THE IMPLEMENTATION OF PROJECT-BASED LEARNING ON TEACHING ENGLISH WRITING IN MERDEKA CURRICULUM OF SEVENTH STUDENTS AT SMP ISLAM AL-AZHAR KEDUNG

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Abstract

Students find writing to be a most difficult talent to master because it takes longer to develop and often causes issues for them. Project-based learning is provided to address current writing issues. Certain experts contend that project-based learning (PBL) possesses the capacity to inspire students to learn new things through their assignments. This study of project-based learning is being utilized to teach writing. The research goal does not equate to utilizing Project-Based Learning (PBL) in the Merdeka Curriculum to teach English writing. This study's research design combines classroom action research with qualitative research methodologies. Researchers employ interviews, field notes, and observation as tools. 28 students from Al-Azhar Islamic Middle School in Kedung's class VII A participated in this study. According to research data, students' writing skills scored an average of 66 out of 75 in cycle 1, with the highest possible score of 75. In the second cycle, students' writing ability increased to an average of 75, with a maximum score of 74. Consequently, it was discovered that a project-based learning approach to teaching writing is being implemented. This is evident from the students' replies when this strategy was applied; they actively participated in the learning process and had good comments about the method. Project-based learning (PBL) has been demonstrated to improve students' writing. In addition, students work on real-world problems and provide solutions as part of the assignments. Put differently, this project possesses the capacity to foster students' critical thinking skills and provide them with a sense of purpose.
Keywords: project-based learning, english writing, merdeka curriculum

INTRODUCTION

Merdeka Curriculum contains ancient educational concepts that are still considered relevant today. (Irfan et al., 2023) states that the Merdeka Curriculum carries the concept of independent learning which aims to create a generation of lifelong learners who have the personality of Pancasila Students. Based on this explanation, it can be described how the Merdeka Curriculum prioritizes students' personalities so that they become someone with good personality and quality as stated in the Profile of Pancasila Student concept. According to (Zakso, 2023) the Profile of Pancasila Student directs students to create meaningful projects, which aim to explore students' talents and interests. Al-Azhar Islamic Middle School has implemented an independent curriculum only for class VII A. The Merdeka Curriculum in schools itself is still relatively new to being implemented so teachers and students still have quite a hard time understanding the Merdeka Curriculum.

According to (Satria, 2022) applying the Project-Based Learning (PBL) model, which involves all students in bringing out the learning process and gives them more time to solve a problem both individually and in groups based on the concepts, theories, and information they have learned, is one proactive step that can be taken to encourage students' creative thinking abilities. During project-based learning, students are given tasks or challenges that are associated with the material they have studied (D. Kartika, 2020). Asking them to create a project or activity to address the issue is the next step. In addition, students must learn, research, and find their knowledge by coming up with original ideas or by using preexisting theories, concepts, and information to create something new for other people (Ngadiso et al., 2021).

Of the various existing models, the author chose Project-based Learning because learning is innovative, has many advantages, and can increase students' learning motivation, improve students' skills, and provide opportunities for students to correct projects. According to (Alotaibi, 2020). It is hoped that pupils will be able to put what they have learned into practice and comprehend the subject matter more thoroughly. According to (Suradika et al., 2023) Project Based Learning (PBL) can be achieved by exposing students to the diversity of information and skills necessary to use technology before their ability to communicate and solve problems is enhanced. Students learn to deepen and internalize knowledge-related concepts and skills through Project-Based Learning, and they are more likely to retain and understand the material given to them due to the use of diverse teaching methods.

One of the skills in mastering English is writing. According to (Mustakim Sagita, and Jamaliah, 2018) writing is one of the important things in learning, writing plays an important role in language learning. Students can convey their thoughts and express their ideas through writing. Writing can also foster students' creativity and critical thinking, this is important for students because students can determine their success in learning English (Syarifah & Emiliasari, 2019). However, based on initial observations at AL-Azhar Islamic Middle School, among the four English language skills, writing is a challenging skill for students to master. Based on the findings of several student and English instructor interviews conducted there, it might be concluded that the elements causing students' challenges in writing English essays are a lack of understanding of the topic, the purpose of writing, and how to organize ideas into writing. This is caused by students' lack of interest in writing. This condition is influenced by students' laziness in carrying out language learning because for students language is difficult. The method applied by the teacher only presents the topic, presents the material, gives assignments, and ends the lesson.

The result of the study demonstrates a particular use of project-based learning (PBL) in writing training. According to (A. Kartika, 2020), the stages involved in project-based learning (PBL) that are distinct from earlier sessions are specially defined when implementing project-based learning (PBL) to instruct writing. Three stages of project-based learning (PBL) implementation are being used in language instruction: planning, carrying out, and reporting. However, by adding more thorough steps, this research supports project-based learning (PBL) implementation in writing instruction even more. The elements that set it apart from traditional language skill instruction are the phases of elaboration, preparation, review, and revision. In addition, studies show that the kinds of exercises in the project-based learning (PBL) Model, which was introduced by (Rambe & Suganda, 2023), may be modified to teach writing using project-based learning (PBL). In this instance, the project activities were modified to better fit the writing context.

Specifically, the writing process's steps are made more useful. The results demonstrate that project-based learning (PBL) represents a flexible methodology that can be tailored to match the unique requirements of various environments.

Because of the poor writing interest of students, efforts are undertaken to raise that interest using various writing instruction strategies. In this instance, a process approach seems acceptable. One of the tactics employed in the project-based learning (PBL) process is the method used. Project-based learning is a methodology that gives students the freedom to create, organize, and complete a task that can be displayed as a published work of art or accomplishment. This is consistent with project-based learning (PBL), which permits students the freedom to complete assignments however they see fit. Students may participate in this project depending on their ideas, plans, and inventiveness (Argawati & Suryani, 2020).

The problem is that students interact very little during the writing process. They are required to write independently, and the method or approach forces them to do so. So the lack of interaction during class activities is not always beneficial, so students who employ the project-based learning approach will gain direct experience in every activity they participate in, which can later develop creativity and improve student learning outcomes. Students can benefit by using Project-Based Learning (PBL) to learn new ideas and encounters and improve their academic performance and creativity in problem-solving and product creation. Project Learning (PBL) has a lot of potential to provide students with a more engaging and satisfying educational experience in a variety of ways, turning it into a learning model that supports the use of Project Learning (PBL) Self-Directed Curriculum (Kharimah et al., 2023).

This study addresses the issue of "How to Implement Project-Based Learning on Teaching English Writing in the Merdeka Curriculum of Seventh Students at Al-Azhar Kedung Islamic Middle School" as a reference for exploring information regarding the title that the researcher represents. Considering this issue formulation, this research hopes to explain further the function of the idea of the project-based learning (PBL) model and the nation of project-focused Merdeka Curriculum.

THEORETICAL BASIS

This notion serves as the foundation for the investigation. This subsection will cover the application of database concepts (project-based learning) and the diagrams that will serve as implementation guidelines.

According to (Anggerani et al., 2022) one type of project-based learning is called project-based learning. By involving all students in the learning process and giving them more time to solve issues alone and in groups utilizing the concepts, theories, and facts they have learned, this teaching technique can help students develop their creative thinking skills. During project-based learning, students are given tasks or challenges associated with the material they have studied. With its many benefits, project-based learning can help students become more motivated to study, develop their skills, and have the chance to make mistakes in projects. Students can use this approach to demonstrate their skills in a project (Anazifa & Djukri, 2017).

According to (Maya Sari et al., 2023) one of the most crucial aspects of learning is writing, which is also crucial to language acquisition. Writing is one of the abilities needed to master English students' can articulate their ideas and thoughts in written form. Students' critical thinking and creativity can also be developed through writing, which is beneficial for them because it allows them to assess how well they are learning English

(Sa'adah, 2020). Since writing allows students to express their ideas, it may be inferred that writing plays a significant part in the English language learning process.

According to (Cantika et al., 2022) the Merdeka Curriculum was developed as a more flexible educational base that emphasizes key subjects and helps students grow their talents. To assist, a self-paced curriculum was developed. Students regain their academic proficiency. The flexibility for instructors and pupils to learn is emphasized heavily in the Merdeka Curriculum. To produce a generation of lifelong learners with the mindset of Pancasila Students, the Merdeka Curriculum incorporates the concept of independent learning (Madhakomala et al., 2022). This explanation explains how the Pancasila Student Profile concept—which states that the Merdeka Curriculum focuses on students' personalities helps them develop into positive individuals with good qualities. In Indonesia, there are 10 changes and improvements to the curriculum that affect learning styles starting from the 1947 curriculum to the "free learning curriculum" that applies today. The independent curriculum began to be tested in 2020 and will begin to be implemented in 2022. According to (Zakiyah et al., 2019) The International Student Research Assessment Program (PISA) results from 2019 served as the impetus for Nadiem Makarim, the Minister of Culture and Education, to launch the Merdeka Curriculum for the first time in 2019. A new curriculum design was introduced in 2019 by the Minister of Culture and Education after research revealed that Indonesia only came in sixth place overall for student evaluation results (Nurmasyitah et al., 2023). Merdeka Curriculum was developed as a framework for a more flexible curriculum that emphasizes key subjects and helps students advance their skills. A self-directed program was developed to assist students in regaining their academic proficiency. The flexibility for instructors and students to learn is emphasized heavily in the Merdeka Curriculum. The Minister of Culture and Education is a mechanism that grants all educational institutions the freedom and authority to function without being restricted by laborious administrative procedures. The fundamental tenet of freedom of learning is that educators need to feel comfortable enough to impart knowledge without restraint (Inayah, 2019).

RESEARCH METHOD

This research employed a qualitative approach using action research in the classroom. There are two main goals of the research: the first is to describe how writing instruction is implemented using Project-Based Learning (PBL) to help students become better writers. In addition, it conveys the views of the students on how the employed teaching strategies are being implemented. According to (Fitria & Romadin, 2023), research that is classified as classroom action research is utilized to enhance teacher engagement in classroom research as part of their teaching. Stated differently, the educator is aware of the issues that arise in the classroom and seeks to address them. According to this study, students are advised to engage in project-based learning and lecturers as a means of resolving writing-related issues.

Classroom Action Research will be conducted using the following four steps: planning, action, observation, and reflection. Depending on the researcher's demands, this cycle of four steps might be repeated. Pre- and post-tests are used in each cycle to gauge how much the students' writing abilities have improved. This study conducted two data collection cycles (Ramadhan & Nadhira, 2022).

. Tests, observations, and interviews are the instruments that are employed in the data. Students are given the essay-style pre-test and post-test, which are linked to instructions on how to create descriptive texts. According to (Sari et al., 2023) the

activities are conducted in the classroom during the period for the interviewer and observation. All of the students in the class were the subject of these observations, and in-depth information about how they responded to the given instructions was gathered through student interviews. (Yunita & Widodo, 2023) that triangulation was used to examine the data after that. It is employed to identify data similarities and differences. The data's findings will be examined in the area of this study that follows.

DISCUSSION

The outcomes of students' writing instruction utilizing problem-based learning are reflected in the first meeting point. Two cycles for in-action research in the classroom were used for this study. Before starting cycle 1, researchers carried out a pre-cycle. According to (Saputra, 2018) to determine the student's ability before the PBL was applied, the researcher gave them a pre-test at this step. Here is a thorough breakdown of the outcomes of using PTK with students:

Pre cycle

Every cycle consists of four phases: preparation, observation, reflection, and action. The researcher gave the students a pretest at the first meeting, asking them to write two paragraphs on a topic of their choice (Ciniru & Kuningan, 2017). The subjects offered are associated with descriptive writing. Students are free to select the subjects they want to write about for their writing to truly represent their ability. Before project-based learning is implemented as pre-test score 1, the results are then utilized as an initial score. 'Not good enough' is the minimal standard score, while the average pre-test score for this pre-cycle is 54. Therefore, it is advised that project-based learning be applied to deal with this problem. Next, the step is a cycle.

Table 1.
Activities On Cycle 1 And Cycle

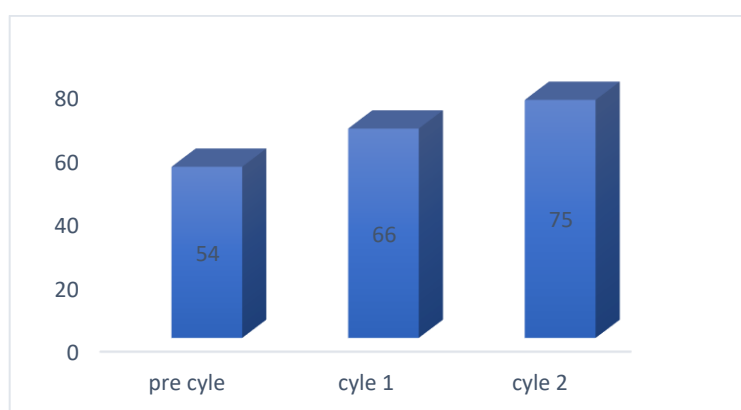| No	Cycle 1	Cycle 2
1	The teacher gives a topic to each group consisting of 3-5 people	The teacher asks students to write descriptive text individually
2	The teacher provides examples of topic sentences and supporting sentences, then students are asked to analyze the topic and supporting sentences given.	Students choose a topic and immediately analyze it according to their respective topics
3	Explains Project-Based Learning used in learning and determines the plans and project ideas provided.	Learning activities have increased significantly, and some of the students already understand.
4	Students write texts with their respective groups	Write texts individually
5	correct with other groups	Students correct their friends' work by reading and appreciating their friends' writing
6	students took the post-test	Take the post-test

Level Cycle 1

At the cycle 1 first meeting, the instructor jotted down five topics namely plants, animals, professions, objects, and places. Each student can choose a topic based on their interests. Then, they form groups consisting of 4-5 people. Once the class has come together, each student is free to select a subtopic related to plants, etc. Students cannot select the same subtopic; instead, they must choose distinct viewpoints, even though the main idea remains the same. They have a choice. Subsequently, the instructor clarifies the meaning of the topic and supporting sentences and invites pupils to do a text analysis. After that, the teacher gives the students an overview of the project and goes over how to work on project-based learning. The instructor then assigns group textwriting to the class. They can talk about it with their pals. Students then correct each other.

During the second meeting, post-test 1 was carried out. Students were required to produce descriptive texts in groups for the post-test. They can select any topics in this part that suit their interests. Following the students' writing of the text, the researcher uses the written component rubric to examine the data. The average post-test 1 score in cycle 1 is 66, according to the results. This indicates that based on the students' pre-cycle performance, there has been an improvement.

Cycle 2

third meeting in cycle 2 the teacher asked students to carry out exercises individually according to the topics that had been prepared. On this occasion, the teacher provides several topic choices and students have the opportunity to develop their skills. Learning activities at this meeting increased quite significantly, some students already understood the material so the teacher only explained the important points. Then, students write texts individually after their work is finished and they will be corrected by other friends.

The fourth meeting was held after test 2, which was carried out individually. Students are asked to write descriptive texts on topics they like. Students are free to choose topics without being determined by the teacher. In cycle 2, the researcher analyzed the results of students' work, the average student score was 75 higher than in cycle 1. This shows that there was an increase in student learning.

Graphics 1.
The mean score of cycle 1 and cycle 2

Because this study employs an action research methodology, it may be separated and split into cycle 1 and cycle 2 two separate cycles. According to (Irwayu & Gaffar,

2023), there are four phases of teaching and learning in each cycle: project design, project execution, project evaluation, and speculation. The first stage was completed in cycle 1. A project is said to begin at this point. At this point, icebreakers, prayer, verifying the student attendance list, pleasantries, and an explanation of the learning objectives kick off class activities. The assignment begins with the teacher showing the class a descriptive text.

The teacher explains project-based learning (PBL) to the students. Following that, the professors and students talked about descriptive texts. It is for students to have questions regarding the content that the teacher has covered. The instructor then goes over descriptive material with the class, specifically discussing its structure and social purpose. Subsequently, the instructor presents the completed task that each group of students produced (Mariana et al., 2018).

The project's design is the second step. The exercise begins at this point when the instructor divides the class into groups and allots seats to each group. Following group formation, students are invited to select five pre-selected topics: places, objects, animals, occupations, and plants. Students talk about the project design in their groups to produce descriptive writing. When the teacher assigns homework for the project, the students won't do it in a single day. Teachers kept an eye on students during the assignment by communicating with them online as well as in class. Through small-scale activities including writing, group discussions, collaboration, and text production, students studying with project-based learning (PBL) have greater opportunities to improve their English language proficiency (Murniarti, 2021).

The third phase is creating a project in the shape of a little magazine. As a result of working on a project, they have written both alone and in groups to create descriptive language. pupils will be given a challenge to hone their writing abilities in this way (the teacher will now ask students to gather the supplies and tools needed to make a magazine project mini). Project-based learning, according to (Asfihana et al., 2022), gives students the chance to participate in the process of instruction learning and pick up new soft skills like ideation, collaboration, cooperation, and communication.

Evaluation is the fourth step. An assessment procedure is included with this evaluation. After students have finished their projects, this step is accomplished. In this step, students evaluate and critique not just the teacher's work but also the outcomes of other groups' performances. One way that students are assessed is by offering helpful critiques, comments, and recommendations without disparaging other groups. The outcomes were initially derived from the findings of teacher observations and then from observations and field notes. Motivation of students and field notes: Students actively participate in group discussions by offering advice, commentary, and critiques. The findings indicate a marginal, if not statistically significant, rise in students' desire and interest in speaking English. But some kids are still docile and too ashamed to voice their thoughts. This supports the assertion according to (Anggraini & Wulandari, 2020)that using students' writing and vocabulary can be achieved through the use of project-based learning (PBL). The project-based learning (PBL) approach and the instructors' opinion regarding the suggested modification to the Merdeka Curriculum (Zidan, 2023). Teachers highlight freedom to explore topics and student-centered learning as key principles in doing anything. The curriculum requires them to do this, as the Merdeka Curriculum states in its official release that the teacher's role is as the owner and creator of the Curriculum (Sartika, Dewi & Arriyani, 2022).

As can be observed from the result displayed in Figure 2 above, the pre-test in the pre-cycle, which was 54, increased to 66 in the post-test 1 in cycle 1. proceeded to the second cycle, when a score of 75 was earned on the post-test. These results indicate that, according to the learning project used to educate grade 7 students at Al-Azhar Kedung Islamic Middle School on how to produce descriptive texts, it can aid students in improving their writing skills as determined by the three tests mentioned above. In addition, there was a decrease in student writing errors from the pre-cycle to the final cycle; in other words, project-based learning can support students' writing skills.

The first cycle is finished. Students' English writing abilities have improved significantly as a result of project-based learning (PBL), according to the data in the table above. It has been demonstrated that raising student participation in the classroom and writing abilities will accomplish this. Teachers will concentrate on several issues in the forthcoming second cycle because some kids are still passive. In cycle 2, the instructor concentrates on helping pupils become better writers.

Based on student performance results, there was a notable rise in the learning outcomes for students' writing abilities in the cycle 2 writing project (data in Table 2). Out of 28 students, the average score for writing skills is 75, with a maximum score of 84. assert that writing assignments help students get more comfortable with writing English.

CLOSING

The implemented project-based learning (PBL) by the Merdeka Curriculum provide new things and opportunities because it requires a lot of preparation and challenges. This also encourages positive students in the classroom, learning, and other educators' professional growth. The pre-cycle is held in one meeting, then cycle 1 is held in two meetings, cycle 2 is held in two meetings, and the final meeting is for interviews. Improvements are evident both the data showing the situation both before and after project-based learning was put into practice. Pre-cycle scores averaged 54, cycle 1 scores 66, and cycle 2 scores 75. Aside from that, they expressed satisfaction with the approach taken; they are highly driven and actively participate in the learning process. PBL has been shown to improve pupils' writing and creativity. Students are also required to solve and respond to real-world problems as part of their given assignments. Additionally, PBL can encourage students to enroll in writing classes. Put differently, this project can develop students' capacity for critical thought and provide them with a sense of purpose. Experiments have shown that project-based learning (PBL) can be utilized to help kids write better and gain insightful feedback from their peers.

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