

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

A. Background of Study

In the current era of globalization, education demands that students have strong language skills, especially in English as an international language. In Indonesia, English is taught as a foreign language at various levels of education, including in Junior High School (SMP). However, English language teachers still face many challenges in introducing effective and engaging English language learning to students. One approach considered promising is Project-Based Learning, where students are involved in real-life projects that allow them to develop English language skills while acquiring relevant content knowledge. In Indonesia, the government has implemented the Kurikulum Merdeka Belajar as an effort to improve the quality of education.

This curriculum emphasizes student-centered learning, involving them in active and collaborative processes. In

English language learning, teachers need to develop strategies that align with the principles of the Kurikulum Merdeka Belajar, including Project-Based Learning. However, further investigation is needed regarding the strategies used by English language teachers as a foreign language in developing Project-Based Learning based on the Kurikulum Merdeka Belajar, especially in the SMP context. Constructivism theory provides a strong foundation for understanding the effectiveness of Project-Based Learning in the context of English language learning. As stated by Jonassen (1999), "Constructivist project-based learning assumes that learning occurs when students interact with their physical and social environment and construct their own understanding through meaningful experiences." In this context, Project-Based Learning can be a relevant and innovative method to enhance students' English language proficiency while promoting their understanding of related learning materials. In the educational context at 7 grade of English teacher in smp it khairunnas kota bengkulu, this research will further examine the strategies used by English

language teachers as a foreign language in developing Project-Based Learning based on the Kurikulum Merdeka Belajar. With a deeper understanding of the utilization of these strategies, it is expected to provide valuable insights and recommendations for educational practitioners in their efforts to improve English language learning at the junior high school level.

In the context of education at 7 grade of English teacher in smp it khairunnas kota Bengkulu, there are several indications of challenges and needs that need to be addressed seriously in developing Project-Based Learning based on the Kurikulum Merdeka Belajar in English language teaching. Firstly, there is a low level of student motivation in learning English, which can have a negative impact on their achievement in English language skills. This may be due to insufficient student engagement in inadequate learning and a lack of implementation of relevant and engaging teaching methods. Additionally, there is a gap between the objectives of English language learning and the teaching methods applied by

teachers at 7 grade of English teacher in smp it khairunnas kota Bengkulu.

The need to develop students' English language skills is not fully met through traditional teaching methods that are more teacher-centered and provide limited opportunities for students to actively engage in the learning process. In this context, the strategy of developing Project-Based Learning based on the Kurikulum Merdeka Belajar can be a potential solution to enhance students' motivation and participation in English language learning and enrich their understanding of the learning content. It is important to specifically investigate how English language teachers at SMPIT Khairunnas Kota Bengkulu face and overcome these challenges and implement Project-Based Learning strategies in the context of the Kurikulum Merdeka Belajar. By understanding teachers' experiences, perceptions, and practices in developing this type of learning, this research can provide valuable insights into the effectiveness of these strategies in achieving more holistic English language learning goals and inspiring students.

If the challenges in developing Project-Based Learning based on the Kurikulum Merdeka Belajar in English language teaching at SMPIT Khairunnas Kota Bengkulu are not properly addressed, several potential impacts may affect student achievement and English language l as a whole. Firstly, the low motivation of students in learning English can have a negative impact on their interest in actively engaging in the learning process.

As a result, students may miss opportunities to develop their English language skills optimally and achieve the expected level of competence. Additionally, inadequate traditional teaching methods can limit students' ability to connect English language learning with their daily lives and apply it in real-life contexts. This can hinder the development of their communication skills in English, which are necessary in the current era of globalization. Without strong language proficiency, students may face difficulties in cross-cultural communication, accessing global resources and opportunities, and competing in an increasingly competitive job market. In

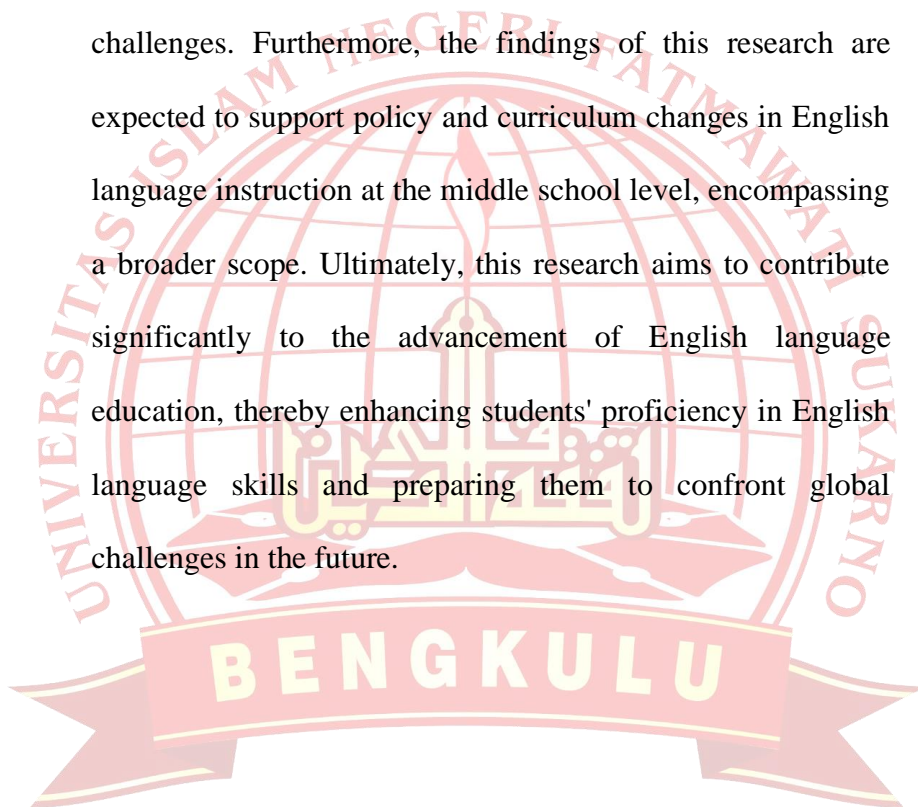
theoretical studies, Vygotsky (1978) asserts that successful learning occurs when students are within their "zone of actual development," where they can reach their highest potential with the support of the environment and educators. However, in the context of English language instruction at SMPIT Khairunnas Kota Bengkulu, it is important to acknowledge that challenges in developing Project-Based Learning based on the Kurikulum Merdeka Belajar can impede students from reaching their actual development zone.

Therefore, it is crucial to analyze the strategies employed by English language teachers in effectively engaging students in the learning process, thereby fostering the development of students' English language skills in accordance with their potential. This research aims to uncover the strategies used by English language teachers as a foreign language at SMPIT Khairunnas Kota Bengkulu in developing Project-Based Learning based on the Kurikulum Merdeka Belajar. The investigated indicators include identifying the types of projects implemented, the teaching methods utilized to facilitate

Project-Based Learning, the assessment approaches employed to measure student progress, as well as the obstacles and challenges faced by teachers in implementing these strategies. By drawing upon theoretical perspectives, the constructivist approach can provide a robust framework for this research. According to Piaget (1976), learning is an active process in which students actively construct their knowledge through interaction with the environment and their own experiences. Within this context, Project-Based Learning offers opportunities for students to assume an active role as knowledge builders through participation in relevant and meaningful projects. By applying constructivist principles, English language teachers can establish a supportive learning environment that fosters holistic development of students' English language skills.

This research holds significant importance within the realm of English language instruction at SMPIT Khairunnas Kota Bengkulu. By acquiring a deeper understanding of the strategies utilized by English language teachers in developing

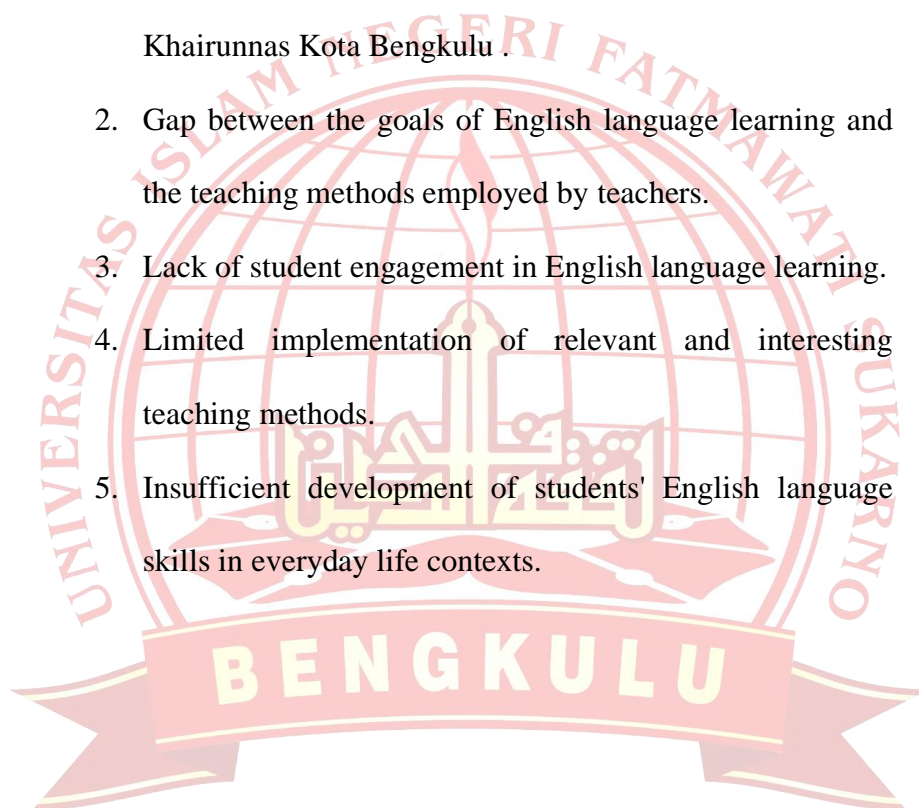
Project-Based Learning based on the Kurikulum Merdeka Belajar, this research can provide practical recommendations to English language teachers in that school and other educational institutions in addressing existing instructional challenges. Furthermore, the findings of this research are expected to support policy and curriculum changes in English language instruction at the middle school level, encompassing a broader scope. Ultimately, this research aims to contribute significantly to the advancement of English language education, thereby enhancing students' proficiency in English language skills and preparing them to confront global challenges in the future.



B. Identification of The Problem

Based on the result at background of study, the researchers identified several problems, namely:

1. Low motivation of students in learning English at SMPIT Khairunnas Kota Bengkulu .
2. Gap between the goals of English language learning and the teaching methods employed by teachers.
3. Lack of student engagement in English language learning.
4. Limited implementation of relevant and interesting teaching methods.
5. Insufficient development of students' English language skills in everyday life contexts.



C. Limitation Of The Problem

The study's findings may have limited generalizability beyond SMPIT Khairunnas Kota Bengkulu, as it focuses solely on English teachers in that specific school. Additionally, potential biases in self-reporting, time constraints, and unaccounted external factors could impact the study's results.

D. Research Question

1. What strategy do use EFL teacher in developing project-based learning based on the 'Kurikulum Merdeka Belajar' at SMP IT Khairunnas Kota Bengkulu?
2. What are the benefits and challenges felt by EFL teacher at SMPIT Khairunnas kota bengkulu when developing project-based learning based on "kurikulum merdeka belajar"?

E. Objectives of the Research

Building on the background statement, the research aims to achieve the following objectives:

1. Primary Goal: Recognize and articulate the distinctive strategies employed by EFL instructors in developing, implementing, and evaluating project-based learning methods aligned with the principles of "Kurikulum Merdeka Belajar"
2. Main Objective: Understand and comprehend the perceived benefits associated with the incorporation of project-based learning within the EFL teaching community. Simultaneously, thoroughly explore the challenges encountered during the practical implementation of these strategies.

F. Signitificant Of The Research

The research holds significant value in multiple aspects.

Firstly, it adds to the existing pool of knowledge by offering unique insights into the specific strategies employed by EFL teachers at SMPIT Khairunnas Kota Bengkulu to implement project-based learning within the framework of the "Kurikulum Merdeka Belajar" (Independent Learning

Curriculum). The findings serve as a valuable resource for educators and curriculum developers seeking effective instructional practices aligned with the principles of independent learning.

Secondly, the research addresses the crucial need for professional development opportunities among EFL teachers. By identifying the challenges faced by teachers and highlighting their experiences, the study can inform the design and implementation of professional development programs tailored to project-based learning in the EFL context.

Moreover, the research findings have practical implications for curriculum design and policy-making. Through an exploration of the benefits and challenges associated with project-based learning, the study can guide curriculum designers and policymakers in refining the English language curriculum and formulating guidelines that promote student-centered, interactive, and authentic learning experiences.

Lastly, the research contributes to enhancing the quality of English language education in Indonesia. By examining the

impact of project-based learning on students' motivation, language proficiency, critical thinking, and problem-solving skills, the study offers insights into effective pedagogical practices that foster students' comprehensive development and equip them with the necessary skills for success in the 21st century

G. Definiton of Key Terms

Key term in this research are:

1. Project-Based Learning (PBL): PBL is an instructional approach that involves engaging students in an extended, in-depth investigation of a real-world problem or challenge. It emphasizes active learning, collaboration, critical thinking, and problem-solving skills through the completion of a project.
2. Kurikulum Merdeka Belajar: Kurikulum Merdeka Belajar is an Indonesian educational policy that emphasizes learner-centered and flexible curriculum, encouraging students to take control of their learning process, pursue

their interests, and develop competencies relevant to their future lives.

