Project-based Learning in Translation Courses: An Implementation and Students' Perception

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Abstract

Translation is one of the useful and beneficial competencies for English students; it is not only to achieve the learning outcomes during their study but also to be a valuable skill that they can use to get a job after graduation. This study aims to introduce project-based learning and its implementation and to explore students' perceptions in deploying project-based learning as the learning method in translation courses. This study was a qualitative study with a case study method design. The data of students' perceptions were attained through an online questionnaire containing close-ended and open-ended questions. The participants were 38 students who took the Basic Translation and Interpretation course. The data were analyzed narratively to describe the implementation of project-based learning and students' perception of its implementation in translation courses. The study showed that students' perception toward PjBL projects was positive and actively engaging students in completing activities of the projects.

INTRODUCTION

Translation is one of the beneficial competencies for English department students, especially for students who are not prospective to be English teachers. Translation competence requires students to transfer sentences of the source language to the target language or vice versa without changing the meaning (Ardi, 2012). In other words, translation is not the same as reconstructing sentences from a source language to a target language. Should one be able to use both languages, they do not directly become translators. To achieve this competence, English departments provide translation courses in their curriculums to build up students' translation competence. Afterward, this competence can be carried out as the basic skill for students to look for a job as a translator or to set up their own translation business.

Teaching translation aims to train the students to obtain the knowledge and skills needed that they can use to translate a text from a source language to a target language; these knowledge and skills are called translation competence. A model of translation competence was proposed by PACTE (Process of Acquisition of

Translation Competence and Evaluation). including five sub-competencies as well as psycho-physiological components (PACTE, 2003). The first sub-competence is bilingual sub-competence that requires procedural knowledge of communication in two languages. Second competence is extra-linguistic sub-competence that deals with implicit and explicit declarative knowledge. Next competence is knowledge about translation that focuses on knowledge about how translation functions and professional translation practice. There is also instrumental sub-competence that is related to the use of any resources of documentation and information as well as the technologies used in translation. The last is strategic sub-competence that controls the translation process. These sub-competencies are interrelated to psycho-physiological components including cognitive and attitudinal components and psycho-motor mechanisms. The relation among the sub-competences of translation competence can be seen in figure 1.
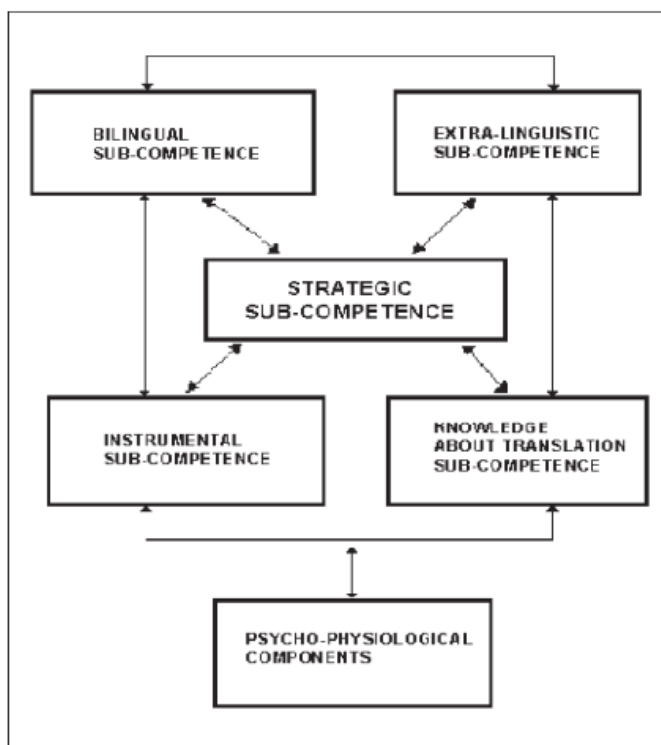

Figure 1. Translation competence

Concerning the teaching and learning of translation courses, translation competence is essentially needed by the students to be professional translators, yet it is frequently not well-developed in the teaching-learning process (Li et. al, 2015) In designing translation courses, teachers and stakeholders need to determine 'what' and 'how' in constructing the curriculum for translation courses and focus on the learning outcome that this course concerns on translation proficiency rather than language proficiency. Unfortunately, it commonly becomes a gap when the curriculum does not fulfill the requirement of employers to the graduates working in the translation business. The translation practice in university is too theoretical and more content-oriented to emphasize the knowledge and understanding theories. Moreover, students

also lack exposure to the work training as they need to learn from the real condition of the translation business.

Regarding the phenomenon above, many approaches have been developed to make teaching translation more effective and applicable for students, especially for students who are not from vocational institutions. A social constructivist approach from Kiraly is expected to bridge the gap that occurred when the students started their work in the translation business (Kiraly, 2000). Project-based learning (PjBL) is used to provide a better learning experience for students and provide the opportunities for them to see how translation can be the choice of career they have.

Project-based learning (PjBL) is a kind of student-centered learning that enables students to be more responsible for their learning and learn collaboratively such as finding out the problems, thinking about the solution, and working on how it solves the problems until they can share and review the results each other (Lee et al, 2015; Shin, 2018). There are some essential elements of PjBL proposed by Larmer and Mergendoller (2007) that can be guided in designing PjBL in a classroom. It begins with a question or challenge to create a desire to acquire or create new knowledge and creating an inquiry to acquire new knowledge as well. Furthermore, PjBL requires students to think critically and have essential skills such as communication, collaboration, and technological skills. Students also work on feedback and revision, and they can present the product. Last, it renders students' voices and choices.

Besides the benefits of PjBL in translation class as stated above, the current condition of translation course also became urgent needs to implement PjBL in translation class. In English Department of FBS UNP, teaching translation focuses on developing students' ability to master the translation theories and it leaves small portions for practice. At the end, students are expected to be researchers in translation. Some examples are analyses of students' ability in translating certain texts (Noviayana, Saun & Narius, 2017; Fransisca & Ardi, 2019; Sari & Rosa, 2019; Azirovi, Syafei, & Fitrawati, 2019), analyses of strategies used in translation (Muhammad, Zaim, & Syafei, 2017; Muslimah & Ardi, 2019), and analyses of students' difficulties and errors in translation (Sari, Amri & Saun, 2013; Syonia & Rosa, 2020). In contrast, current needs of the students are to have entrepreneur skill as well, and translation can be a worth option for it. To fulfill the needs, some adjustments should be made to provide more opportunities for students to practice translation in the classroom; one of them is to implement PjBL in translation class.

In line with the studies about the implementation of PjBL in the translation class above, this paper is to show how PjBL is applied in teaching translation. However, some differences appear to distinguish this study from others. First, unlike Muam (2017) who managed the study in vocational school, this study was conducted at the university level that enabled the graduates to be translators. Then, as Lie et al (2015) let students directly work with real clients, this study is set as a kind of simulated translation that the source texts were taken from the current trend of translation in students' environments. Moreover, Lie et. al (2015) designed the research-oriented translation as the way to acquire students' critical thinking. Meanwhile, in this study, research-oriented project is to provide students opportunity to think about issue related to translation and enable them to write proposal of PKM.

Therefore, this paper discusses how PjBL is implemented in Basic Translation and Interpretation class and how students think of the implementation of this project.

METHOD

This study is aimed to introduce project-based learning and its implementation and to explore students' perception in deploying project-based learning as the learning method in translation courses. This study was a qualitative study with a case study method design. This method is used to investigate a contemporary case within its real-world context (Yin, 2014). The participants of this study are 38 students who took the Basic Translation and Interpretation course. Data of this study were obtained through an online questionnaire containing close-ended and open-ended questions. The questionnaire was adopted from Muam (2017) to figure out students' perceptions about the implementation of PjBL. The data were narratively described and statistical analysis was presented as supporting data.

RESULT AND DISCUSSION
Results
1. Implementation of PjBL in Basic Translation and Interpretation Course

Basic Translation and Interpretation course is aimed at providing students with the theory and practice of translation and interpretation from English into Bahasa Indonesia. The theory of translation covers the definition of translation, translation mapping, and translation techniques. Meanwhile, the practice covers the conventional translation practice and the simulation of CAT tools in translating news, comic strips, and short stories.

In implementing PjBL in Basic Translation and Interpretation course, there are two kinds of projects adopted from Li et. al (2015) that were given to the students, namely translation-oriented and research-oriented projects. In the translation-oriented project, students work together in small groups to produce a good quality of a translated text. This project is expected to make students able to gain better translation skills and improve their translation competence (Kiraly, 2003; Li, 2013). On the other hand, in research-oriented projects, students work in small groups inquiring about translation issues that interest them. This project is used to improve their critical thinking and creativity in writing a proposal of Students Creativity Program (PKM/*Program Kreativitas Mahasiswa*) related to translation issues. In other words, students are not translating a text, but they are discussing and thinking innovatively related to translation issues. The concepts of a translation-oriented project and a research-oriented project can be seen in table 1.

Table 1. Translation-oriented PjBL vs Research-oriented PjBL

	Translation-oriented PjBL	**Research-oriented PjBL**
Aim	To improve translation competencies and become familiar with real-world translation situations.	To seek an in-depth understanding of translational issues

Task	To work in small group and complete an authentic or simulated translation project	To work in small groups and inquire into topics on translation through various data-gathering methods
Product	A complete translation	Students' Creativity Program *(PKM)* proposal
Outcome	Improve translation competencies	Enhanced knowledge of translation Indirect contribution to translation competencies Being critical and creative to create a program related to translation

The syllabus for these projects was designed to fulfill the academic and professional translation criteria in one particular course. It is in line with Davies (2005) who believed that the syllabus should be designed with specific aims by certain considerations and materials. Consequently, these projects were designed for 16 meetings in 1 semester divided into 8 meetings for the translation-based project and 8 meetings for the research-based project. In each project, some phases need to be done to achieve the goals of the project. Stroller (2002) stated that working on a project required a sequence of activities to reach the outcome successfully. Therefore, some phases, namely preparing and piloting the project, carrying out the investigation and training, presenting findings, and summarizing the project, were elaborated in the meetings of each project.

For the translation-based project, meeting 1 is used to introduce the course and the projects during the semester. In meeting 2 to 4, basic theories of translation are explained to the students to prove them with basic knowledge of translating a source text to target text. This knowledge is also useful for them in completing the translation-oriented project. Not only the theories but the students are also guided in translation practice before they start their own project. In this phase, the information about the project, methods, assessments, and possible topics are also explained to help students understand what they need to do in completing the project. Each group of students may choose their own topic whether it is from news, comic strips, or short stories. Later, when they present their project, they have to explain why they choose the topic.

In the next phase, during meetings 5 to 7, students carry out the project, consult any problems during the work. They can obtain feedback from the teacher or other students to solve the problems. The teacher also monitors and evaluate the group's work and offer suggestion and guidance to the class. At this time, students need to complete their logbook as a journal of activities they do in completing the project. The last phase of project 1 is in meeting 8. Students present their group project, receive any suggestions and revise what has been discussed together in the class. After revising the project, they submit the final and complete translation text to the teacher.
In this project, the theories of translation are only given at the beginning of the semester, and during working on the project, students can consult the problems in the classroom or outside the class as long as the teacher has time to discuss with them. The

benefit of obtaining feedback in the classroom is students from other groups that have a similar problem will be encouraged as well at the same time. It is efficient to have them discuss and figure out the solution together and to save time to explain other problems to other students.

When students finish their first project, the teacher starts explaining the second project related to students' creativity program proposal (PKM). *Program kegiatan mahasiswa (*PKM) or students' creativity program in a national program of education ministry of Indonesia in creating students who have the critical thinking, and be creative and innovative to solve any current issues around them. The second project should be related to the translation issue, so the students need to discuss what issue of translation can they work on. In meeting 10 to 11, students read journal articles and the connection of related studies to the topic chosen. They can consult with the teacher to get a brief understanding of the topic they choose. Students continue writing the proposal and investigate the topic in weeks 12 to 15. They can obtain feedback from the teacher and other students to evaluate and revise their proposals. In the end, in week 16 each group has to present their proposal. They may get feedback and revise their proposal. The final revision should be submitted to the teacher as bank proposals for the national competition of PKM. The syllabus of PjBL in Basic Translation and Interpretation is presented in table 2.

Table 2. Silabus PjBL pada mata kuliah Translation

Week	The lecturer	The students
Project 1: translation-oriented project		
Week 2-4	Explain the basic theories of Translation	Study the basic theories of translation
	Guide the students with some practices of the basic theories	Complete the initial practices of the basic theories.
	Announce project 1 (translation-oriented project-)	Make groups
	Explain the methods, assessments, and possible topics.	Discuss the action plan
Week 5-7	Be available for consultation,	Carry out the project
	Monitor and evaluate the progress of the projects	Report any problems during the work
	Offer suggestions and guidance with the class	Complete the logbook
		Obtain feedback from the class
Week 8	Assess the project	Present the project
	Give feedback to the students	Revise the project as suggested
		Submit the Project
Project 2: research-oriented project		
Week 9	Explain about Students Creativity program or	Study all about *PKM*
	PKM(Program Kreativitas Mahasiswa)	Choose topic
	Discuss the possible topics	Work out an action plan

Week 10-11	Guide students to read related journal articles for their topic Offer suggestions and help students to Find the connection of any related studies to the topic chosen	Read any journal articles Find the connection of any related studies to the topic chosen
Week 12-15	Be available for the consultation Offer suggestions and feedback Monitor and evaluate the progress of the project	Write the proposal of *PKM* Carry out any investigation Complete the logbook Obtain feedback
Week 16	Assess the project Give feedback to the students	Present the project Revise the project as suggested Submit the project

2. Students' perception in implementing PjBL in Basic Translation and Interpretation course

PjBL was expected to give the perception to students. All students completed the questionnaire after finishing both projects in Basic Translation and Interpretation course. There were 6 items of the questionnaire and the result of the responses are described in table 3 below.

Table 3. Students' response toward implementation of PjBL in Basic Translation and Interpretation course

No	Items	SA	A	D	SD
1	Completing a project in a group is easier than doing it individually.	00	57.89	31.57	7.89
2	Completing a project in a group provides knowledge and experience.	23.68	73.68	0	0
3	Working in group trains students to think critically and to solve problems.	15.78	68.42	13.15	0
4	The result of the project is a reflection of conceptual knowledge and skill related to the working world.	21.05	63.15	13.15	0
5	Working in a group motivates students to study.	7.89	55.26	34.21	0
6	Working in a group increase students' translation competence in whole aspects.	0	63.15	26.31	7.89

Regarding item 1, 57% of students felt that working in a group for a project was better than working individually because the projects are useful dan effective if they did it together in a group. In the process of translating the text and writing the proposal, students work collaboratively and review the work of each member, so that they can produce a better result for their job. It is in line with Bell (2010) who stated

that students working in small groups get more peer pressure to finish the tasks they need to complete. So, students can be responsible to achieve their goal of the task.

Furthermore, the projects enabled students to have the opportunity to strengthen their teamwork and collaborative skills. They had a chance to share their opinion and discuss their point of view to get better results for their translation and proposal as well.

> *'When we were confused about a sentence, each of us looked for related information to reveal the meaning of the sentence. Then my fellow friends would help me interpret the words or sentences, so we could continue the translation process. When we were done, I was so proud of myself'*. (Student 6)

Students were also able to manage their projects well with good teamwork.

> *'I think our group had good teamwork because we completed the projects right in time and without any serious problems'*. (Student 1)

They are also concerned about their responsibilities as a group member to achieve the goal of the group.

> *'Since it was a teamwork project, I should be more responsible and not be selfish'*. (Student 7)

Implementing PjBL in translation class enables students to learn new knowledge and seek new experiences (Muam, 2017). From students' responses to item 2 in table 3, all students agreed that they were accessing new information and gaining new experience related to the current condition of translation in the learning environment and the real-world condition.

> *'I learned a lot from these two projects. First, it enriched my vocabulary and the use of idioms in English. Then, it gave me new insight into students' creativity proposals (PKM). I heard about PKM so many times, but I used to ignore it.'* (Student 6)

The students also noticed the real use of grammar in constructing the sentence.

> *'I started to realize that the use of grammar, especially pronouns, was not as easy as I thought. When I reconstructed the sentence into Bahasa Indonesia, the use of pronouns was quite confusing'*. (Student 11)

Another response is that they synched their information to translation learning.

> *'During translation group project, it was confirmed that translating idiom and metaphors cannot be translated literally. You need to reveal the meaning first before rewriting it in the target language'*. (Student 16)

Providing students to think critically and solve problems appeared is another purpose of PjBL in the teaching and learning process. Choi and Jang (2010) stated that students who worked collaboratively learned something from problem-solving process and sharing result. As it is tailored in item 3 of Table 3, more than 80% of students were able to think critically during the translating process and seek solutions toward problems they found in completing the projects.

> *'I became more critical during the discussion of the project because there were some different opinions of other friends'*. (Student 4)

They also tried to criticize their friends' ideas to reach one solution to the problem they discussed.

> *'I commented on my friends' translation part, then I gave some suggestions to fix it. They accepted it. Well, I will also accept their comment if I did some mistakes too. I just tried to think critically to analyze'.* (Students 26)

In the next item, PjBL is supposed to be a reflection of knowledge and skill students get in the classroom to the real working world. As can be seen in table 3, nearly 85% of students agreed that the projects they worked on in the group gave a beneficial insight into the world of translation business. Besides the knowledge of translation, students can increase their ability in other beneficial skills such as technology and communication skills. Students apply their knowledge of the use of technology to participate in learning activities and learn other than language skills as well (Musa et. al., 2011). Regarding the current condition that the teaching and learning process is conducted online, technology and communication skills take necessary parts in completing the course and projects. Some students reported that they became more digitally literate and improved their communication skills during the implementation of PjBL.

> *'I think my skill in using technology was getting better. Now, I can use Google Drive, Google Form, and Google documents, so I can edit anytime I want to. I know how to use Zoom conference with many features such as breakout rooms and the close caption'.* (Students 32)

> *'I can discuss with my group in breakout rooms in zoom. I am not shy anymore to share my opinion with my friends in zoom even though in WA group chat we sometimes argued with each other. Moreover, now I know that it is not only google translation to help me translate the text but there is much software to use in translation.'* (Students 16)

By bridging the knowledge and experience in the classroom into the real world, PjBL increases students' motivation to study and to achieve the goal of the translation course. From item 5 in table 3, 63% of students found their motivation to learn and practice more in translation. Furthermore, item 6 showed that 63% of students agreed that their activities in group projects increased their translation competence in whole aspects. When they finished the projects, they got new insight and felt that their translation competence increased.

> *'Translating short stories as the project became an interesting project for me. I understood more about the translation method, knew how to use translation aid, and strengthen other abilities such as my communication skill. Learning online makes me difficult to talk to my friends, but at last, we finished our projects and I was satisfied with it.'* (Student 8)

Regarding students' responses, it seems that students' perceptions toward PjBL projects were positive and actively engaging students in completing activities of the projects. It is in line with the findings of the study of Li (2015) that by seeing their area of growth, students can notice some important developments of their skills in translations and soft skills like motivation, collaboration, communication, and technological skills. These skills can become basic skills that the students bring when they graduate from university and be ready for the real translation job later.

Discussion

As mentioned earlier, the implementation of PjBL is obviously needed to support students in translation courses for the needs of knowledge and practices as the achievement of their translation competencies as the outcome of the course. Despite the obstacles found during the process of conducting PjBL in translation courses, the use of PjBL offers numerous advantages for students to experience and enrich their competencies in translation. These competencies are the basic skills for them to get into the real world of translation business.

Furthermore, PjBL in teaching translation is seen as an individual or collaborative project that is well-planned for students to accomplish the translation knowledge and skills within a certain period. Li et. al (2015) stated that PjBL is effective to build up students' skills related to translation competence. It can be also revealed in the result of his study that students perceived positively and felt encouraged that it helped to bridge the classroom experience and real translation experience. The students worked with real clients so that they were able to solve the problems arising in their case. Li's finding is somewhat similar to what this study revealed although the context is not as real as it was provided by Li in his study. Through the simulated text practices, it can be tailored that students are having opportunities to gain the translation-world experience as the reflections of what knowledge and skills attained during the PjBL learning.

Another result to point out is that PjBL makes students able to work collaboratively and provides opportunities for students to get real experience in translation projects. In accordance with Muam (2017), it is showed that PjBL in translation teaching has a positive contribution for students in his class. He conducted his study at the vocational institution where the students directly dealt with the real clients that needed a translation of their local manuscripts. Meanwhile, this study provided students with current trends of translation texts that are usually needed by surrounding people.

CONCLUSION

The success of this project confirms that PjBL can be used in any teaching field. It can also be incorporated with any translation teaching. The important thing is that the main focus is to maintain students' knowledge acquisition and develop skills such as critical thinking, communication, collaborative work, technological skill, and public speaking as well. The innovation should meet the goals and outcomes of the course as stated in the syllabus, so it will give significant effects on students in many aspects. Further efforts should be done continuing to gain the better result of this study such as an analysis of students' ability in translating the text before completing the project and after the project to see how significant students develop themselves during the projects. Another consideration is also about how the results of the projects can be different if the course is conducted virtually or in the face-to-face situation. Since this study was a part of an online course during pandemic Covid-19, it made students struggle to work together to complete their project. More efforts are needed to help them face this condition.

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