

Project-Based Learning as an Innovative Method in Indonesian Senior High School EFL: Challenges and Teachers' Strategies

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ABSTRACT

Project-based learning (PjBL) has been known as an effective, creative, and innovative teaching method in the EFL context. Some previous research has highlighted the effectiveness of PjBL and the challenges faced by teachers in its implementation. However, the research that explicitly explores the strategies implemented by teachers to overcome the challenges is rare, especially in the context of Senior High School. To fill the gap, this study aims to explore teachers' perception on the challenges faced in PjBL implementation and the strategies employed to overcome the challenges. This study was conducted in a descriptive qualitative design and collected the data through interviews with eight English teachers who have experience in implementing PjBL, classroom observation, and document analysis. The data were analyzed by using thematic analysis to identify the main themes appears from teachers' practice and experience. The study identified four challenges in its implementation, including (1) time constraints and curriculum demand, (2) variety of students' readiness and ability, (3) teachers' workload and project planning, and (4) assessment difficulties. In addition, the teachers employed four adaptive strategies to overcome the challenges: (1) time management strategies and project simplification, (2) scaffolding and differentiated learning, (3) collaboration with fellow teachers, and (4) assessment and rubric adaptation. By highlighting teachers' strategy explicitly, this study gives contribution to PjBL literature by providing practical insights into a more sustainable implementation of PjBL in the EFL context.

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I. INTRODUCTION

Project-based learning has long been acknowledged as one of the effective, creative, and innovative teaching methods in language teaching, especially in the context of English as a foreign language (EFL), at various educational levels (Aldobekhi & Abahussain, 2024; Asfihana et al., 2022; Hamidah et al., 2020; Maulina, 2024; I. N. S. Paragae, 2023). This teaching method emphasizes experience-based learning through students' active participation in a meaningful project, which requires the use of authentic language (Chi, 2023). PjBL gives a space for the development and integration of listening, speaking,

reading, and writing in a series of contextual activities. Thus, the learning is not only focused on the language structure, but also on the real communication competence in the authentic language use (Aldobekhi & Abahussain, 2024; Bytyqi, 2021; Ghosheh Wahbeh et al., 2021; Laur, 2013; I. Paragae, 2022).

In addition to its contribution to language skills, PjBL has also been known to be able to facilitate the development of soft skills needed, such as 21st century skills (Astaifi, 2024; Gabuardi, 2021; Hao et al., 2024; Padmadewi; et al., 2023; Rahardi et al., 2023; Ratminingsih et al., 2021; Song et al., 2024; Yong & Saad, 2023). Through completion of projects, the students are encouraged to develop their critical thinking, creativity, collaboration, and communication, which become essential competencies in their academic and professional success in the future. The process of planning, project making, and presentation in PjBL enables the students to express their ideas effectively in English as a foreign language.

However, apart from the advantages of PjBL, its implementation in English class has also reported to have some challenges (Nhung & Tuyen, 2024; Rees Lewis et al., 2019; Sagita et al., 2023; Warman et al., 2024). Some research has found that teachers often face challenges in the implementation of PjBL. These challenges often cause teachers to prefer other teaching methods that are simpler and more practical, even though the methods give less authentic and meaningful experiences for the students.

Even though much research about PjBL has been conducted, there are still research gaps that need further attention. First, most of the previous research tends to explore the effectiveness of PjBL, which focuses on one specific language skill or on the quantitative learning outcome (Arochman et al., 2024; Astaifi, 2024; Hao et al., 2024; Yaprak, 2022). Therefore, they could not give enough description on how PjBL is implemented to teach four language skills in an integrative way in the context of EFL. Second, the research which explore the teachers' perspectives and practices in the PjBL implementation is still limited. Yet, teachers are the main actors who determine how PjBL is designed, adopted, and implemented in the classroom reality, which has its own limitations. The lack of research focusing on teachers' experience causes the understanding of challenges and pedagogical strategies in their implementation. Third, the study, which simultaneously investigates the challenges and teachers' strategies in one comprehensive study, is rarely found, especially in the context of EFL in Indonesia. Some researchers only highlight the benefits or challenges in implementing PjBL (Chi, 2023; Mohamed, 2023; Nhung & Tuyen, 2024), without linking it to the concrete strategies implemented by the teachers to overcome those challenges.

Based on the gap, this study aims at giving in depth exploration of the teachers' perception of the challenges faced by the teachers in PjBL implementation and the strategies implemented by teachers to overcome the challenges. By examining these three aspects in an integrated manner, this study is expected to be able to give theoretical and practical contribution toward the development of English instruction using PjBL, especially in Senior High School. For the theoretical contribution, this research extends the existing literature on PjBL by moving beyond the studies that are oriented on PjBL effectiveness toward the perspective of integrated implementation. This research shows the challenges faced by EFL teachers in Senior High Schools in Indonesia and how they adaptively implemented strategies to overcome the challenges. For the practical contribution, this research provides

contextually relevant guidance for teachers, school leaders, and curriculum developers to address the challenges in the PjBL implementation to conduct effective instruction.

II. METHODS

This study used qualitative descriptive methods to explore deeply the English teachers' perception about the benefits of PjBL, the challenges in its implementation, and the strategies used by the teachers to overcome the challenges in the context of EFL in Senior High Schools. A qualitative approach was chosen to enable the researcher to gain comprehensive experience, point of view, and teachers' practices in the instruction (Creswell, 2015). This approach is considered suitable to investigate the teachers' perception and practice, which is contextual and complex.

This study was conducted in several senior high schools in Bali, Indonesia. Those schools used the national curriculum and have English as a foreign language, and have experience in implementing PjBL in their instructions. This context was chosen based on the characteristics of Indonesian EFL in Senior High Schools, which demand the development of students' language skills and 21st century skills, so it is suitable for PjBL in real practice.

The participants of the study were eight English teachers who had varying teaching experiences ranging from 5 to 15 years of teaching, which was chosen by using purposive sampling. This technique was used to get the participants who have relevant experience and knowledge, so rich and meaningful data can be gained (Patton, 2015). The criteria cover: (1) the teachers who were active in teaching in Senior High School, (2) have experience in implementing PjBL in English instruction, and (3) are willing to participate in the interview and observation in the classroom. The variety of teachers' backgrounds and teaching experience was expected to be able to enrich the perspectives related to PjBL implementation in EFL classes.

The research data were collected through semi-structured interviews, classroom observations, and document analysis, to enable data triangulation and increase data validity (Denzin, 2012). The interview was used as the main technique of data collection to gain data about teachers' perceptions of the challenges and teachers' strategies to overcome the challenges in PjBL implementation. The interviews were conducted twice. The first interview was to collect data about the challenges and experiences faced by the teachers by using six open-ended questions. Sample questions included: "*Can you describe your experience in teaching with PjBL?*", "*What challenges did you face in PjBL implementation?*", and "*How do your students respond to instruction with PjBL?*". After the data about the challenges were analyzed, the second interview was conducted to gather data about teachers' strategies to overcome the challenges being identified by using seven open-ended questions. The sample questions included: "*What strategies do you use to overcome the challenges identified in previous interview?*", "*How do you adapt the instruction when students face difficulties in instruction with PjBL?*", and "*What strategies do you use to manage your time in PjBL instruction?*".

This sequential interview enabled the researcher to link the challenges and the teachers' adaptive strategies. Each interview lasted approximately 45-60 minutes.

The observations were carried out to get a picture of the practice of PjBL implementation in the classroom. The observations were focused on the learning activities, students and teachers' roles, integration of language skills, and teachers' strategies in managing the instruction. Document analysis was carried out on the relevant documents, such as lesson plans, project guidance, and assessment rubrics, to verify the data gained from interviews and observations.

The collected data were analyzed by using thematic analysis to enable the researcher to identify, analyze, and report the emerging patterns or themes from the qualitative data systematically (Braun & Clarke, 2006). It was started by transcribing the interview data and recording the result of the observations, followed by initial coding to identify the relevant units of meaning. The codes were then grouped into broader categories based on the themes

of challenges faced by teachers and teachers' strategies in overcoming the challenges. The themes were analyzed interpretatively and linked to the research questions of the study.

III. RESULT AND DISCUSSION

Based on the thematic analysis of the results of interviews, classroom observation, and document analysis, two main themes that directly answer the research questions of the study were identified: (1) challenges faced by teachers in implementing PjBL, and (2) teachers' strategies in overcoming the challenges. These findings show the strong relationships between the benefits, challenges, and the teachers' strategies, as well as emphasize that the success of PjBL implementation is based on the instructional context and teachers' role as a pedagogical decision maker.

Challenges in PjBL Implementation

Based on data analysis, there were four main challenges faced by teachers in implementing PjBL in Senior High Schools: (1) time constraints and curriculum demand, (2) a variety of students' readiness and ability, (3) teachers' workload and project planning, and (4) assessment difficulties.

Time Constraints and Curriculum Demand

One of the challenges that appears the most consistently from the interview and observation data is the limitation of time allotment of English instruction in the classroom and the structure of the curriculum. The teachers stated that PjBL needed a longer time to be conducted compared with conventional teaching methods. One teacher stated, *"Based on the concept, I think PjBL is great, but in its implementation, it is a little bit hard because we have limited time. In one semester, there are many materials that need to be completed, while the project cannot be done in a rush"* (Teacher 2). This finding shows a mismatch between the ideal condition of PjBL and the time available in its practice.

In addition to the limitation of time allotment in the classroom, the demand for the curriculum also become the burden for the teachers in implementing PjBL in their instruction optimally. The teachers felt that they were tied to the target material, which needed to be completed based on the academic calendar, so the project needed to be simplified or shortened. One participant explained, *"I actually want the project to be more in-depth, but since I need to catch up with the other materials, I make the project simpler, even just one or two meetings"* (Teacher 6). This shows that the implementation of it is often compromised, adjusted to the curriculum and administration.

This finding is in line with the result of classroom observation, which shows that some projects are conducted in a limited manner, focusing on the final project without in-depth exploration. This condition supports the statement that the demand of the curriculum pushes them to adapt the design of the PjBL to meet the demand of the time allotment. One teacher stated, *"If it is not adapted, the project can spend too much time, and it is risky to make the other materials cannot be delivered"* (Teacher 7). Therefore, the limitation of time and the demand for the curriculum not only influence the frequency of PjBL implementation, but also the quality and the depth of learning experience for the students.

Conceptually, this finding is aligned with previous research that the limitation of time and curriculum burden becomes the main challenge of PjBL implementation in EFL context (Rees Lewis et al., 2019; Rohmah et al., 2024; Siminto et al., 2024; Warman et al., 2024; Yong & Saad, 2023). However, the findings in this research expand on this understanding by showing how the teachers actively negotiate the demand of the curriculum and the principles of PjBL through the

simplification of the project and the adjustment of time. It confirms that time constraints are not only a technical constraint, but a structural factor that shapes pedagogical practice implemented by the teachers in the project-based instruction.

Variety of Students' Readiness and Ability

In addition to time limitation and curriculum demand, the students' readiness and ability emerge as challenges in the implementation of PjBL in the EFL context in Senior High Schools. The teachers stated that not all students have the academic readiness, learning independence, and language ability to actively participate in PjBL instruction. One teacher stated, *"PjBL requires the students to be active and independent, but in reality, some of the teachers still need detailed instruction from the teacher"* (Teacher 4). This finding shows that the characteristic of EFL instruction in Senior High school, which is accustomed to teacher-centered learning, affects the effectiveness of PjBL implementation.

The challenge of students' readiness is strongly linked to the variation of students' English ability in one class. The teachers reported that the difference in students' ability, especially in the skills of speaking and writing, often hinders group work and achievement of project goals. One participant stated, *"In one group, usually there is only one or two students who are really active due to their better English ability. The other students tend to be more passive and become the followers"* (Teacher 8). This finding is supported by the result of classroom observation, which shows a gap in student participation during the process of discussion and project presentation. This condition challenges the collaboration principle, which becomes the main point of PjBL.

In addition to English ability, the teachers also highlight the limitations of 21st century learning, such as critical thinking, problem-solving, and teamwork. Some students faced difficulties in project planning, task distribution, and resolving conflicts within groups. One teacher stated, *"Some students often get confused about where to start to complete their project. They are not accustomed to analyzing problems and designing their solution"* (Teacher 1). This finding indicates that the success of PjBL does not only rely on the learning design, but also on the readiness of the students' abilities.

Conceptually, this finding is in line with previous research findings that the readiness of the students determines the success of PjBL in the EFL context (Rachmawati et al., 2024; Sutrisna et al., 2026; Warman et al., 2024). However, the result of this research added that the limitation of students' readiness is not only related to students' language ability, but also to the students' learning habits and self regulations skill, which have not optimally developed. Therefore, the challenge related to the readiness of the students needs to be understood as a pedagogical issue that requires special intervention and strategies from the teachers in implementing PjBL.

Teachers' Workload and Project Planning

The next challenge in implementing PjBL is the teachers' workload. The teachers stated that the PjBL planning and implementation need more time, energy, and planning compared to the conventional teaching method. One teacher stated, *"Planning the project does not only involve making a lesson plan, but also thinking about the project flow, the task for every meeting, and its assessment. It needs a lot of time outside the teaching hours"* (Teacher 2). This statement reflects the complexity of teachers' roles in PjBL, since they not only deliver the material, but also design the learning experience.

The workload is getting bigger since the teachers need to adjust the project to various levels of students' competence and limitation of learning hours in the classroom. The teachers reported that they need to do modification toward the project design to make it realistic and suitable for the classroom conditions. One teacher put forward, *"The project needs to be revised midway because the class condition is not always suitable with the planning at the beginning"*

(Teacher 6). This finding shows that the implementation of PjBL is dynamic and requires high flexibility, which adds to the cognitive and administrative burden of the teachers.

In addition to the planning process, the teachers also highlight their burden during the project making, especially in monitoring the group progress, giving feedback, and managing the classroom dynamics. Classroom observation shows that the teachers need to be actively moving from one group to the other to ensure the students' involvement and the project's progress. One teacher explains, *"While the project is being made by the students, I need to monitor them, to make sure that the groups work maximally"* (Teacher 7). This condition shows that PjBL requires the intensive involvement of the teachers during the process, not only on the planning stage.

Theoretically, this finding is in line with the previous research, which stated that the high workload and planning complexity become one factor that hinders the sustainable adoption of PjBL by the teachers (Sudarso et al., 2024; Warman et al., 2024). However, this research gives an additional contribution by showing that teachers' workload is not a technical thing, but also related to the demand of pedagogical adaptation which needs to be continuously carried out. It emphasizes that the success of PjBL implementation is greatly influenced by systemic support and recognition of teachers' professional burden in planning and managing instruction with PjBL.

Assessment Difficulties

The study found that assessment is one of the most complex challenges in PjBL implementation. The teachers highlighted that difficulties in assessing the process and product, especially when the project was completed in groups. One teacher stated, *"It is difficult to assess the contribution of each student. Sometimes, the product is great, but not all students gave an equal contribution"* (Teacher 3). This finding indicated that the PjBL assessment requires a more complex approach compared to traditional test-based assessment.

The assessment difficulties were also related to the teachers' limitations in understanding instruments and assessment criteria that are suitable for PjBL. Some teachers admitted that they were not confident in designing an assessment rubric that can accommodate the aspects of process, collaboration, and simultaneous language skills. One teacher explains, *"Making the PjBL rubric was not easy because we have to assess several aspects at once, not only the final product"* (Teacher 2). This shows that the PjBL assessment requires the teachers to be competent in doing authentic assessment, which has not been mastered by all teachers.

The result of the observation also shows that formative assessment during the project making is often conducted in a limited manner due to the limitation of time and the teachers' workload. The teachers tend to focus on the assessment of the final product rather than on monitoring the learning development of the students continuously. One teacher put forward, *"Ideally, each step of the project is assessed, but with the number of students and the limitation of time, I personally focus on the final result"* (Teacher 5). This finding shows that a practical compromise was carried out by the teacher in the PjBL assessment.

Theoretically, this finding is aligned with the previous research, revealing that assessment is one of the most challenging aspects in project-based instruction, especially in the EFL context (Rohmah et al., 2024; Warman et al., 2024). However, this research gives an additional contribution by showing that assessment difficulties are not only caused by the PjBL complexity, but also by the limited authentic assessment competence owned by the teachers. Therefore, the challenge in PjBL assessment needs to be understood as a pedagogical and professional issue that requires the development of teachers' capacity and a more flexible and contextual policy related to assessment.

Teachers' Strategies to Overcome the Challenges

Based on the findings about the challenges faced by teachers, there were four strategies employed by teachers, presented in Table 1.

Table 1. Teachers' Strategies in Overcoming Each Challenge in PjBL Implementation

NO	CHALLENGES	TEACHERS' STRATEGIES
1	Time constraints and curriculum demand	Time management strategies and project simplification
2	Variety of students' readiness and ability	Scaffolding and differentiated learning
3	Teachers' workload and project planning	Collaboration with fellow teachers
4	Assessment difficulties	Assessment and rubric adaptation

Each strategy is the adaptive action taken by the teachers as the response toward the challenges in PjBL implementation in Senior High Schools.

Time Management Strategies and Project Simplification

The study found that to overcome the time limitation and curriculum demand, the teachers implemented some time management strategies and project simplification in PjBL implementation. The teachers realized that the implementation of an ideal PjBL is often hard to carry out in the context of formal instruction, which has time limitations. Thus, adaptations are crucial to make the project realistic and sustainable. One teacher explained, *"I usually divide the projects into some steps and adjust them to the time available, to make the project run well without disturbing the time allotment for other materials"* (Teacher 1). This strategy shows teachers' efforts to maintain the essence of PjBL while maintaining the condition of the instruction.

The project simplification is also carried out by narrowing the topic coverage and decreasing the complexity of the final product without losing the main learning purposes. Some teachers chose projects that are directly integrated with the main competence demanded by the curriculum to make the time efficient. One teacher explains, *"I make the project simple, but still relevant to the material. The most important thing is to make the students use English in a real context"* (Teacher 7). This finding indicates that the teachers make the achievement of linguistic and pedagogical learning goals the priority, not only the complexity of the project.

The result of classroom observation also revealed that the teachers allotted the time by giving a clear deadline for each step of the project completion and monitoring the progress of the project periodically. This strategy helped the teachers to ensure the project was conducted on time. One teacher stated, *"If there is no clear deadline for each step, the project completion can be delayed or not finished"* (Teacher 2). This strategy reflects the role of the teachers as active managers of the instruction.

Theoretically, this finding supports previous studies emphasizing the importance of time planning and flexibility of project design to make the PjBL instruction effective (Sudarso et al., 2024). However, this research gives a new contribution by showing that the simplification of projects does not reduce the quality of the instruction but is an adaptive strategy that enables PjBL to be implemented meaningfully within the constraints of the EFL context in Senior High Schools. Therefore, the strategies of time management and project simplification can be understood as pedagogical agency in navigating the challenge of instruction.

Scaffolding and Differentiated Learning

This study found that the teachers implemented various scaffolding and differentiated learning to overcome the students' readiness and variety of abilities in PjBL. The teachers realized that PjBL requires sufficient independence and language competence that is not always possessed by all students. Therefore, incremental support is a crucial strategy in ensuring the students' involvement. One teacher stated, *"If we directly let the students work fully independently, many of them get confused. So I usually give the model first, and the guidance step by step before they can do the project independently"* (Teacher 3). This strategy is the effort made by the teacher to bridge the gap between the demand of PjBL implementation and the readiness of the students.

The scaffolding methods conducted by the teachers involve giving texts as examples, a list of important vocabulary, an example of the final project, and guiding questions to help them understand the task and develop ideas. The classroom observation shows that the teachers actively gave support to the students at the beginning of the project completion and gradually reduced it as the students' understanding improved. One teacher also emphasized, *"At the early stage, I will help them a lot, but when they gradually understand what to do, I reduce my intervention, to make them more independent"* (Teacher 6). This finding shows that the implementation of scaffolding is dynamic and responsive toward students' development.

In addition to scaffolding, the teachers also implemented differentiated instruction to accommodate the differences in language competence and students' learning styles. It was carried out by different role distribution among group members, adjustment of task difficulties, and the flexibility of the final product. One teacher stated, *"I divided the role of the students in the group based on their capability. There are some who are good at writing, there are those who are good at presenting, so all can contribute"* (Teacher 1). This approach enables students with a variety of language competencies to actively participate in PjBL instruction.

Theoretically, this finding is in line with the principle of scaffolding in constructivism and language learning, which emphasizes the importance of incremental support to help students to achieve a higher competence (Brownfield, 2018; Kambe, 2016; Kim, 2022; Proctor, 2007; Ryshina-Pankova, 2016). Other previous researchers also suggested the provision of guidance scaffolding (Chi, 2023) and different roles for students (Imbaquingo & Cárdenas, 2023; Sagita et al., 2023; Wiramarta & Paragae, 2024) to ensure the equal participation among students (Rohmah et al., 2024). Furthermore, this study provides an additional contribution by showing how scaffolding and differentiated learning not only function as pedagogical strategies but also as an adaptive response of the teachers toward PjBL implementation. Therefore, scaffolding and differentiated learning can be understood as strategies to enable PjBL to be implemented inclusively and continuously.

Collaboration with Fellow Teachers

The result of the study found that collaboration with fellow teachers was used as a strategy to overcome the challenge in implementing PjBL. The teachers consider that collaboration is a means to share their workload, exchange ideas, and enhance the planning and implementation quality of PjBL instruction. One teacher mentioned, *"Planning a project-based instruction alone is hard to do. When I get a chance to discuss with other teachers, the ideas can be developed much better, and I feel that the burden is much lighter"* (Teacher 8). This finding shows that collaboration serves as professional support that helps the teachers to face the complexity of PjBL.

The collaboration conducted by the teachers involves planning a project together, developing materials, developing assessment rubrics, and reflecting on the PjBL implementation in the instruction. Some teachers reported that informal discussions with fellow teachers often

produce practical solutions to the problems faced in instruction. One participant explains, *"We often have a discussion after teaching, discussing what worked and what needs to be evaluated in the project-based instruction"* (Teacher 5). This practice shows that collaboration is not always conducted in a formal way. It can be carried out contextually and sustainably in the teacher community.

Theoretically, this finding is aligned with the literature about professional learning communities, which emphasizes the importance of teacher collaboration in enhancing pedagogical practice and instructional innovation (Nasir & Mydin, 2023; Qizi et al., n.d.; Singh et al., 2023). However, this research expands this understanding that collaboration among teachers in the PjBL context functions as an adaptive strategy to overcome challenges in EFL instruction. Thus, collaboration can serve as a collective agency that can support the sustainability of PjBL instruction in Senior High Schools.

Assessment and Rubric Adaptation

The study revealed that the English teachers did an adaptation of assessment practice and rubric development as one of the crucial strategies to overcome the complexity of assessment in PjBL. The teachers admitted that assessment in PjBL cannot rely on traditional tests since the project requires assessment of the process, collaboration, and final product simultaneously. One of the teachers stated, *"If it is only assessed based on the final product, the students' effort during the process cannot be seen. In fact, that is the most important thing in PjBL"* (Teacher 7). This statement reflects the teachers' awareness of the importance of formative and authentic assessment in project-based instruction.

Some teachers reported the use of simplified analytical rubrics to assess main aspects such as language use, project content, group work, and creativity. This adaptation is carried out to balance the demand of PjBL and the limitation of time, as well as the teachers' workload. One teacher explained, *"I made the rubric not very detailed, but focused on the main indicator, to make it objective and make the time efficient"* (Teacher 6). This finding is in line with the perception and rubric in PjBL need to be flexible and contextual, to make it practical and implementable without neglecting the assessment validity.

Self-assessment and peer-assessment are also implemented by some teachers as adaptive strategies. This practice is considered to be able to decrease teachers' burden in doing assessments while supporting students' reflection and responsibilities in learning. One teacher stated, *"I asked the students to assess the contribution of the other members of the groups, so I did not assess the students myself"* (Teacher 2). This approach shows a shift of the teachers' role, from being the only assessor to become facilitator of the evaluation process, which is in line with the constructivist learning in PjBL.

However, some teachers also expressed doubts about the reliability of the alternative assessment, especially about the objectivity of students' assessment of themselves and their peers. This shows that even though assessment and rubric adaptation can help to overcome the challenges of PjBL implementation, the teachers still need systematic guidance and professional training about authentic assessment design.

This finding emphasized that adaptation of assessment and rubric is a crucial strategy in bridging the ideal demand of PjBL and the reality of PjBL implementation. The adjustment of the simplified rubric, the use of formative assessment, and the integration of self and peer assessment show the teachers' effort in maintaining the principle of authentic assessment without adding significant workload. This practice is in line with the point of view that PjBL assessment should assess process and product holistically, not only the final product (Imbaquingo & Cárdenas, 2023; Oda et al., 2018; I. Paragae, 2025). In addition, the adaptation of the assessment is also suggested (Rohmah et al., 2024), such as through the use of formative assessment functions as a feedback strategy to support language learning progressively (Fernando, 2018; I. Paragae et al., 2013; Webb, 2018).

The teachers' doubts about the objectivity and reliability of alternative assessment indicate the gap between conceptual understanding and practical readiness in implementing assessment. This finding is supported by previous research, which shows that the teachers often face difficulties in designing a rubric that is clear and consistent to assess language competence and collaborative work at the same time (Arifin et al., 2025; Güneş, 2020; Ling, 2025). Therefore, this finding indicated that the success of PjBL does not only rely on the project design, but also on the teachers' ability to adapt assessment practices to make it fair, meaningful, and implementable in the EFL context.

IV. CONCLUSION AND SUGGESTION

This research aims at exploring teachers' perceptions toward the implementation of PjBL in the EFL context in Senior High School, with the focus on the challenges faced and the strategies employed by the teachers to overcome the challenges. The findings of the research reveal that even though PjBL was considered to be a potential teaching method in developing students' language competence and 21st century skills, its implementation also has pedagogical and structural challenges. The main challenges being identified covers (1) time constraints and curriculum demand, (2) the variety of students' readiness and ability, (3) teachers' workload in project planning, and (4) assessment difficulties.

Furthermore, the study also reveals that the teachers show an active action by using pedagogical strategies as an adaptive capacity to overcome the challenges, covering (1) time management strategies and project simplification, (2) scaffolding and differentiated learning, (3) collaboration and differentiated learning, and (4) assessment and rubric adaptation. First, the teachers implemented flexible time management by simplifying project design, breaking the projects into small steps that are more manageable, and adjusting the project coverage to the available time. Second, the teachers implemented scaffolding and differentiated learning to accommodate the variety of students' readiness and ability, so all students can give meaningful participation in PjBL instruction. Third, collaboration with fellow teachers also appears as an important strategy in project planning, sharing resources, and teaching practice reflection, which can decrease the individual workload and improve the quality of PjBL implementation. Fourth, the teachers also adapted the assessment and rubric by emphasizing the use of formative assessment, simplification of assessment criteria, as well as the assessment of process and product, to make the PjBL assessment more realistic, transparent, and suitable for the classroom condition.

The findings of this study reinforce the view that PjBL cannot be understood as a statistical teaching method, but also a pedagogical practice that is dynamic and contextual. Its success depends on the pedagogical decision made by the teachers in classroom level. In addition, this research makes a contribution to the literature about PjBL in EFL by highlighting the teacher's role as adaptive practitioners who actively negotiate the ideal condition of PjBL and the reality of PjBL implementation in the classroom. Therefore, this research also provides empirical perspectives that are more realistic about how PjBL is implemented in everyday practice in the EFL classroom.

Based on those findings, the policymakers in education need to give flexibility in curriculum implementation, especially related to the time allotment, so that the teachers can have sufficient time to implement project-based instruction. The school need also to conduct collaboration with other related institutions, such as by promoting collaborative lesson planning and reducing the administrative workload. In terms of pedagogy, professional development program need to emphasize the competencies required to implement PjBL, especially project planning,

differentiated instruction, language scaffolding, authentic assessment and development of a rubric. Moreover, future research needs to be conducted to examine the effectiveness of the adaptive strategies and their impact on students' learning.

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