Research Based Learning in Indonesia's Islamic Higher Education:
A Case Study in Pragmatics Course

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Abstract: *This case study aimed to know the implementation of Research-Based Learning (RBL) in Pragmatics class, its benefits, and barriers the students underwent in doing the research projects. The study took place in English Department, Univeristas Islam Negeri Syarif Hidayatullah Jakarta and Universitas Islam Sultan Maulana Hasanuddin Banten in March 2018 involving 115 students taking Pragmatics course, and two teachers handling the class as the participants. It used a questionnaire and an interview to get the students' and teachers' perception on the implementation of RBL in Pragmatics class; and research portfolios as primary data analyzed qualitatively using relevant concepts of RBL and autonomous learning. The study revealed that RBL encouraged the students to learn the pragmatic topics curiously exploiting their higher order thinking skills. Each student eagerly did the assignments and research project with their peers collaboratively. Therefore, the study concluded that RBL enabled the students to master content courses through learning and research activities exploiting the higher thinking skills. Moreover, they enjoyed learning because they were engaged cognitively and emotionally in doing the assignments and research projects.*

Keywords: *RBL; Pragmatics; Autonomous Learning; Linguistics; Semantics*

I. INTRODUCTION

In the beginning of 21st century, state Islamic universities organized by the Indonesian Ministry of Religious Affairs administered undergraduate programs in science, social science and humanities studies. Some universities opened English department to run English literature and education characterized by Islamic values. One of English courses the department offers is Pragmatics. Pragmatics is a branch of Linguistics which concerns more with how people use language in their communication. It is not about how a language works rather it is about how the users of a language use it in daily communication activities. How they use a language is the core concept of Pragmatics. Pragmatics differs from Semantics in terms of the context that underlies how it is used [1]. As pragmatics plays very important role in building students' communicative competence, the teaching of it should adopt appropriate strategies. One of them is a research-based learning (RBL) as an autonomous learning which emphasizes on generating their potentials to learn independently. RBL triggers the students to be more active and independent that they can gain more comprehensive information about the topics discussed [2].

RBL is a kind of teaching method that puts the students' independence as a paramount importance [3]. The students can maximize their potentials to learn by conducting a research on the chosen topics with a concise guidance. RBL does not only explores their potentials individually to learn, but it also encourages them to do the assignments cooperatively [4]. In addition, a well-designed RBL will enable them to reconstruct a new insight on Pragmatics. RBL combined with a serial classroom discussion on topics done prior to the main research assignment will be helpful for the students. How the students learn Pragmatics in RBL class is very interesting topic to discuss. It attracts the researchers to curiously know about its strengths and weaknesses in helping students explore their ability in a constructive learning. It is also a new phenomenon to apply RBL in Pragmatics course though it is well known in Sciences. The implementation of RBL in Pragmatics course has its own characteristics and distinction compared to its application in Sciences.

In the teaching and learning of foreign languages, a study has revealed that RBL was an effective method to help students learn concepts and theories of language learning and other

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linguistic materials [5]. The study also indicates that students were more curious and independent in doing assignments under their teacher's guidance. However, it did not explain the conventional method to compare with; and it did not either elaborate the linguistic background knowledge of the participants. It is possible that the increase of students' ability in doing the assignment was not the only impact of RBL. In addition, another research pointed out that the students believed in how RBL helped them explore their potentials in learning concepts and theories [6]. Similarly, a research done by Wenger shows that the students had very interesting learning experiences as they could maintain their motivation and competed with others fairly to finish their assignment [7]. They also felt happy to do the assignment cooperatively in a small group. However, the study still used a very simple assignment asking them to observe everyday communication practices using English. Therefore, it is still challenging to conduct a research with more complex skills, especially with content courses, like Pragmatics.

The current study aims to know the implementation of RBL in Pragmatics as a content course in two state Islamic universities in Indonesia. More specifically, issues arise to investigate were: a) how the students learned and conducted research projects on Pragmatics course in RBL class; b) what benefits the students got from the implementation of RBL in Pragmatics course; and c) what barriers the students underwent in learning and doing research projects on Pragmatics course in RBL class.

II. LITERATURE REVIEW

In an undergraduate language teaching, students learn language use and usages distributed into courses, one of which is Pragmatics. It covers topics that discuss how people use their language in real contexts, like reference, deixis, presupposition, implicature, conversational maxims and speech acts [8]. As a content course, Pragmatics can be delivered in an autonomous learning where teachers make use of strategies helping the students learn the knowledge or skills by themselves [9]. The students explore their potentials to learn learning materials through various interactive activities completed with research projects; while the teachers help them cope with problems that hinder them to reach the targeted learning outcomes. Such an autonomous learning is commonly known as a research-based learning (RBL).

RBL has some distinctive features that do not belong to other learning strategies, one of them is the integration of learning and research activities. In this learning model, the students discuss learning materials in the classroom independently with their peers; and conduct researches on interesting topics to enrich their knowledge and skills empirically. The integration of learning and research activities in RBL provides the students with challenging experiences how to reconstruct information to be meaningful knowledge.

RBL has been implemented in the teaching and learning of courses in many fields or disciplines but it is still rarely used in Linguistics or Pragmatics. Many studies were conducted to know how RBL was implemented in many courses offered by universities. A study done by Savery indicates that RBL enabled the students to learn knowledge and skills independently with the help of their teachers and peers [10]. The students played more roles than the teachers especially in reconstructing information through higher order thinking skills, such as analyzing, evaluating, or creating implemented in their research projects [11]. Armed with such skills, they became more independent assembling pieces of information to be meaningful knowledge. Another study intended to evaluate the implementation of RBL utilizing a questionnaire, focus group discussion and in-depth interview indicates that RBL

was able to increase all aspects of the qualification framework for higher education, especially higher order thinking skills and other relevant learning outcomes [12]. The study also highlighted the need for a research-based curriculum to improve the teaching-learning experience of undergraduate students through their engagement in researches.

Complementarily, many studies that focused not only on the advantages of RBL but also its weaknesses were done in colleges and universities. One of them has emphasized the importance of the students' engagement in RBL and research projects for developing their research capacity. However, the study also identified some methodological limitations to consider in further studies, such as collecting data in different moments and statistical analysis to evaluate changes in participants [13]. Similarly, beside pointing out the impact of RBL in developing the students' ability to evaluate knowledge sources, in her study Hughes (2019) has identified three issues that should get more attention to in the future studies, namely conceptualizing research skills; the effectiveness of research skill enrichment; and the support in the implementation of RBL in the classroom [14]. Another study has also pointed out that through RBL, students easily accomplished learning outcomes; though, as a relatively new mode of learning strategies RBL remained challenges with the four difficulties, namely teacher mindset, teaching methodology, curriculum design, and academic leadership [15]. The advantages and disadvantages of RBL implementation in courses in the field of Science should be considered if it is applied in different fields, like social science and humanities.

The previous studies that dealt with the implementation of RBL in the field of Science were too many, but only few studies concerned with its application in Linguistics discipline, including Pragmatics. Therefore, it is still necessary to conduct a study on the implementation of RBL in the Linguistics disciplines, especially the teaching of Pragmatics to the students of undergraduate programs. How the students do the assignments and research projects on Pragmatic topics, and cope with the barriers is another priority or focus to concern. Of course, previous studies' limitations also obtain serious attention to get more complementary information on the implementation RBL in Pragmatics course.

III. METHODOLOGY

The study aimed to know the implementation of RBL in Pragmatics course in Indonesia's Islamic universities. It applied a qualitative research as an approach to explore how students and teachers conducted teaching and learning of Pragmatics using RBL and dealt with any barriers in its implementation. The approach enabled the researchers to see how individuals interacted with others in their groups to cope with their problems from different perspectives [16]. As the study concerned with a more specific issue or event within its real-life context, that was the implementation of RBL in Pragmatics course in two state Islamic universities, it applied a case study as the method [17].

This case study took place in English Department at *Universitas Islam Negeri Syarif Hidyatullah* Jakarta and *Universitas Islam Negeri Sultan Maulana Hasanuddin* Banten in March 2018. The study depended on relevant information from credible source persons who experienced what was intended by the research questions. Therefore, it used a purposive or judgment sampling to decide the participants using certain criteria or considerations [18]. To be chosen as the research participants, the students had to have three years of learning experience and were taking Pragmatics course; and the teachers had at least five years of teaching experience and were handling Pragmatics course. The study, then, engaged 115 students and two teachers who met the criteria as the research participants providing relevant information.

To get the data comprising of information about the implementation of RBL in Pragmatics course, the research used a questionnaire supplemented with relevant documents

[19]. The questionnaire consisted of four domains: a) the learning process of RBL in Pragmatics course; b) the research process of RBL in Pragmatics course; c) the benefit of RBL implementation in Pragmatics course; and d) the barriers of RBL implementation in Pragmatics course. While, the relevant documents to include were the students' research project portfolios. The questionnaire was designed to contain 22 statements with dichotomous scale of responses that made the data collection as easily as possible to conduct [20]. The instrument was distributed manually to the whole participants in the end of the semester program in March 2018. All the answer sheets attached with the research project portfolios were gained from the students to be analyzed. In addition, to increase the data trustworthiness, the study applied a method-triangulation by conducting in depth interview with the teachers who were handling Pragmatics course [21]. The interview was focused on getting more detailed information that the questionnaire could not identified, and clarifying the information gained from the students' research portfolios. Using such method, the study ensured the findings were trustworthy and believable that reflected the participants' experiences with the phenomena [22], in this case, the students' and teachers' experiences with how RBL was implemented in Pragmatics course.

After the data collection had been completed, the data analysis was done by transforming raw data and extracting meanings from them [23]. More specifically, the data were analyzed using the concepts of RBL and other relevant autonomous learning strategies with concurrent flows of activity, namely data condensation, data display, and conclusion drawing [24]. Data condensation dealt with simplifying and transforming raw data to be meaningful information. Data display concerned with assembling the data into displays that permit conclusion drawing. Conclusion drawing was related to the efforts to decide patterns configurating how RBL was implemented in Pragmatics course; and to provide a future recommendation.

IV.   RESULT AND DISCUSSION
4.1   The implementation of RBL in Pragmatics Course

The analysis of the data obtained from the questionnaire led the study to find out the participants' opinions on the implementation of RBL in Pragmatics course covering two domains: the learning process of Pragmatics course using RBL and research projects. The data of the first domain, the learning process of Pragmatic course using RBL, consisting of the general description of the learning process of Pragmatic course using RBL, the teacher's roles, the student's roles, the cognitive development, and language skill development are available in Table 1.

Table 1. Students' Perception on Learning Process of Pragmatics Course Using RBL

No.	Statements	Frequency			
		D	%	A	%
1.	Learning process is interesting or attracting because there is a two-way communication between teachers and students.	19	17%	96	83%
2.	Students have experiences of connecting learning materials to current issues so that learning process becomes meaningful	19	17%	96	83%
3.	Teachers play a role as a facilitator helping students to learn by providing a guidance, worksheets, or other learning aids.	21	18%	94	82%
4.	Teachers apply various learning strategies to help students master knowledge or skills effectively.	27	23%	88	77%
5.	Students do not play as independent learners, like sharing ideas or opinions with their peers in a classroom seminar or discussion.	95	83%	20	17%
6.	Students do not work collaboratively with their peers to complete the assignments and other tasks.	94	82%	21	18%
7.	Students cannot develop high order thinking skills, like analyzing, creating, or evaluating the information.	97	84%	18	16%

8.	Students are accustomed to developing their scientific writing skill, like writing a paper, a research proposal and research report.	15	13%	100	87%

D: Disagree; A: Agree

RBL as one of the autonomous learning strategies originated from the failure of conventional learning that was boring and not interesting especially for content courses that the students had experienced. They failed to understand important information and knowledge; and even to reconstruct them into a new insight because they were accustomed to using lower order thinking skills. It is in line with a research revealing that there should be more ways or means to make lecture more interesting and successful [25]. They can integrate with other more interesting strategies that enable the students to explore their potentials effectively.

RBL is a unique learning strategy that stresses on the connection of learning to research individually or collaboratively. RBL has two main characteristics, interestingness and meaningfulness as measured by the first and second items of the questionnaire. The first item obtained 83% of the students' responses that agreed with the interestingness as one of RBL features. This response indicates that the students believed that RBL was interesting strategy in which they were able to communicate with their teachers and peers to discuss the information they did not understand well. Such a two-way communication makes information and knowledge share becomes more possible. It also helps the students express their opinions naturally and increase their confidence to communicate their opinions and ideas openly. That the learning activity happens through interactive communication refers to the interestingness of RBL. While, for the second item, 83% of the students agreed that they were able to connect the learning materials to existing issues that made it more meaningful for them. This evidences that the students underwent connecting the learned concepts or theories to contemporary issues. They were encouraged to think divergently seeking the relation among concepts and contemporary issues that created rich learning experiences. Therefore, it increases the meaningfulness of the learning materials that they do not get from conventional strategies [26]. What the study found is relevant to the finding of a previous study that stressed the interestingness and meaningfulness of RBL in maintaining the students' curiosity in learning new materials or skills [27].

Both features can create a more conducive learning if the teachers play their roles differently from other learning models. The teacher's role in RBL was identified by the third item whose 82% of the students' responses agreeing with the roles. In RBL class, the teachers do not play as a conductor that determines and manages everything for the students, but they play as a facilitator that provides the students with any helps and assistance the students need. Additionally, as a facilitator, the teacher can do many things to help the students learn, for example, giving open access to online or offline learning sources, using learning aids, providing learning guidance or worksheet, or allotting time for discussion and consultation. Such teacher's roles enable the students to explore their potentials to learn more independently. This finding is consistent with the research done by Tadesse et al. revealing contributing roles the teacher can apply in a modern learning [28]. As identified by the fourth item, 77% of the students agreed that the teacher's roles indeed worked functionally if they developed various strategies appropriately for learning materials. The strategies included designing learning activities, like preparing and presenting papers in a classroom seminar, textbooks reading, writing short essays, conducting a mini research, or reviewing journal articles. Those strategies worked properly because the teachers provided the students with a brief description of what the they did, and a rubric to evaluate their works. In addition, the teachers were more creative to design their strategies that attracted the students' curiosity to learn more independently. It can be understood that teacher's creativity and assistance were contributing factors for the students in doing their assignments and research. This result is in

line with a previous study pointing out that teacher's creativity and assistance were important factors of successful teaching and learning [29].

Likely, as indicated by the fifth and sixth items, the students also played many roles, like an independent learner, collaborator, or partners to study knowledge or sharpen skills. Most of the students (83%) agreed with the independence that RBL offered in learning and research activity. Being independent learners, they can explore all learning sources they access easily to get more information to share with their peers inside or outside the classroom. Of course, the independence they get in RBL opens their mind to see issues or problem from different perspective. What the study pointed out about learning independence does not contradict the finding highlighted by Noh and Yusuf's study [30]. Complementarily, the students also played as partners for their peers working collaboratively to fulfil the learning outcomes. Related to this role, the sixth item showed that 82% of the students acknowledged that being collaborator was also important role in RBL. Working in collaboration affects the students how to arrange jobs, to perceive differences, to cope with problems, and to prioritize teamwork rather than personal interest. More importantly, the students can enrich their insights, increase their skills, and support each other to do the assignments individually or collectively. This is what Le and Wubbels stressed in their study that working in collaboration encourages the students to learn knowledge and skills more enthusiastically [31].

In relation to working in collaboration, RBL enabled the students to improve their higher order thinking skills, like analyzing, evaluating, and creating as pointed out by the seventh item. It was about the cognitive development that RBL could for the students. The item obtained 84% of the responses claiming that RBL could increase the higher order thinking skills. However, the developing of cognitive skills can work well if the students are facilitated with good assignments. With well-designed assignments, RBL can drive them to process all information using their higher order thinking skills. For example, to get more detailed elements that construct a concept, they can overview it from many perspectives. They can produce a good essay on speech acts or conversation implicature by knitting all information to be integrated paragraphs using various syntactical constructions. Of course, they can develop such thinking ability because RBL has provided them with great opportunities to do so. Using the higher order thinking skills enables them to handle or solve problems appropriately with more alternatives. This finding shows that RBL contributes significantly how the students develop their higher order thinking skills and strengthens the previous study's finding [32]. Another important skill the students can develop through RBL was writing academic articles as measured by the eighth item. The item indicates that 87% of the students agreed with this language skill development. The skill relies on their thinking ability of assembling pieces of information and other discourse elements to be academic articles, though, other thinking abilities also contribute proportionally. Therefore, writing a research report as an academic article becomes less complicated because they were accustomed to using their higher order thinking skills in processing information to be more meaningful [33].

Complementarily to the learning process of Pragmatics course, the questionnaire also covered the second domain about how the students did the research projects measured with seven items. The students' responses to the items are available in Table 2.

Table 2. Students' Perception on Research Process in RBL

No.	Statements	Frequency			
		D	%	A	%
1.	Before carrying out the research, students discuss the problems to investigate and prepare the proposal with their peers.	27	23%	88	77%
2.	Literature review help students to identify their research novelty or difference compared to others and design the instruments.	23	20%	92	80%

3.	In collecting the data, students use research instruments, like questionnaire, interview, or observation guide validated by teachers.	21	18%	94	82%
4.	Teachers help students to cope with barriers and obstacles in doing the researches in the field involving participants.	19	17%	96	83%
5.	In analyzing the data, students make use of inductive and deductive process to answer the problems accurately.	16	14%	99	86%
6.	Having analyzed the data, students do not present the research findings in a seminar to get more inputs to complete their research.	93	81%	22	19%
7.	Students write the research reports covering introduction, methods, result, discussion, and conclusion using an available template.	25	22%	90	78%

D: Disagree; A: Agree

The information in Table 2 illustrates how the students conducted the research projects under the teachers' guidance. For item one, 77% of the students acknowledged that they discussed interesting issues to investigate with others. Initially, they studied the learned topics of Pragmatics and identified problems liable to investigate by considering data sources, instruments, and all expenses. They discussed some existing problems with their peers and decided to choose the ones that met all consideration. When the teachers validated the problems, they continued to prepare the research proposal focusing on the introduction, literature review, and methods. However, they usually got difficulties writing a good introduction so that they asked to expand the allotted times to finish [34]. As they were novice researchers, they needed a great help from the teachers to finish writing a good introduction. They did not explain why the chosen topic was important and its relation to other previous studies. This finding confirmed what Ritchie et al. stressed in their study that good introduction should explain the importance of topic supported with previous studies to know the current research standpoint [35].

Following up the introduction, the students had to write a literature review to ensure their research's position among others. About this issue, item two showed that 80% of the students agreed with this phase. Substantively, for literature review they at least analyzed two research articles for each variable by presenting their strength and weaknesses. In addition, they also had to find gaps or differences between previous researches and the current research so that it would have a distinction. They made some analyses to get new enlightens convincing them to conduct their researches. However, they failed to compare the previous studies' findings with existing issues to identify a novelty differentiating their research from others [36]. A novelty does not mean a new discovery from nothing, but it is rather a modification of available entity or even a single quality. Simply, novelty refers to differences among researches in terms of problems, concepts, method, instrument, point of view, findings, population, and sample, unit of analysis, or linguistic corpus. This finding is consistent with what Janssen et al. elaborated in their study that newness could be any differences that belonged to a study but did not to others [37].

Having completed the literature review, the students went on to construct research instruments, like a test, a questionnaire, or interview guide as pointed out by item three. It is known that 82% of the students admitted using the instruments have been validated by the teachers. In designing valid and reliable tests, the students followed some steps consisting of defining conceptual and operational definition, formulating indicators, constructing and calibrating items. For an observation and interview guidance, they prepared pointers focusing on exploring the information from the participants. To help the students design the tests and guidance, the teachers made a worksheet they had to follow. It was made so practical that they easily filled in with the concepts or ideas that were elaborated in the literature review section [34]. Therefore, they made the tests and guidance for the interview and observation effectively. The finding shows a consistency with a study done by Leung and Cheng who claimed that such a well-designed worksheet is very effective to help the students translate concepts or theories into more practical things in designing their instruments [38].

Equipped with the observation/interview guidance, documentation examination rubric, or other instruments validated by the teachers, the students collected data to deal with investigated problems. Although, they were busy with data collection, they still attended weekly session of RBL in the classroom and discussed some barriers they had to cope with. In general, they found it difficult to do with available documents as primary data sources in the library researches, or to build a rapport with key informants in the field researches [34]. However, as indicated by item four, 83% of the students agreed that the teacher was helpful with barriers they got. Some students were able to handle the documents as the primary data more efficiently; while, others became more confident to build a rapport with the informants in such a way a mutual trust arose between the two parties. As the rapport was built, the students got the intended information openly from the informants. This finding is consistent with a study highlighting the importance of rapport in the field researches [39].

Having collected the data, the students focused on the data analysis using deductive and inductive procedures as indicated by item five. Most of the students (86%) agreed with the statement that they made use of deductive and inductive procedures. Some students did the analysis using a deductive procedure where they enriched themselves with experts' thoughts supported with samples from available linguistic corpora. Other students applied an inductive procedure by analyzing or synthesizing evidences of linguistic corpora to reconstruct new concepts in Pragmatics [36]. The finding is in line with the current research result that shows then importance of deductive and inductive procedure in the data analysis [40]. In addition, the students also did the analysis with three concurrent steps: data reduction, data display, and drawing conclusion. In data reduction, they sorted the relevant from the irrelevant data, and classified the data in accordance with the proposed research questions. While, in the data display, the sorted data, then, were examined to identify a connection among them to produce more comprehensive insight. They used the concepts and theories of Pragmatics to strengthen a connection among information so that it would be easy to reconstruct the findings [41]. The next job that the students had done was drawing conclusion consistent with the research problems. Substantively, it includes restating the research purpose, explaining how the research had already filled the gap, contribution the research could offer; and opportunity for future research. Structurally, conclusion uses effective sentences constructed in one or two paragraphs. From the research portfolios, it was known that their conclusion fulfilled the essential points to include. They were good at restating using the effective sentences the research objective, brief findings, contribution, and the possibility for the future studies. This result seems to strengthen the previous study that shows how to write a good conclusion [42].

Although it is not compulsory, disseminating the research findings in a seminar or other forums becomes important for the students as novice researchers not only to get more inputs, but also for the knowledge development. Item six pointed out that 81% of the students agreed with the statement. Having written their research reports, the students enthusiastically conducted a seminar to share the findings with other students and teachers from different departments. In this forum, they got valuable inputs that enriched their discussion from various perspectives, either monodisciplinary or multidisciplinary [34]. This finding confirms the previous research that pointed out that the disseminating of findings and innovation through spoken or written communication media was necessary [43].

The last item about writing the research report indicated that 78% of the students agreed with the statement. The students only needed to write a research article consisting of an abstract, introduction, methods, findings, discussion, conclusion, and references. They wrote their research article referring to the university article writing guidance and the teacher's assistance. The teachers reviewed a submitted article draft and wrote comments on the text that the students had to take into consideration in finishing process. Such process ran until the

teacher validated the final draft that at least met a minimum criterion [36]. Based on an article evaluation rubric, their research articles meet the essential parts, namely an introduction, methods, result, discussion, conclusion, and references which are commonly known IMRAD. This finding is consistent with a discussion that elaborates how a research article fulfils the criteria of IMRAD [44].

4.2   The Benefits the Students Get from RBL

In revealing the benefits, the students get from the implementation of RBL in Pragmatics course; however, the study only focuses on the most important things, namely learning agent, motivation and curiosity, communication skill and transferability, and team workability. It utilized a questionnaire consisting of four items representing the measured domains. Completely, the distribution of the students' responses to those items is available in Table 3.

Table 3. Students' Perception on Benefits of RBL Implementation in Pragmatics Course

No.	Statements	Frequency			
		D	%	A	%
1	In RBL, students are active learning agents seeking and reconstructing information to be meaningful knowledge.	21	18%	94	82%
2	RBL with good assignments help students to increase their learning motivation and curiosity.	19	17%	96	83%
3	RBL increases communication skills (speaking and writing) that strengthen their transferable skills.	23	20%	92	80%
4	RBL strengthens the students' team workability in doing the assignments and research projects.	26	23%	89	77%

D: Disagree; A: Agree

As a learning strategy that engages the students with more roles in exploring their potentials to acquire knowledge and skills, RBL puts them as the main agents of learning. The item identifying the existence of the students as learning agents shows that 82% of them were aware with this role. Provided with the syllabus, they choose the topics, decided the goal of their projects, and worked collaboratively using all learning sources. This students' role in Pragmatics course confirmed what Brew highlighted that undergraduate students should be learning agent compared to other roles [45]. In the case of Pragmatics course, the students got themselves immersed with tasks or assignments individually or in groups. They did the research projects on the chosen topics after they had already presented Pragmatics topics in a classroom seminar. When they got barriers in doing their jobs, they tried to handle them by asking their peers or teacher' help. They did activities creatively to reconstruct information to be meaningful knowledge and to reach the targeted learning outcomes. They became creative in processing information with the support of open accessed sources and other learning aids. This result is consistent with a study done by Marín that highlights the students' existence as learning agents in knowledge and skill mastery [45].

Being learning agents, the students get more freedom to do activities rather than they get from conventional strategies. Such freedom makes them curious and motivated to keep doing efforts to achieve the target. The increase of curiosity and motivation was denoted by the second item. The item got 83% of the students' response that claimed they were curious and motivated in RBL class. They struggled to understand learning materials and kept trying to do their best though they got barriers and difficulties. When they were motivated to learn materials curiously, they applied the higher order thinking skills to reach the target well. It can

be said that RBL is one of external factors generating the motivation and curiosity in an autonomous learning. What this research exposed convinces the previous study that RBL enables the students to increase their motivation and curiosity [45].

Another benefit the students got was developing their communication skill as the third item found out. The item showed that 80% of the students found their oral communication skill increased in Pragmatics course using RBL. The students seemed very enthusiastic in sharing their ideas and opinion using their own languages communicatively. If they found it difficult to explain something they did not know, their peers helped them by giving clues to remember what they had to say. They also made some progress in their written communication, though it was not so great as their spoken communication [34]. What the students experienced in RBL class enhances their communication skills. Since they do not feel hesitated to speak before the audience, they become effective communicators. This result does not confront what a previous research pointed out that RBL improved the communication skills [48]. In addition, as they were able to communicate effectively, they could share ideas or opinions to others. This sharing activity indicates the improvement of a transferable skill has occurred. The skill enables them to exchange information and to find more appropriate alternatives for the problems they must cope with. What this study points out conforms to the previous one that highlights the role of transferable skill in a knowledge development [49].

In connection with the communication skills, resembled another benefit they got from RBL, that was a team workability as the fourth item identified. About 77% of the students claimed that they were able to work in a team. They learned more a team workability from the assignment and research projects. Initially, they had to prepare the paper discussing about pragmatic topics collaboratively in a small group and presented in a classroom seminar to get more inputs before determining the topic as the research project [36]. The assignment and research project triggered them to do in collaboration with others. Each member did his job, for example, looking for references or preparing the papers. Through assignments and research projects, RBL teaches the students a team workability where they share their ideas or opinion with their peers, like presenting or defending their own ideas. This finding assures a study revealing that RBL enhances a team workability among the students. [50].

4.3   Barriers in Pragmatics Class Using RBL

RBL in Pragmatic class engaged the students in learning and research activities that challenged them to explore their potentials to reach the learning outcomes. However, they underwent some barriers they must cope with in the future. Therefore, a questionnaire with three items was constructed to identify barriers of RBL in Pragmatics course. The students' responses to the items are available in Table 4.

Table 4. Students' Perception on Barriers of RBL Implementation in Pragmatics Course

No.	Statements	Frequency			
		D	%	A	%
1	Students need to improve their information literacy to obtain accurate information to do the assignments or research.	20	17%	95	83%
2	Students find it hard to get more update references or sources to support their research effectively.	28	24%	87	76%
3	In RBL, time allotted and time management to complete all assignments and research are still problematic for the students.	25	22%	90	78%

D: Disagree; A: Agree

One of the barriers the students found was the lack of information literacy defined as the ability to seek, process, and evaluate information from any sources. The first item shows that

83% of the students thought they lacked information literacy. They used to go the university's library to read books and other printed sources. They were also familiar with digital technologies used in everyday lives, for example, writing email, online dictionaries, listening to music, or watching videos. However, they were not capable of seeking what they needed effectively when they were exposed in a huge information available in various online sites. They got difficulty identifying the relevant information to their research need because they were not accustomed to doing so. They often used a general google search feature, and seldom used a google scholar feature to search references and other sources. Such a lack of information literacy inhibited them from getting the important information. This finding conforms to what Ray and Mandal highlighted that becoming information literacy was necessary for the students to get information effectively. Therefore, the students need to improve their information literacy not only for their research projects, but also their knowledge development as well [51]. As they were not good information literate, they failed to get relevant information from up to date references to support their research projects. Based on their responses to the second item, it known that 76% of them failed to get the up to date sources. Indeed, the examination of their research portfolios indicates that they did not equip themselves with current issues. On average, they still used old references and sources available in the university library and other public universities. Similarly, a current study has also stressed the importance of information literacy in improving the quality of sources and references [52].

In addition, the ineffective way of searching information made the students spend more time sorting appropriate sources rather than analyzing the data. They indeed had to accomplish other Pragmatics assignments and other courses they attended in this semester. Therefore, they failed to finish their research projects on time and asked to extend the allotted time rescheduling their research activities. As denoted by the third item, 78% of them failed to manage their time effectively. Such failure shows that time management is still problematic in finishing the research projects and other assignments. They need to learn how to manage their time effectively to deal with all learning and research activities and reach the learning outcomes as well. This finding is consistent with a study conducted by Ruiz-Gallardo et al. pointing out that time management in this learning model becomes one of the factors influencing the quality of teaching and learning [53].

V. CONCLUSION

The implementation of RBL in Pragmatics course brings about a new learning experience that is different from the conventional one. It is a student-cantered learning model, but it is more challenging as it demands the students to be more active doing their works. In RBL, the students paly as learning agents who learn higher order thinking skills, such as analyzing, evaluating, synthesizing, or creating that are necessary to reconstruct information to be new insights. Such cognitive skills are one of contributing factors that the students need in processing all information to be meaningful insights. RBL in Pragmatics course engages the students in an initial research experience where they learn knowledge through research activities guided by their teachers. The students explore learning sources and do their research projects individually. They undergo how to conduct a research under the teachers' supervision and guidance which enhance their research ability, such as collecting data using participatory observation or in-depth interview and analyzing the data. Such experiential learning is accessible in RBL class that other leaning strategies cannot accommodate. In addition, the students also learn transferable skills that enable them to cope with any obstacles and problems in their lives. They learn, for example, problem-solving, communication, and teamwork skill. However, there are still weaknesses in implementing RBL in Pragmatics

course, especially the students' lack of information literacy. They are familiar with the digital technology but are not able to utilize it optimally to search relevant sources, which in turn affects their time management and the limitedness of up to date references. Therefore, the study recommends that anyone who is interested in implementing RBL in content courses should consider the students' information literacy and time management. Both abilities contribute significantly to the success or failure of their research ability development.

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