CHAPTER 1
INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background of the Study

The importance of 21st century skills require all elements including educational elements to prepare students to develop 21st-century skills. Educational elements are expected to equip students with 21st century skills so that students can adapt, survive and succeed in a changing society, especially in relation to education and the changing needs of the international workforce (Trilling & Fadel, 2009). Therefore, educational elements, especially teachers as the main role in education, are required to play a more creative and innovative role in developing a teaching method that can support the development of students' 21st century skills.

In practice, teaching method is one of the factors that support the development of students' 21st century skills. According to Devkota et al. (2019), Puangpunsi (2021), and Tham and Tu (2023), project-based learning is one of the best teaching methods that can be implemented to equip students with 21st-century skills. It is also considered to improve teaching and learning process by fostering a feeling of community and collaboration among students and teachers, promoting student-centered learning, connecting theory to practice, and giving teachers more freedom in their instruction (Aksela & Haatainen, 2019; Viro et al., 2020). Therefore, it is undeniable that project-based learning can equip students with 21st century skills because it reconstructs experiences through interactive processes with the environment.

Furthermore, project-based learning has been implemented to teach various ESL and EFL skills around the world and it has been extensively researched (e.g., Atikah et al., 2022; Kavlu, 2017; Ngadiso et al., 2021; Wahbeh et al., 2021; Yaprak, 2022). Contextually, project-based learning was implemented in one of the courses at English education department in one of the universities in Tasikmalaya (i.e., Grammar in Multimodal Discourse). During this course, the students were asked by the lecturer to produce a project collaboratively to design small-scale research

in the form of scientific articles. It focused on researching multimodal issues related to education.

In this regard, the researcher conducted initial brief interviews with students who had enrolled in the Grammar in Multimodal Discourse course. From the results of these interviews, it was found that the implementation of project-based learning in the Grammar in Multimodal Discourse course went through learning stages that were in accordance with the stages proposed by The George Lucas Educational Foundation (2005) in Nurohman (2015). First, designing a plan for the project in which the lecturer informed the project topic and students are informed that they have the opportunity to choose and plan the sub-topic for their project. Second, forming the group work in which the lecturer asked the students to form groups of 4-5 students. They have freedom to determine the members of their groups. Third, the lecturer provided guidance on the formulation of ideas, issues and relevant reference as examples that can be adapted by the students. Fourth, the students identified and discussed ideas and issues, as well as selected references that are credible and relevant. Fifth, the students were given the freedom to choose the multimodal issues as data resources. It could be educational posters, university websites, learning application advertisements, textbooks, teacher's gestures or body movements, etc. Sixth, the students were asked to formulate ideas, issues, and essential question (i.e., the research question), and select credible and relevant references. Seventh, the lecturer monitored the students and the progress of the project. In this stage, the students should finish the project in 5 weeks with progress reports conducted once a week. The progress report was carried out in turn by each group through consultation session. In the consultation session, the students reported their progress of the project and the lecturer asked questions related to the difficulties that students faced during the writing, provided opportunities for students to ask questions related to things they did not understand, evaluated and reviewed what had been written by students, and provided input on things that must be improved. In the first consultation, the students consulted the ideas, issues, and essential question (i.e., the research question) of their project. Eighth, creating a tentative research schedule together. Ninth, the lecturer provided guidance on data

collection and analysis techniques while reviewing the initial manuscript of the research. Tenth, the students identified and discussed data collection and analysis techniques. Eleventh, the students consulted data collection and analysis techniques to the lecturer before starting to write the small-scale research in the form of scientific articles. Twelfth, composing a cohesive and coherent research article. Thirteenth, all groups were asked to present their small-scale research through Zoom recording with a maximum duration of 10 minutes and it should be uploaded via YouTube. Fifteenth, all students are required to submit their research report (scientific article) to Google Drive by representatives of each group, then the Google Drive link is submitted to the lecturer by the class leader via email.

In the context of project-based learning implementation in Grammar in Multimodal Discourse, the lecturer executed almost all stages of project-based learning, including briefing students before project completion and monitoring students and their project progress through consultation sessions. Thus, the lecturer fulfilled his important role as a facilitator for the students. However, the explanation above shows that the lecturer did not execute the reflection stage as a form of learning evaluation at the end of project-based learning implementation. Therefore, the implementation of project-based learning in Grammar in Multimodal Discourse course became the research context of this study.

Moreover, a number of studies on project-based learning implementation in the area of second and foreign languages have increased. In a study by Ngadiso et al. (2021) which explored students' and teachers' experiences in implementing project-based learning showed that project-based learning has a positive impact on the classroom situation and teaching and learning process. Specifically, this study showed that project-based learning improved a way of teaching and learning process, students' participation, and students' achievement. Thus, students and teachers perceived positively to project-based learning. In addition, the results of the study by Atikah et al. (2022) on the implementation of project-based learning showed that project-based learning enables students to take an active role in their learning process. Through project-based learning, students have the opportunity to express all of their thoughts and their difficulty in learning process. Thus, project-

based learning is widely said to affect student motivation in learning (Chu et al., 2017; Wang, 2016; Zaafour & Salaberri-ramiro, 2022). Furthermore, the study of Haniah et al. (2021) who investigated project-based learning in teaching 4Cs from students' perceptions and experiences by using observation and Likert-scale questionnaires to collect the data showed that students positively assessed project-based learning in teaching 4Cs because it can help them to acquire 4Cs which includes creativity and innovation skills, communication skills, critical thinking skills, and collaboration skills as the essential skills in 21st-century. However, the implementation of project-based learning observed in the study only focused on the 4Cs. In addition, some previous studies on the implementation of project-based learning only focused on English language learning, not specifically related to 21st century skills and did not explore the challenges students faced during the implementation of project-based learning. Therefore, this study aims to explore the benefits of project-based learning implementation from students' experiences in the area of English language learning and 21st century skills by using the 7Cs theory from Trilling and Fadel (2009) as a development form of the 4Cs theory as well as explore the challenges that students face during the implementation of project-based learning.

1.2 Formulation of the Problems

This study aims to answer the following questions:

1.3.1 What are the benefits of project-based learning implementation on students' English language learning and 21st- century skills?

1.3.2 What are the challenges students faced during the implementation of project-based learning?

1.3 Operational Definitions

The researcher provides five definitions related to this study to avoid misunderstanding about the terms set out in this study as follows:

1.3.1 Students' experiences

Student experience refers to the expression of students' memory, thinking, understanding, feelings, and emotions towards the learning process they have gone through. It focuses on the project-based learning that students have gone through in the Grammar in Multimodal Discourse class. This study focuses on cognitive, affective, and social interaction experiences while joining the class, such as when students compose scientific articles that include the process of identifying and discussing the compilation of scientific articles, consulting the progress of completing scientific articles, and using technology as a learning assistant. Thus, this study focuses on the disclosure of the quality of the effectiveness of the teaching and learning process, the acquisition of knowledge and skills, as well as the disclosure of the challenges that students faced during the implementation of project-based learning.

1.3.2 Project-based Learning

Project-based learning is the teaching method that emphasizes a student-centered teaching approach where students are required to conduct research collaboratively in creating a final product at the end of the class. It used in Grammar in Multimodal Discourse course to support the implementation of meaningful language learning by designing small-scale research on multimodality issue related to education in the form of scientific articles and presenting them through online platform such as Zoom and YouTube. It consists of several stages that include project initiation, project execution, and project submission.

1.3.3 English Language Learning

English language learning refers to the process of students, especially students whose first language is not English, acquiring proficiency in English. This process involves their efforts in acquiring English proficiency which

includes reading, writing, listening, and speaking skills. One part of English language learning is Grammar in Multimodal Discourse. It is one of the courses in the English Education Department at one of the universities in Tasikmalaya, Indonesia. The output of this course is that students are able to analyze, combine, and evaluate multimodal discourse in various multimodal texts in English using an analytical framework based on a social semiotic approach to develop multimodal literacy which is manifested through data analysis and English language teaching in a responsible, quality, and measurable manner.

Grammar in a multimodal discourse course is an important aspect of English language learning. Multimodal discourse analysis uses many modes of communication, such as audio, visual, and textual features, to improve understanding and meaning-making in language learning. This approach understands that language is more than just words; it also contains nonverbal aspects such as visuals, gestures, and layouts that help to facilitate communication. In the context of English language learning, understanding grammar within multimodal discourse helps learners to interpret and produce texts that utilize multiple modes. This is essential for developing comprehensive language skills, as it prepares students to engage with diverse forms of media and communication in real-world contexts. By analyzing how different modes interact, students can gain a deeper understanding of both the structure and function of language, thereby improving their overall proficiency in English

1.3.4   21st-century Skills

21st century skills are the skills needed to adapt, survive and succeed in facing the challenges and opportunities for success in the 21st century. These skills include three main components: learning and innovation skills, digital literacy skills, and life and career skills.

1.4 Aims of the Study

In accordance with the research question, this study aims to explore students' experiences of the benefits of project-based learning implementation on English language learning and 21st century skills as well as the challenges students faced during project-based learning implementation.

1.5 Significance of the Study

1.5.1 Theoretical Significance

This research contributes to complement previous studies that focus on the use of project-based learning in English language learning and its relation to the development of students' 21st-century skills.

1.5.2 Practical Significance

Practically, this study can be used as a reference and consideration for teachers in implementing project-based learning to improve English language learning and develop students' 21st-century skills.

1.5.3 Empirical Significance

This study enriches the literature on students' experiences of project-based learning implementation. Specifically, it will provide the literature on the students' experiences of the benefits of project-based learning implementation in the areas of English language learning and 21st century skills as well as the challenges they faced during the implementation of project-based learning.