Article

Students' perception on the implementation of Project-Based Learning in Writing Instruction at SMA Bala Keselamatan Palu

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A B S T R A C T

Project-Based Learning (PjBL) is one of the learning methods in the independent curriculum and is a proven effective teaching methods in writing. However, few studies have explored students' perceptions of the implementation of PjBL in writing. Therefore, this study investigates students' perceptions of the level of participation, benefits, and challenges in the implementation of PjBL in writing instruction among tenth-grade students at SMA Bala Keselamatan Palu. This study selected 7 students through purposive sampling, and data were obtained through semi-structured interviews and focus group discussions in a qualitative phenomenological design. The results showed that they were actively involved in the learning process and increased their confidence in writing, even though they also faced various challenges, including limited vocabulary and differences of opinion within the group. However, most students generally had positive perceptions. In conclusion, PjBL is considered an effective teaching method in writing instruction.

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INTRODUCTION

Writing is an essential component of English language learning because it allows students to construct knowledge and improve their academic communication abilities. Regarding to the Indonesian senior high school curriculum, writing is positioned as an essential literacy skill that supports higher-order thinking, academic success, and students' readiness for future academic or professional needs. According to the Ministry of Education, Culture, Research, and Technology of the Republic of Indonesia (2022), the Emancipated Curriculum places a strong emphasis on the integration of writing into authentic learning tasks and performance-based evaluations, which call for students to exhibit creativity, critical thinking, and self-directed learning. However, a significant percentage of Indonesian high school students persist in struggling frequently in writing. These challenges may vary across different learning levels and can also stem from teaching methods. Gunawan (2022) stated that teaching methods play an important role in determining the success of achieving learning objectives. PjBL is further emphasized as an offered strategy within the Emancipated Curriculum (*Kurikulum Merdeka*) since the method is consistent with student-centered and authentic learning principles. In order to address these challenges, Project-Based Learning (PjBL) has been recognized as an effective method for encouraging meaningful, student-centered writing instruction. PjBL aligns with the principles of the Emancipated Curriculum, which emphasizes autonomy, collaboration, and authentic learning experiences. Through PjBL, students engage in real-world projects that require them to plan, draft, revise, and produce written output collaboratively, making writing more contextual, meaningful, and interactive. PjBL has drawn

recognition regarding the capacity to encourage contextualized learning, teamwork, and active engagement in writing assignments since pedagogical techniques are crucial in influencing students' writing growth Hujjatusnaini (2022).

Numerous studies still focus on writing outcomes rather than exploring students' real experiences in the writing process, even though study shows consistent positive effects on English writing performance as a foreign language Cahyono et al., (2024). Students' analytical and descriptive writing skills has improved in a few Indonesian high school studies, such as those by Mardatilla et al., (2023) and Silaban et al., (2025). However, these studies are still few and primarily numerical. Furthermore, studies focusing on cooperation and creativity in PjBL, such done by Wardani et al., (2021), rarely evaluate how students' perception on their level of participation, benefits, and challenges during PjBL writing instruction. The difference is important because students' perspectives affect their motivation, engagement, and behavioral interest in learning writing, along with that has an impact on how successful the teaching methods in achieve learning objectives.

On the other hand, there are several studies that have investigated students' perception on the implementation of PjBL. The first is Jamilah (2024) that has conducted used a qualitative descriptive design focusing on junior high school students' perceptions on the application of PjBL to develop English language skills and 21st-century skills. The second is done by Argawati & Suryani (2020) that focus on elevating the students' ability on writing and to know the students' opinion of the implementation of PjBL in teaching writing used a qualitative method with Classroom Action Research (CAR). The next study is has been conducted by Ratu (2025) used a qualitative cased study to determine students' behavioral, emotional, and cognitive responses to the use of PjBL in writing instruction. In addition, there is Fadhillah et al., (2023) to find out students' positive perceptions on the use of PjBL in writing class used a quantitative approach with descriptive statistic data analysis techniques. Through the four studies that has been conducted, those studies show students generally gave positive perception on the implementation of PjBL in writing instruction and present significant score in the learning process. However, in this study used a qualitative research design with phenomenological approach to aims the students' perception on the implementation of PjBL in writing instruction on their level of participation, benefits they gained, and challenges they encountered.

In order this study selected 7 students through purposive sampling in tenth-grade students at SMA Bala Keselamatan Palu based on them emphasizes the application of PjBL in English language learning, particularly in writing instruction. The research instrument consisted of interview questions and focus group discussion and data analysis referred to Miles et al., (2014) to maintain validity and reliability in three stages data condensation, data display, and drawing and verifying conclusion. Based on the findings, the implementation of PjBL on students' perception can be concluded was an effective teaching methods in writing instruction specially to know that students as a learning centered and how students participated when guided properly by the teacher. The result show that most students stated that working in groups made it easier to share ideas, improve writing skills, and communicate in English. However, that students faced several challenges but in generally students held positive perceptions.

Perception

Perception is defined as a process in which individuals interpret and organize their sensory impressions to give meaning or impression to the environment. In the context of education, perception refers to how students receive, process, and evaluate learning experiences, which can be either positive or negative. Thamrin et al., (2023) highlight that student perceptions are influenced by instructional design and the quality of teacher facilitation, reinforcing the view that perceptions have a strong influence on student engagement and learning outcomes in English teaching environments.

Project-Based Learning (PjBL)

According to Emira & Hindun (2023) stated that the PJBL model has been proven to be an effective approach in creating immersive and relevant learning experiences for learners, it

helps improve critical thinking, creativity, collaboration, and learner autonomy, making the learning process more active and student-centered. In educational settings, PjBL has become a popular teaching method that encourages active participation and practical application of information.

Advantages and Disadvantages of Project-Based Learning

The implementation of PjBL it also aids students improve their creativity, which is defined as their capacity to spread up with innovative thoughts and apply them to solve problems. Cahyani (2021) stated that PjBL model is also advised used because it has a good positive effect on student creativity for example of this skill is project management and communication ability to work team, analytical and innovative thinking, problem solving, and discussion skills. However, despite it is various advantages, PjBL also presents certain disadvantages that need to be overcome to ensure its effectiveness. According to Yusuf (2021) claim PjBL requires a lot of to complete the into a product, it takes a lot of tools and resources, and limited amount of time also a barrier for students to present their project.

The Procedure of Teaching Writing through Project-Based Learning

Project-Based Learning (PjBL) that make the student as the center of teaching method that emphasizes the writing process through authentic projects, allowing students to plan, draft, revise, and present their work in a meaningful context. According to Arif & Sukarno, (2024), the process of PjBL in writing instruction consists of six interconnected stages; introduction of the project, planning and drafting, revising, editing, presenting the final product, and reflection.

METHOD

In this study, the researcher used a qualitative research design with phenomenological approach. Specifically, which is a qualitative research strategy that focuses more deeply on exploring and describing how individuals experience certain phenomena. This approach is particularly useful when the research objective is to gain deep insight into participants' life experiences and how they understand those experiences. Phenomenology's primary goal is to accurately depict, as far as possible, the experiences of those involved in a phenomenon Creswell & Poth (2018), Giorgi & Giorgi (2003).

Respondents

The research subject of this study were 140 people divided into five class in tenth-grade students. In the context of this study was selected 7 students as the sample through purposive sampling technique. The use of purposive sampling was appropriate because this study employed qualitative phenomenological approach that does not focus on generalization, but rather on exploring students' perception in depth that focusing in their level of participation, benefits they gained, and challenges they encountered on the implementation of PjBL in writing instruction.

Instrument

The researcher used semi-structured interview questions focus group discussions (FGD) as a research instrument. In this study, interview questions used to explore students' individual experiences meanwhile focus group discussion served to validate and confirm the individual interviews. Semi-structured interview allowed in exploring students' perceptions and focus group discussion expected to gather in-depth insight.

Procedures

In this study, the researcher employed interview questions by semi-structured interview questions and focus group discussion. The interview questions were used semi-structured interview questions because it allowed the researcher can change the order questions, omit questions, or change the question depending on what happens in the interview. Furthermore, focus group discussions was used to confirm and complement the data from the individual interviews then there may be dynamics in the discussion that generate data that are rich, natural, spontaneous, and sometimes unpredictable Bloor et al., (2012), Hennink (2014), Krueger (2014). In addition, focus group discussion (FGD) were used to validate and confirm the information of interview session.

Data analysis

In analyzing the data, the researcher used a qualitative data analysis. According to Miles et al., (2014) qualitative research is conducted through intense and or prolonged contact with participants in a naturalistic setting to investigate the everyday or exceptional lives of individuals, groups, societies, and organizations. According to Miles et al., (2014) outlined three stages to analyzed the data:

Data Condensation

The first stage was data condensation which include; simplification, abstraction, and transformation. To make the analysis more focused, the researcher removes out irrelevant information and concentrate on those that are essential.

Data Display

The next stage was data display. The purpose of data display was to improve comprehension of the case and serve as a guide based on the researcher interpretation and evaluation of the displayed data.

Drawing and Verifying Conclusions

The last stage was drawing and verifying conclusions. This step is taken after the data has been collected and organized from start to finish. Verifying conclusions could be thorough and elaborate were drawn by the researcher throughout the data collection process.

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

The researcher presented and analyzed the data from interview questions and focus group discussion (FGD) that were conducted with the research participants. The research findings presented the results of data analysis to explore the students' perception on the implementation of Project-Based Learning (PjBL) in writing instruction at SMA Bala Keselamatan Palu on their level of participation, the benefits they gained, and challenges they encountered during the learning process.

Students' participation

In this study, many students stated that their level of participation increased when the researcher explored their perceptions, especially regarding on their level of participation during on the implementation of PjBL in writing instruction. Student 2 said: "Yes, because the implementation of PjBL can increase my ability to participate and enabling me to share more with each other and encourages me to be more active because I feel motivated when working on tasks in the writing instruction process." Student 3 also said: "Yes, my participation has increased because through the use of PjBL method, I can be more active in discussions and exchange ideas with my friends and it helps me understand and learn English more deeply, especially in writing instruction." Student 4 added: "Yes, I feel more active because through the PjBL method, I have friends to exchange ideas with and help each other with in writing instruction and helps improve my knowledge during the process of learning to write in English." These statement align with Fuadiy & Fauz (2023) emphasis that Project-Based Learning (PjBL) requires students to be active participants rather than passive recipients of knowledge. Argawati & Suryani (2020) stated that students become more engaged and motivated when learning writing through Project-Based Learning (PjBL) projects, which is consistent with the increase in student engagement observed in this study.

Based on the interview result, students stated that their participation in class discussions, activities, felt motivated, and group projects was increased. They said that learning was more engaging and enjoyable when they collaborated. Some students stated that they were able to share ideas more freely and interact confidently with their classmate. However, there are students admitted that they were still adapting to the learning method and felt more comfortable working individually. Student 1 said: "Not yet because, my participation in writing instruction has not been very active because I am still adapting to the PjBL method, but gradually I am becoming more confident and involved in the writing process." Student 5 added: "No, I am not actively engaged because studying or writing by myself makes me feel more comfortable and concentrated but I realize that the implementation

of PjBL in writing instruction can help to develop my English skills." This perception is in line with Dörnyei (2005) idea that individual learning preferences and motivation have a strong influence on participation in collaborative learning. In addition, as emphasized by Sweller (1994)(Sweller, 1994) , the high cognitive demands of managing both content creation and group coordination can cause some students to experience cognitive overload, which in turn can lead to frustration. Therefore, these responses indicate varying levels of participation among students, but generally increased their level of participation in during PjBL activities in writing instruction.

Perceived Benefits

Students described several of benefits they obtained through the implementation of Project-Based Learning (PjBL) in writing instruction. Students claimed increased motivation, enhanced public speaking abilities, greater collaboration, and improved writing ability. Student 2 said: "I gained benefits such as gather a knowledge in writing instruction and public speaking practice through exchanging ideas in English with my classmate through the implementation of PjBL method." Student 3 said: "I have been able to feel the benefits of becoming more proficient in writing instruction through the implementation of PjBL method." Student 4: "I have experienced that on the implementation of PjBL method, my ability to work together with friends on assignments has improved, especially in terms in writing instruction." The findings obtained are consistent with those of Fadhillah et al., (2023) and Ratu (2025), who discovered that students thought PjBL was a fun and worth while approach that increased writing proficiency and engagement. In the other hand, ST05 (student 5) mentioned, "I realize that this teaching method is beneficial because it encourages me to participate more". This findings align with Jamilah (2024) found that PjBL improves problem-solving, communication, and teamwork skills. Based on the interview result, most students stated that they became more confident in expressing their opinions, improved their writing skills, and became more motivated to learn English.

Challenges Encountered

Implementation of Project-Based Learning (PjBL) in writing instruction either offer several benefits but also presents several challenges that can affect the effectiveness during the learning process. Some students expressed displeasure about their classmate absence of cooperation or difficulties presenting their written projects. Student 1 said: "The difficulty I was experienced when I present about what we had written during the process in writing instruction with my friends." Student 3 said: "When I am around friends who were not inclined to cooperate, I find it challenging." Student 4 added: "I find it difficult when my group members do not participate enough in completing assignments, especially in writing instruction." These findings align with Liando (2022) noted that students occasionally struggle with concept organization and productive teamwork when working on writing assignments. Similarly, this is in line with Social Interdependence (Johnson & Johnson (2009), which emphasizes that effective cooperation depends on positive group dynamics and shared responsibility. Therefore, some students stated that they encountered challenges in vocabulary comprehension and lack of participation among group members such as student 2 said: "The difficulty is when I try to understand English vocabulary." This statement aligns with perspective of Krashen (1982) challenges may also arise because the linguistic input in PjBL projects exceeds the current proficiency level of students.

Despite these issues, several students explained that group collaboration helped them overcome such difficulties since their classmate often provided explanations and support. Student 6 said: "I do not feel there are any difficulties because on the implementation of this Project-Based Learning (PjBL), especially in learning writing, me and my friends feel that we help each other." Student 7 added: "I did not encounter any difficulties during the implementation of Project-Based Learning (PjBL) method in learning writing because I enjoy being given group assignments." According to L. S. Vygotsky (1978), learning outcomes vary depending on the level of support and guidance received from peers.

Focus Group Discussion

Focus group discussion was conducted to validate the results of the individual interviews. In their level of participation, students said that they found it easier to exchange thoughts, share ideas, and they are able to learn how to appreciate the opinions of their friends. Student 3 said: I usually active to participate with classmate to share ideas. Student 4 said: I usually active to participate with classmate to exchange thoughts. Student 5 also said: I usually appreciate classmate opinions more and can increase collaboration with classmate. Student 6 added: I usually enjoy the learning process with my classmate and adding new knowledge that can be gained when exchanging ideas with classmates. These statements show that group learning encourages active engagement and promotes deeper understanding through interaction among classmates. In addition, the focus group discussion also highlighted students' perception of their writing skills improvement and ability to develop ideas. Student 1 said that "Can enhance my writing ability". Another student 5 added, "Can increase confident". These responses indicate that Project-Based Learning (PjBL) either improves writing skills but also supports students' confidence in communicating ideas in English.

Additionally, some students explained from the benefits they gained that through collaborative activities, either learned writing techniques but also communication and teamwork skills, which are essential for their academic growth. Student 6 said: "I have benefited from the implementation of Project-Based Learning (PjBL) that I have become closer to my classmates, especially in the process in learning writing." Student 7 also said: "On the implementation of Project-Based Learning (PjBL) method in writing instruction makes it easier for me to settle in with my classmates." These findings show that Project-Based Learning (PjBL) encourages active participation and provides opportunities for authentic learning experiences. Furthermore, in the focus group discussion, the researcher was found several challenges that all of the students find it difficult when they have a group in which their friends are less active in discussing and exchanging opinions. Student 1 said: Lack of participation when work in groups. Student 2 also said: Difference opinion with classmate and find it difficult to work in groups with classmates who are unable to cooperate. Student 3 added: Lack of participation among the classmate. These responses show that although the benefits are significant, successful Project-Based Learning (PjBL) implementation requires good teamwork.

CONCLUSIONS

This study concludes that students generally perceive Project-Based Learning (PjBL) as a valuable and enjoyable technique for learning writing, as it encourages their participation, improves their writing abilities, and strengthens teamwork. Despite these beneficial outcomes, students encounter challenges such as differences of opinion, insufficient participation, and a limited vocabulary. However considered, these results show that PjBL is an effective technique for enhancing writing classes, particularly when teachers provide specific guidance and preserve a student-centered learning environment. According to these findings, teachers should incorporate scheduled guidance, curriculum designers should create writing tasks that are in line with PjBL to foster authentic learning, and future researchers ought to investigate toward strategies to address the issues identified and improve PjBL's efficacy in the context of high school writing instruction.

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