UNVEILING STUDENTS' EXPERIENCE WITH PROJECT-BASED LEARNING IN HIGHER EDUCATION

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ABSTRACT

Project-Based Learning (PjBL) has garnered considerable attention as an innovative pedagogical technique that fosters active participation, analytical reasoning, and tangible utilization of acquired knowledge. This study explores the experience of undergraduate students focusing on the benefits, challenges and coping strategies during the implementation of project-based learning (PjBL) in an ESP course. Involving 45 English Education Department students as the participants, this mixed methods study utilized questionnaire and semi-structured interviews to obtain the data regarding their experience while joining PjBL. The quantitative data from the questionnaire were analysed by using descriptive statistics, while the qualitative data from the interview were analysed through the steps of data condensation, data display, and conclusion drawing. The results of this research indicate that students recognized the roles of PjBL in enhancing their learning motivation, engagement, understanding, language proficiency, problem solving, critical thinking, creativity, and collaboration skills. However, this study also reported significant challenges regarding time constraints, resourcing difficulties, and collaboration issues. To address these challenges, students employed various strategies such as managing tasks independently, utilizing accessible resources, and maintaining effective communication. This study concludes that when carefully implemented, PjBL can be an effective instructional method in ESP contexts that offers meaningful opportunities for both linguistic and personal development.

Keywords: Project based Learning, learning experience, higher education, ESP

INTRODUCTION

In recent years, there has been a growing trend within modern higher education institutions to use teaching strategies that go beyond conventional lecture-based approaches. To cater this demand, Chi (2023) believes that it is crucial to select suitable teaching methods that can foster learners' autonomy, enhance their motivation to study, enrich their experience, and deepen their knowledge in their chosen professional domains through English for Specific Purposes (ESP) courses. Among several progressive methodologies, Project-Based Learning (henceforth PjBL) has emerged as a potent instrument for endowing students with not only academic information but also crucial skills that are needed for their professional and personal growth (Jalinus et al., 2017). According to Stoller (2012), including Project-Based Learning (PjBL) into ESP training allows students to develop technical vocabulary, professional communication skills, and contextual comprehension by engaging in practical assignments pertinent to their prospective careers. Hence, by incorporating Project-Based Learning (PjBL) into English for Specific Purposes (ESP) courses, students can effectively utilise their existing

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or recently gained knowledge, skills, and competencies in English. Furthermore, Project-Based Learning (PjBL) encompasses an educational methodology that places the student at the center, with a focus on active participation, critical analysis, collaborative efforts, and the practical utilization of acquired knowledge (Milentijevic, 2008). Within this instructional framework, students engage in projects that closely resemble real-world situations (Larmer et al., 2015; Thomas, 2000). This approach allows them to explore complex problem-solving strategies while simultaneously refining their interpersonal and organizational skills. Therefore, Project-Based Learning plays a vital role in ESP courses within EFL contexts, as it aligns language learning with students' specific needs and contexts, support the development of language skills, and promote various competencies crucial for success in both academic and professional environments

This phenomena was identified during the instruction in the Business English course at a university in Tasikmalaya, West Java, Indonesia. This course required students to undertake multiple group projects, including formulating a business idea, conducting a SWOT analysis, reporting the SWOT analysis results through a poster presentation, making a business ad, and performing a business pitching. Those projects required the students to work as a group consisting of 6-7 members within the given time allotment for each project. During the completion of those projects, students were given the opportunity to develop both receptive and productive language skills. Besides, they were also demanded to develop their creativity, collaboration and critical thinking skills in order to execute the projects well. However, while working on the projects, students sometimes experienced several difficulties related to the limited time set by the lecturer for the project deadline and differences of opinion in the decision-making process. In this case, understanding students' perspectives and experiences of project-based learning (PjBL) is essential for maximising its educational benefits.

Project-Based Learning (PjBL) is an instructional approach that engages students in a comprehensive project or assignment that encompasses multiple areas of the curriculum. In this regard, Guo et al. (2020) define PjBL as an instructional approach that involves students working together to solve complex problems while integrating and applying their knowledge in the process. Similarly, Larmer et al. (2015) contend that in PjBL, students engage in projects or assignments that necessitate the resolution of authentic problems or the simulation of genuine scenarios. In addition, Thomas (2000) defines PjBL as an instructional approach that immerses students in authentic scenarios, where they must tackle intricate difficulties by engaging in specific projects or tasks. During the process of PjBL, students are typically assigned projects to enhance their ability to work effectively in teams through collaboration with their peers (Helle et al., 2006). Hence, PjBL is a beneficial teaching method that provides hands on experience and fosters the development of their collaboration skills as one of the 21st century essential skills.

In general, PjBL is characterised by several specific features. These include prioritising student learning objectives, placing the project at the centre of the learning experience, assigning tasks that are relevant to the real world, fostering collaborative learning, creating tangible project artefacts, emphasising constructive learning, providing supportive instructions, encouraging active student participation, employing various assessment methods with well-defined criteria, and emphasising the final project outcome (Haatainen & Aksela, 2021). These characteristics distinguish PjBL from other educational methodologies.

In regards to the learning process of PjBL in general, Jalinus et al. (2017) have classified it into three distinct stages. The initial level involves the provision of skill proficiency. The purpose of this stage is to verify that students possess the anticipated comprehension and capabilities, exhibit strong motivation in completing project assignments within the allocated timeframe, demonstrate a grasp of the learning material, and possess competencies relevant to the delivered learning topic. Following that comes the phase of project implementation where students are given projects that are derived from real-world situations. The process of working on these projects is organised in a way that closely aligns with genuine scenarios and is directly related to the desired learning outcomes. The evaluation stage is the last phase in the process, with the objective of assessing the attainment of student learning

outcomes and competences. This assessment serves as the basis for evaluating and appraising the results.

Furthermore, according to Milentijevic et.al (2008), PjBL is intended to facilitate profound learning by allowing students to employ an inquiry-based method to interact with complex and meaningful problems and questions related to the subject being studied. Regarding this matter, the teacher's role in PjBL is that of a facilitator who provides guidance to students as they engage in their projects (King & Smith, 2020). PjBL offers pupils the chance to cultivate problem-solving abilities, social aptitude, and critical thinking skills (Hmelo-Silver, 2004). In addition, PjBL has the potential to foster students' introspection on their own learning process (Bell, 2010). In PjBL classes, students have the opportunity to collaborate in groups to strategize, execute, and showcase a project. Therefore, PjBL positions students as the primary focus, motivating them to cultivate their analytical reasoning skills in order to address authentic challenges. PjBL can enhance the significance of learning activities for students by enabling them to engage in reflection and evaluate the learning process they undertake.

Based on the aforementioned description, PjBL has been recommended as a successful teaching approach in ESP courses. It facilitates the simultaneous development of language, material, and skills relevant to the 21st century (Kavlu, 2020). In addition, PjBL equips students with a diverse range of competencies, such as teamwork, conflict resolution, critical thinking, and effective communication. Furthermore, practising skills such as developing and discussing ideas can also enhance students' independence, self-confidence, and productivity. Therefore, PjBL is a fruitful learning model that can be implemented to promote a more meaningful language learning.

Several studies have examined the implementation of PjBL in ESP contexts. Shaalan (2020) examined the efficacy of incorporating Project-Based Learning (PjBL) into the design of English for Specific Purposes (ESP) courses to enhance technical vocabulary. This research demonstrates that Project-Based Learning (PjBL) is an excellent approach for enhancing students' vocabulary proficiency, self-autonomy, problem-solving abilities, critical thinking, and creativity. In addition, Hidayati et al. (2023) also investigated how PjBL improve students; learning outcomes. The results revealed increased mean scores on the examined learning outcomes subscales, along with positive correlations regarding the participants' academic achievement. Besides, a study by Krisdianata and Larasati (2025) revealed that students experienced joy and contentment during the process of PjBL in different ESP classes. Furthermore, they obtained enhanced clarity regarding their future objectives upon the completion of their projects. Overall, these studies have demonstrated the efficacy of the PjBL method in different ESP settings. However, there is a paucity of research examining students' experience of PjBL application in ESP classes. Therefore, to address this gap, this research aims to examine students' experience while joining Project-Based Learning (PjBL) in the Business English course. This research is expected to provide a novel perspective on the implementation of Project-Based Learning (PjBL) from the student's standpoint, which can also serve as a significant resource for educators contemplating the incorporation of PjBL into their instructional methodologies.

METHODS

To examine students' experiences while joining PjBL in higher education, this study adopted a mixed-methods research design. The research was conducted in a Business English course offered as an elective in the English Education department at a university located in Tasikmalaya, West Java, Indonesia. The course aimed to equip students with effective English communication skills for various business contexts. As part of the instruction, students were assigned group projects (6-7 students per group) such as conducting and presenting a company's SWOT analysis, formulating a business idea, creating a business advertisement, and delivering a business pitch.

A total of 45 fourth-semester English Education Department students participated in this study, consisted of 9 males, and 36 females aged between 20-21 years old. Data were collected through surveys and semi-structured interviews. The survey, distributed via Google Form, included 20 Likert-scale items (1= Strongly Disagree, 2= Disagree, 3= Agree, 4= Strongly Agree) designed to explore students' experiences with PjBL in the course. Prior to distribution, the questionnaire was validated by two experts in ELT for clarity and readability. The questionnaire responses were analyzed descriptively by calculating response frequencies and percentages. In addition, to obtain deeper insights, semi-structured interviews were conducted with six students who served as group leaders from each project team. They were purposively selected based on their role as primary coordinators and observers of group dynamics, which allowed them to provide more comprehensive perspectives on collaboration, responsibility, and overall group experience. The decision to These interviews were held via Zoom to ensure flexibility and ease of access. The interview transcripts were analyzed using interactive model by Miles et al. (2014), which involves data condensation, data display, and conclusion drawing.

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

The findings from the questionnaire and semi-structured interviews revealed students' experiences while joining Project based Learning as a learning model in an ESP course, specifically Business English class. Students' experience focused on the benefits of PjBL, challenges they encountered during the course, and strategies they used to overcome those challenges.

Benefits of Project Based Learning

The findings of this study revealed some benefits of PjBL in ESP class. The participants highlighted several advantages of PjBL in their learning such as building positive classroom atmosphere, encouraging their motivation and engagement, improving their language skills, and developing 21st century skills.

Promoting Positive Classroom Atmosphere

The implementation of PjBL in Business English course provided the opportunity for the students to have a contextual experience that resembles real-life situations. It can also build positive classroom atmosphere by making the teaching and learning process more interesting and enjoyable. As a result, the students were also encouraged to be more active and engaged in learning activities. The completion of the project can also provide satisfaction among students. Thus, it is considered as one of the relevant methods to be implemented in higher education.

Table 1. PjBL promotes positive classroom atmosphere

Item	Frequency (%)			
	Strongly Agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
I enjoyed the teaching and learning process which implemented Project Based Learning in my ESP classes	43,5	56,5	0	0
I am more interested to learn in my ESP classes because of the implementation of Project based learning in the teaching and learning process.	34,8	52,5	13	0

Item	Frequency (%)			
	Strongly Agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
I find project-based learning to be a valuable approach for learning in higher education.	78,3	17,4	4,3	0
I feel more engaged and motivated in a project-based learning environment compared to traditional lecture-based learning.	60,9	30,4	8,7	0
I feel satisfied when I can finish the projects in my ESP classes.	78,2	21,8	0	0
The implementation of Project Based Learning encourages me to be more active during the learning activities in my ESP classes.	43,5	56,5	0	0
The projects assigned in my ESP classes are relevant with the real-life situation.	52,2	47,8	0	0

As can be seen in Table 1, students favoured the implementation of PjBL in their ESP class. They admitted that PjBL enhanced the classroom atmosphere to be more enjoyable (100%) and interesting (87%), as P1 said during the interview *It was so interesting! I really enjoyed the class.* The students also valued the appropriateness of PjBL as a learning method to teach students in higher education (95,7%) as it relevant with real life situation (100%).This also led them to be more motivated (91,3%) as they actively participated in the project based learning environment (100%). As a results, they also experienced satisfaction after finishing the projects (100%). In this case, projects are regarded as a means to inspire learners and enhance their enthusiasm for learning (Stoller & Myers, 2019).

Enhancing Student' Understanding and Promotes Learning Autonomy

In addition, students also admitted that during the implementation of PjBL they can enhance their understanding and encourage them to be more independent learners as can be seen in Table 2 below.

Table 2. PjBL Enhances Students' Understanding and Learning Autonomy

Item	Frequency (%)			
	Strongly Agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
Project based learning helps me gain a better understanding in my ESP classes	47,8	47,8	4,3	0
The implementation of Project Based Learning in my ESP classes gives me more control of my own learning.	34,8	56,5	4,3	4,3
Project based learning in my ESP classes makes me more independent in learning.	43,5	34,8	21,7	0

Based on table 2, implementing PjBL enabled the students to acquire a better understanding of the learning materials (95,6%). This in turn also encouraged the students to have more control of their own learning (91,4%), which triggered them to be more independent learners (78,3%), as reflected in excerpt 1.

Excerpt 1

P3 : Well, it made me more willing and engaged in my own learning. Before I do the project, I need to find out and understand the topic or material or anything about the project first.

Excerpt 1 indicates that P3 navigated her own learning. In this regard, PjBL encouraged her to be more independent learner, as she tried to explore more about the topics independently prior to the project work. This indicates that the students can acquire a better understanding by exploring the learning materials on their own without fully relying on the lecturer as the only source of information. It is in line with King and Smith (2020) who propose that the instructor's principal duty as a facilitator in project-based learning (PjBL) is to provide guidance to students as they work on their projects. Consequently, in ESP course, the focus should be on learner-centered activities that prioritise communication (Hidayati et al., 2023). In addition, Bell (2010) states that PjBL has the capacity to stimulate students to reflect on their learning process. Thus, PjBL can be a beneficial strategy to grow learners' autonomy for a long-life learning experience.

Encouraging the Development of Students' Language Skills

Furthermore, the implementation of PjBL in the ESP course requires the students to develop their language skills, as they were required to train their communication skills which involve their productive skills (speaking and writing) by relying on the information that they obtained previously through some practices that involved their receptive skills (listening and reading).

Table 3. PjBL Encourages the Development of Students' Language Skills

Item	Frequency (%)			
	Strongly Agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
Project based learning promotes my language skills in my ESP classes	65,2	30,4	4,3	0

As a result, table 3 demonstrates that majority of the students (97,5%) also confirmed that through the given projects they could also develop their language skills. In addition, the learning activities conducted by the lecturer in the class enabled the students to develop their language skills as can be seen in excerpt 2.

Excerpt 2

P5: Well, I think the learning activities in my (ESP) class helped me improve all of my language skills. My lecturer often asked us to collect information first before doing the projects by reading some articles or watching some videos, then we were also asked to share our opinions of certain issue either orally or in the written form by using padlet.

Excerpt 2 indicates that P5 admitted the beneficial contribution of PjBL learning activities towards the development of their reading, listening, writing, and speaking skills. This finding is supported by several studies which confirmed that PjBL improve students' English language skills (Haatainen & Aksela, 2021; Kavlu, 2020; Musa et al., 2011). Thus, PjBL can be a suitable learning model to be implemented in ESP courses.

Promoting the Development of 21st Century Skills

Students also noticed that their personal skills increased with the PjBL implementation. Several important 21st-century skills—such as problem-solving, critical thinking, cooperation, and creativity—were developed during the various stages of project work. During the projects, students encountered real-world difficulties that taught them to think critically and find effective

solutions. Working in groups allowed students to develop collaboration skills, share tasks, and communicate more effectively with their peers. They also had the opportunity to be creative by designing and presenting their own concepts using a variety of tools. These experiences demonstrate that PjBL not only helps students learn English more effectively but also equips them with critical abilities required in today's academic and professional worlds.

Table 4. PjBL Promotes the Development of 21st Century Skills

Item	Frequency (%)			
	Strongly Agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
Project based learning promotes my critical thinking skill	73,9	21,7	4,3	0
Project based learning promotes my problem-solving skill	60,9	39,1	0	0
Project based learning encourages my creativity in my ESP classes.	69,6	30,4	0	0
The implementation of Project based learning trains me to cooperate more with my friends.	73,9	26,1	0	0

A closer inspection of table 4 shows that PjBL also contributed to the development of some personal skills that should be mastered by the students in order to deal with various challenges in the 21st century era. In this regard, Tsybulsky & Muchnik-Rozanov (2019) mention that the main goal of the PjBL approach is to foster students' inquisitiveness and engagement during the learning process, hence facilitating the development of their critical thinking skills. More specifically, according to Hmelo-Silver, (2004), PjBL also enables students to develop skills in problem-solving, social interaction, and critical thinking. This view was obviously echoed by the students who believed that utilizing PjBL in their ESP course helped them flourished their creativity (100%), problem solving (100%), and critical thinking skills (95,7%). Besides, this method also stimulated them to grow their collaboration skills (100%) as the lecturer gave them some group projects to execute. This is supported by P2 who stated during the interview that PjBL was *good because it helps you to learn and train to be good teammates*. This finding is supported by Helle et al. (2006) who assert that the PjBL learning process frequently entails assigning students with collaborative tasks to improve their collaboration skills through the practise of cooperation. In this case, when learners engage in group projects that include communication, leadership, and cooperation abilities, they develop a sense of responsibility to successfully finish the projects (Puangpunsi, 2021). Which in turn can also promote learning satisfaction among the students (100%) as confirmed by the result presented in table 1.

To sum up, the findings of this study highlight numerous benefits of incorporating Project-Based Learning (PjBL) into an ESP course. Students reported a positive classroom environment and higher motivation as a result of projects that were engaging and authentic. PjBL also promoted learner autonomy, with individuals demonstrating greater control over their learning process and adopting more independent study habits. Furthermore, the students reported considerable improvements in their English language fluency, especially in integrating receptive and productive skill through task-oriented learning. Furthermore, the method emphasized fundamental 21st-century skills such as critical thinking, problem-solving, creativity, and collaboration, which are considered essential for academic and professional success (Silvani et al., 2023). These findings demonstrate that when strategically integrated into ESP education, PjBL can provide a dynamic and learner-centered approach that promotes both language and personal growth.

Students' Challenges and Solutions in Project Based Learning

Besides highlighting some benefits of PjBL from the students' perspective, this study also entails exploring some challenges faced by the students during the implementation of PjBL such as time constraints, resourcing difficulties, and collaboration issues, as well as the solutions to tackle those challenges.

Time Constraints and Resourcing Difficulties

While Project-Based Learning (PjBL) has numerous benefits, its implementation is not without challenges. In this study, some students reported having difficulties when completing their projects, especially in terms of time management and resource availability. These challenges indicate the practical requirements of PjBL, which, while good for student involvement and skill development, requires careful preparation and proper support. Table 5 provides information on the students' perspectives on time constraints and their capacity to obtain supportive materials throughout the project process.

Table 5. Time Constraints and Resourcing Difficulties in PjBL

Item	Frequency (%)			
	Strongly Agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
Designing the project takes up too much time.	13	43,5	39,1	4,3
The time given to finish the project is not sufficient.	8,7	8,7	69,6	13
I have a hard time finding additional material independently during the project completion.	13	34,8	43,5	8,7

Based on Table 5, students reported that limited time constraints became one of the issues they encountered in PjBL. They assumed that the project design took up too much time (56,5%). It is confirmed by Sumarni (2015) who also agrees that implementing PjBL is quite time consuming as it involves different stages from project planning to project report or demonstration. Nonetheless, the results in table 5 indicated that majority of the students (82,6%) assumed that lecturer had given adequate time for the project completion. Furthermore, nearly half of the participants in this study (47,8%) experienced difficulties finding some additional materials for the project completion independently. The results of the interview also yielded similar results, as can be seen in Excerpt 3:

Excerpt 3

P6: During this class, I felt that sometimes I had difficulty finding creative ideas. And sometimes maybe because we are running out of time, the learning process feels like we are rushing.

Based on Excerpt 3, P6 mentioned that the limited time allotment in the classroom restricted his creativity. This could be a result of a scarcity of time allocated for the material/content (Sumarni, 2015). Meanwhile, it is important for the students to have adequate knowledge or ideas in order to complete the projects. Nonetheless, the results of the questionnaire indicated that majority of the students (82,6%) assumed that lecturer had given adequate time for the project completion. To handle this challenge, the students prepare themselves more before coming to the class as mentioned in Excerpt 1 that P3 tended to

prepare herself better before coming to the class by exploring various sources to support her understanding of related topics or learning materials.

Excerpt 4

P6: To overcome this problem, I looked for a lot of material sources from the internet such as journals and YouTube before coming to the class. Apart from that, I also had a lot of discussions with my friends to exchange ideas and share materials. Sometimes, we also make an appointment outside the course schedule to discuss further

In addition, as confirmed by P6 during the interview, he often did some resourcing activities such as finding information related to the learning materials from various electronic sources and from his friends through discussions outside the course schedule. This is actually in line with Thomas (2000) who believes that PjBL enbales the students opportunities to work independently for a prolonged duration. Consequently, fot the students, PjBL requires time to prepare for each class (Jones, 2019) It means that it is important for the students to make use the time outside the classroom and maximize their autonomous learning by utilizing technology as one of the characteristics of PjBL (Krajcik & Shin, 2014; Tal et al., 2006) to support the effectiveness of the project work, since PjBL tends to rely on the students' input for the project completion.

Collaboration Issues

In addition to time constraints and resource availability, collaboration issues arose during the PjBL deployment process. Effective cooperation is an important part of project-based learning, but not all students had great group experiences.

Table 6. Collaboration Issues

Item	Frequency (%)			
	Strongly Agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
Some of my friends are less active in group work.	21,7	34,8	26,1	17,4
I experienced some conflicts with my group while completing the projects in my ESP classes.	4,3	17,4	47,8	30,4

Based on Table 6, while serious interpersonal conflict was relatively uncommon, with 78.2% of students denying that conflicts occurred, a significant portion of participants (56.5%) expressed concerns about unequal participation among group members. Several students indicated displeasure with group members who contributed minimally to the assignments, which had a negative effect on the overall project process and learning experience. This issue is confirmed by the interview results as can be seen in excerpt 5.

Excerpt 5

P2: *While doing the project, some group members just do what they are told and are less active. There is an imbalance between those who are active and those who are not which makes me feel slightly uncomfortable.*

In excerpt 5, P2 highlighted the imbalance contribution among her group members. It implied that some students had a high willingness to actively take part in completing the project, while others did not. Similar finding is also reported by a study conducted by Munianti and Syukri (2022). In addition, this issue confirms what is proposed by Sumarni (2015) who

believes that there is a potential for students who exhibit lower levels of engagement in group work during the implementation of PjBL.

In addition, during the interview P3 also mentioned that the decision-making process during the group work became another challenge that students often face while working on the projects regarding the individual different perspectives or points of view. It can be seen in Excerpt 6 below.

Excerpt 6

P3: The challenge is often feeling confused when making decisions because there are many suggestions and input that must be weighed, always confused about what kind of solution to take by looking for the problem itself, and many other members group be passive when discussion.

To handle those problems related to the dynamic of group work, the students addressed the collaboration issues by trying to maintain the harmony and good relationships with their group members by raising awareness of individual differences during the decision-making process and consistently communicating, helping each other, and inviting the less active group members to take part in the group work by assigning them tasks which were suitable with their interest and capabilities, so they could give the equal amount of contribution in the project completion as can be seen in excerpt 7.

Excerpt 7

P2: We need to keep communicating with our group to ask if there is something difficult and to invite the other members who are less active to do the project together. I think it will be better if we give them work that suits their interests and invite them to join in the discussions too.

P3: It is not easy when a group has different views. So the main thing we must do is understand each other by carefully communicating our opinions to reach agreement. Because usually the problems faced require frequent discussions so that we can find common ground on what to do.

Maintaining effective group work is crucial during the implementation of PjBL. Accordingly, Land and Greene (2000) accentuate that successful project based learning capitalize on the success of cooperative or collaborative learning. The solution proposed by P2 concerning task management for less active students aligns with Jones' (2019) recommendation that students rapidly familiarize themselves with their teammates' strengths and weaknesses to decide who can contribute most effectively to various aspects of the project, as projects in Project-Based Learning (PjBL) are executed by teams rather than individuals. Those solutions implemented by the students can serve as recommendations to cultivate a favourable and efficient group work atmosphere inside the Project-based Learning (PjBL) framework, encouraging cooperation, fair participation, and overall project achievement.

CONCLUSION

This study aims to explore students' experience while joining Project Based Learning model in an ESP course, specifically in Business English. It also investigates the challenges students encountered during project completion and the strategis they used to address them. The results from both questionnaire and interview indicated that students recognized its benefits in building positive classroom atmosphere, enhancing their learning motivation and active participation, developing their creativity, communication, collaboration, critical thinking,

and problem-solving skills. These outcomes were largely attributed to the authenticity of the projects provided by the lecturer. These benefits of PjBL also promoted greater independence in learning. Despite the benefits, students also faced several challenges particularly related to time constraints and collaborative dynamics. Issues such as unequal contributions among group members were commonly reported. To overcome those challenges, the students drew on various resources and maintained open communication and negotiation to sustain group harmony and cooperation. The findings of this study suggest that integrating PjBL into ESP courses can enrich students' learning experiences and foster 21st century skills. Therefore, educators are encouraged to adopt and adapt PjBL strategies while also addressing potential challenges through careful instructional planning and classroom management. Despite these insights, this study is not without limitations. The small sample size and the focus on a single institutional context limit the generalizability of the findings. Additionally, this study portrays the general implementation of PjBL and did not focus on specific aspects of the instruction. Therefore, future studies may include diverse educational settings and involve larger number of participants. Besides, investigating more specific learning aspects such as the integration of digital tools or technologies to support PjBL implementation would provide practical insights for curriculum development and instructional design in ESP settings.

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