reading skills (Barr & Chinwonno, 2016) because it is potential means of reading teaching due to its integration of knowing, doing and applying what students know to solve the problem (Markham, 2011). Then, the benefit of PBL application in English classrooms has been proved by (Zhang, 2015) that is PBL can develop students' listening skills also increases students writing skills (Aghayani & Hajmohammadi, 2019).

While PBL application in the learning process has been proven to be very helpful in the educational setting including English classrooms, knowing students' attitudes towards PBL is also important (Calore, 2018). It plays an important role

because attitude becomes one main factor besides motivation that influence learner (McGroarty, 1996). Therefore, research on students' attitudes toward the application of PBL in learning needs to investigate. The research on students' attitudes toward PBL has been carried out both in the international and local context.

The researchers investigated the effect of project-based learning method towards students' attitudes were done analyzed by various researchers in the field of education (Cömert, 2014; Gültekin, 2005; Karaçalı & Tezi, 2011; Koparan & Güven, 2014), including the students' attitudes in term of behavioral, cognitive, and affective attitude (Ayaz & Söylemez, 2015) in mostly Science and Technology classes alongside Biology, Geometry classes, etc. (Duman & Yavuz, 2018). Students' attitude of PBL application on teaching English as a foreign language have studied by some researchers which indicated that common students have a positive attitude toward PBL implementation in English classroom (Baş, 2011; Baş & Beyhan, 2010; Duman & Yavuz, 2018; Nassir, 2014; Yaman, 2014).

Concerning Indonesian context, there are some studies investigated the students' attitudes toward project-based learning method in Science, Mathematics class and so on both on the university level and under that level (Tias & Octaviani, 2018; Hartati, 2018; Mahanal, Darmawan, Corebima, & Zubaidah, 2010; Astawa, Sadia, & Suastra, 2015). Furthermore, there is only a study that discusses students' attitudes toward PBL application in English classrooms (Putri Astawa, Putu Artini, & Nitiasih, 2018) which conducted at senior high school.

Although many studies show the PBL impacts on students' attitude towards learning process as explained above, the research analyzing its effects on teaching English as a foreign language is still quite limited (Avşar, 2017; Baş & Beyhan, 2010; Baş, 2011; Karaçalı & Tezi, 2011; Essien, 2018; Nassir, 2014; Yaman, 2014; Zhang, 2015). Moreover, there is only one research that explores PBL in the Indonesian setting (Putri Astawa et al., 2018) and there is no conducted at the university level. Therefore, more research should be done to examine the students' attitudes towards the application of PBL in the English classroom context especially in the Indonesian setting at the university level.

Knowing students' attitudes toward PBL used in English classrooms is play a significant role because it determines the success of the learning process (Baş & Beyhan, 2010). Attitude is one of the individual character traits that have of each student which is thought to have either a direct or an indirect effect on the acquisition of a foreign language (Krashen, 1981). Knowledge, belief, and emotions are in a systematic and continual organizational interaction in the formation of attitude (Duman & Yavuz, 2018). This situation indicates that the presence of the learning process is important in the formation of attitude. The learning process also indicates the mutability of attitude (Inceoglu, 2011). Based on this, the learning method applied in the learning process is effective in changing attitude and PBL proved can change students' attitudes to be more positive (Baş, 2011). Therefore, using the PBL method in the English learning process is a compatible choice.

Applying PBL in English classroom is needed because it overcomes some problems dealing students' negative attitude on English classroom such as students' passiveness in the learning process (Nassir, 2014), students perceived English is difficult also students' less enthusiasm in learning (Putri Astawa et al., 2018). Those problems can be solved since PBL give a chance for students to be active because in PBL students become a center of the teaching-learning process, on the other hand, all of the activities focus on students (Sitaresmi, Saputro, & Utomo, 2017). Yaman (2014) also stated that students be more interested in study English after the application of PBL. It is related to Nassir (2014) study that shown PBL makes students' attitude more positive in term of cognitive, affective and behavioral attitudes.

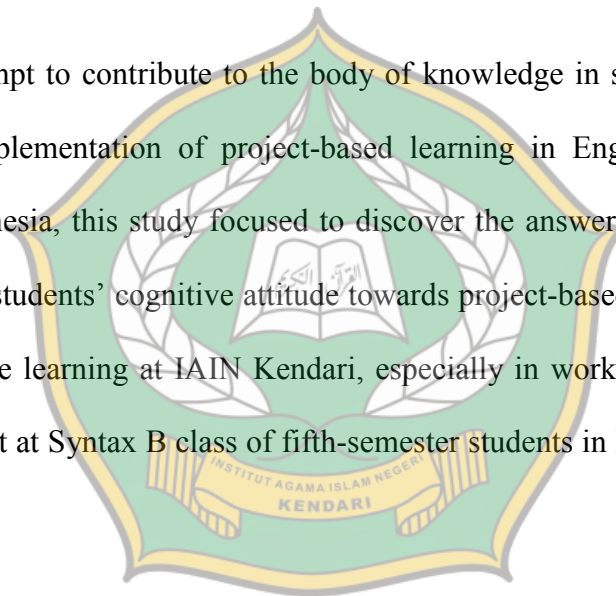
Hence, the researcher is interested to investigate students' attitudes towards the implementation of project-based learning in English instructional context especially Indonesian university students' attitude, since this research does not exist in Indonesia at all. However, the researcher only focuses on investigated students' cognitive attitudes since it is believed to be more fundamental and constant over time also more closely connected to basic values (Pendleton, Schofield, Tate, & Havelock, 2003). Therefore, this study is on the investigation of students' cognitive attitudes towards project-based learning used in English language learning at IAIN Kendari, especially in working on the syntax challenge project at Syntax B class of fifth-semester students in English education department.

1.2 Scope of the Study

This study investigated students' cognitive attitudes towards project-based learning used in the English instructional context at IAIN Kendari, especially in working on the syntax challenge project at Syntax B class of fifth-semester students in English education department.

1.3 Research Question

In an attempt to contribute to the body of knowledge in students' attitudes towards the implementation of project-based learning in English instructional context in Indonesia, this study focused to discover the answer of this following question "How students' cognitive attitude towards project-based learning used in English language learning at IAIN Kendari, especially in working on the syntax challenge project at Syntax B class of fifth-semester students in English education department?"



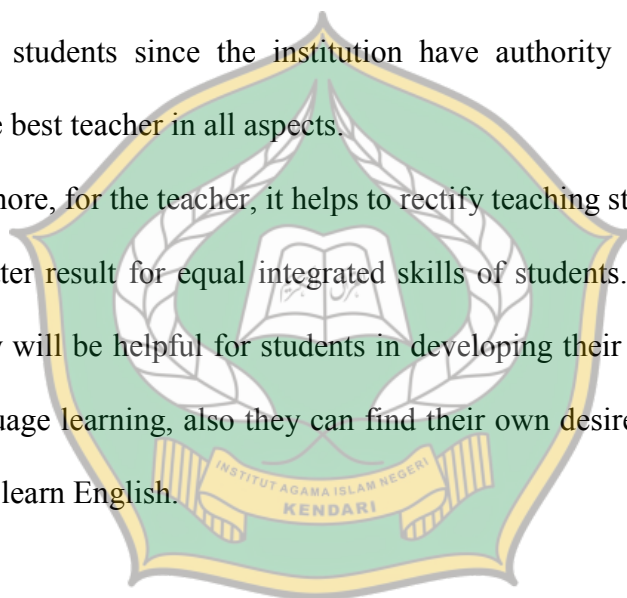
1.4 Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this research was to describe students' cognitive attitude towards project-based learning used in English language learning at IAIN Kendari, especially in working on the syntax challenge project at Syntax B class of fifth-semester students in English education department.

1.5 Significance of the Study

This study offered some important insights into several aspects of theoretical and practical benefits. The finding of this study can be used as references for those who want to conduct research in analyzing the students' attitudes towards project-based learning used in English instructional context. Moreover, it can give positive impacts for all level of academic society, such as it will be helpful for the institution, IAIN Kendari to improve the quality of teaching and training to students since the institution have authority to shape student teacher to be the best teacher in all aspects.

Furthermore, for the teacher, it helps to rectify teaching strategy in order to improve the better result for equal integrated skills of students. Then, the writer hopes this study will be helpful for students in developing their positive attitudes in English language learning, also they can find their own desire and define their main reasons to learn English.



1.6 Definition of Key Terms

For the purpose of this study, the terms to be defined are listed as the following.

Project-based learning strategy: Project-based learning (PBL) strategy in this study means projects are activities combine in working towards an agreed goal and include some activities that students carry out during completing the project for one semester such as planning; the gathering of information through

reading, writing, and observing; group discussion of the information; analyzing; problem-solving; written reporting; display and so on. The project is Syntax challenge project conduct in Syntax class. Syntax challenge is a project carried out which consists of three activities namely first is daily and weekly projects (students write sentences three times a week and post on their WhatsApp account and write a weekly journal). The second task, which is a mid-task, is students analyze the signboard in a public place in a group and present it in an article. The third activity that becomes the final task of this class is students are posting their own writing on their social media accounts then the feedback obtained from the writing reports in the form of a presentation.

Cognitive Attitude: In this study, a cognitive attitude refers to Wenden (1991) which is one main element of attitudes besides affective and behavior. This research explores students' cognitive attitudes related to project-based learning (PBL) implementation in English instructional context during they work on the Syntax challenge project where they are supposed to reject or accept the ideas of that strategy which set in two types are positive or negative attitude.

English instructional context: In this study, the English instructional context refers to Syntax class of fifth-semester students at IAIN Kendari especially in English education department. The learning process of this class focuses on study Syntax as part of linguistics which is they learn the structure and the formation of sentences through a project-based learning method. All activities in this class based on project-based learning in which students carry out a project called the Syntax challenge for one semester either in a group or individually.