



Project-Based Learning to Enhance Student's English Skill

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ABSTRACT

In today's educational system, the emphasis has switched from the teacher to the student as the primary focal point of the learning process. This study aims to determine the effect of Project-Based Learning on students' English language skills. The participants of this study were 20 sixth-semester students of English Education in one of the public universities in Central Java. This study used qualitative methods to obtain information and students' opinions about implementing Project-Based Learning to improve their English language skills. In collecting data, the researcher used a questionnaire collected through answers to an online survey to find out and analyze students' opinions. The results of the analysis showed that Project-Based Learning significantly improved students' abilities in terms of personal and interpersonal skills in English. However, the results were unsatisfactory because the researcher also found some problems students complained about when implementing this Project-Based Learning.

INTRODUCTION

In today's educational system, the emphasis has switched from the teacher to the student as the primary focal point of the learning process. A method of teaching and education known as "student-centered learning," places the requirements and pursuits of the student at the forefront of the educational experience. Learning centered on the student is an essential component of course design, and it helps students feel more engaged in their studies and more responsible for their education (Morel, 2021). In student-centered learning, students are the subject of learning, not the object. Prins (2009) argued that the benefits of a student-centered approach

outweigh the challenges it poses to students and teachers. Therefore, the student's part in this strategy is crucial.

The Indonesian National Education Standards Regulation emphasizes the significance of students' contributions to their own education. In PP. No. 19 Th. 2005, Pasal 19, Ayat 1, students are encouraged to think for themselves and develop their own problem-solving methods in a classroom setting that is both stimulating and engaging. To grow as learners, students engage in various activities catering to their individual strengths, interests, and physical and mental maturation stages. Paying attention to constructivist ideas, such as Project-Based Learning, is one strategy to boost the potential to maximize students' roles in learning (Astawa et al., 2017).

PjBL or Project-Based Learning, is a novel educational approach that uses projects to make learning a language fun and interesting. This method is useful because it facilitates the acquisition of numerous talents in a cohesive, purposeful endeavor (Rochmahwati 2015). PjBL is a teaching method that has been increasingly popular in recent years because of its emphasis on personalized instruction and practical application of classroom material. Students must engage in an investigative process through the PjBL project-based learning method. Students will develop transferable skills outside the classroom as they design questions, prepare lessons, organize research, put into practice a variety of learning methodologies, and assess the effectiveness of their final projects (Hamidah et al., 2020; Thu, 2021). In PjBL, students face real-world problems they never faced in the classroom. Hence, by facing real-world contexts, students can improve their knowledge and ability related to real-world conditions (Pradana et al., 2023).

Increasingly, courses are turning to project-based learning as a means of helping students gain new competencies. English proficiency is one such area. Poonpon (2017) discovered that using a project-based approach to education helps students reflect on and develop their English skills in authentic settings. Because it

encourages students to use English in real-world contexts, project-based learning has the potential to be an efficient method for enhancing students' proficiency in the language. Ultimately, teaching English through student-driven projects can be a fun and fruitful experience for everyone involved. Students' acquisition of English will progress more smoothly and successfully if given authentic contexts to use it.

The needs of teaching and learning English in the classroom seem suitable for using Project-based learning (Poonpon 2017). Traditional teaching methods are distinguished from project-based learning by their emphasis on student participation, student-centered approach, and multidisciplinary nature. However it should be noted that traditional education cannot be completely replaced by project-based learning. Students collaborate to solve and assess an issue. Students can learn through project-based learning by looking for answers, questioning, discussing, and cooperating with others (Choi et al., 2019). It implies that students are encouraged to work together on projects, with the teacher's role limited to that of a facilitator (Greenier 2020).

PjBL offers students the information they need to succeed in the real world and the opportunity to practice important psychomotor and social skills like independent research, analysis, evaluation, summarization, and presentation (Aldabbus 2018). PjBL gives students more freedom, allowing them to choose an appropriate topic, consult resources, distribute tasks among group members, create something, and then show it (Marwan, 2015). In some situations, PjBL can be utilized with conventional teaching methods if instructors worry that PjBL will hinder students' ability to master the subject matter. PBL also necessitates much time spent on these things: planning, preparing, facilities, student discipline, monitoring, and evaluation.

Sirisrimangkorn (2021) discovered that project-based learning with presentations enhanced learners' ability to communicate orally due to their participation in

presenting activities, skill-building activities, and integrated skill practice. He noted that a cooperative learning environment is considered beneficial for improving learners' speaking skills. Fadhillah et al., (2023) found that students had positive views on project-based learning regarding their motivation and writing skills improvement. Furthermore, Idayu, Bakar, and Razali (2019) study found that students' listening skills improved by implementing project-based learning in the course.

Based on previous research, the researchers involved in this study seek to analyze, based on their own experiences, the students' perspectives toward implementing project-based learning in one of the state universities in Central Java.

RESEARCH METHOD

This study used a qualitative method to examine how students felt about using Project-Based Learning to improve their English language skills. Twenty sixth-semester English Education students from one of the state universities in Central Java took part in the study. They were then asked how they felt about project-based learning in the classroom using this research method. The survey was meant to collect data and hear students' feedback on how the project was being carried out and whether or not they felt it helped them with their language abilities.

The researchers used a questionnaire to find out and investigate the students' opinions. The research method was used to obtain information and opinions from the participants. The questionnaire was collected through answers to an online survey modeled by Poonpon (2017). Students were asked to answer 12 multiple-choice questions using one of four predetermined response options (strongly agree, agree, disagree, or strongly disagree). The researchers also included two free-form questions designed to have students recall the specifics of their project-based learning experiences. The survey link was initially shared via WhatsApp by the researchers. Then, the participants followed the link provided by the researchers and completed the online survey. Once the data processing was complete, the

researchers collected the data by downloading the answers from the Google form. This process involved tabulating the data and then calculating the proportion of responses for each question item, regardless of whether the majority of respondents agreed or disagreed. The participants' responses influenced their interpretation of the subject matter that the researchers were investigating. Finally, the researchers concluded from the collected data.

FINDING AND DISCUSSION

Findings

To encourage students to use English as a medium for delivering content and exchanging information across disciplines, PjBL was created as a disciplinary-based project (Poonpon 2017). To address the research objectives, the data that eventually comprised the conclusions of the research were presented and discussed as follows:

Table 1. Questionnaire Result (Statement)

STATEMENT	Level			
	Strongly Agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
1. Our team members have learned and shared a lot of lessons from the project work.	35%	65%	-	-
2. Our team is able to solve problems while we are working on a project.	20%	65%	10%	5%
3. The team showed high potential through project work.	15%	70%	10%	5%
4. I have gained interpersonal skills from this project work.	15%	70%	15%	-
5. I could perform excellent team working skills.	10%	85%	5%	-

6. Learning by doing this project challenged me to develop my English skills.	35%	60%	5%	-
7. Project work activates my enthusiasm for participating in class activities.	15%	45%	35%	5%
8. I have developed my information-searching skills.	35%	55%	5%	5%
9. Project work promotes a positive learning environment.	15%	55%	20%	10%
10. I felt more confident in my English performance.	10%	80%	10%	-
11. I increased my responsibility and confidence level by working on this project.	10%	80%	10%	-
12. We have accomplished the project as we planned in the beginning.	10%	75%	15%	-

The findings present the responses of the research participants to the inquiry posed in the research question: What are the students' perspectives on the application of project-based learning in language classes? It demonstrates a high level of positivity regarding project-based learning, as can be derived from the percentage of respondents who agreed and strongly agreed with the statement. The highest response out of 12 close-ended questions was provided, with a percentage of 85% who agreed with the fifth statement. The two highest responses obtained from the data were the tenth and eleventh statements with 80% of participants who agreed. The third highest response indicated that they had completed the project as

anticipated, and 75% of participants agreed with this statement. This was the third-highest response. Despite this, there are a few replies that demonstrate a poor opinion of learning through project-based activities. As can be observed from the table that is located above, several of the participants disagree, and some of them even vehemently disagree with the claims that were presented. As one of those, 10% of the participants strongly disagreed with statements stating that project work promotes a positive learning environment. The second point is that 5% of those who took part in the study were generally of the opinion that they strongly disagree with the statement that it is possible to fix problems while working on a project. Third, the assertion that the team demonstrated high potential through the work they did on the project received resounding support from the votes of 5% of the total participants.

Discussion

Several respondents highlighted the potential gains in social skills and lifelong learning that could result from exploring other relationships, supported by the current data. In addition, Anon (2017) stated that students' language abilities and capacity for social communication can benefit from PjBL. Studies also back up this claim based on Macadangdang (2019), which states that students' improved fluency in English and arithmetic leads to enhanced problem-solving abilities. Project-based learning (PjBL) can improve students' accountability and self-assurance in learning and their capacity to face and overcome challenges in the classroom. The results of this previous research can be related to the current situation in this institution which is the subject of this research. It can be concluded that the results align with this study because they show a positive perception of the students undergoing project-based learning.

In addition, students were also asked two open-ended questions privately to find out what they liked and didn't like about their project work. Those questions about how students saw project-based learning yielded some important results.

What is/are the benefit(s) you obtained from working on the project work?

The answers showed some benefits students obtained from working on the project.

For instance;

"I get a lot of positive insight during the discussion and add more critical thought in dealing with problems", "Project work improves my leadership skill", "I can get more information", "I can do smaller tasks", "I learn to manage my time properly", "I can construct team's thought into one strong output", "We develop team working ability and gather many ideas combined into one line to finish the task", "I learn to cooperate with others to achieve certain goals", "I learned new things", "My critical thinking improves when I do a discussion with my team", "Project work develops my soft skills", "I gain more knowledge because I read lots of articles for the project", "We do less work since each member get their parts". Furthermore, PjBL was also viewed by some students as an effective strategy to enhance their English skills. For instance; *"I can maximize my skill in doing the project, I can develop my English skills, and I can deal with time management", "I can polish my skills", "Project work increases communication skill and how to coordinate with the others", "Project work build a team work and it improves my writing skill".* Only one student feels there is no benefit from project work; *"I feel there is no benefit from project work".*

What is/are the difficult(ies) you experienced in this project work?

The answers to the question revealed that students experienced some difficulties and barriers in project work. For example,

"I have a lack of motivation to start the project", "I have a lack of motivation", "Different thoughts and ideas among members", "Hard to manage time well", "Every person has their thought and we trying hard to compile it into one idea", "It is hard to manage time, deliver my ideas, and look for related sources", "We experience the diversity of the idea, and the mind blocks about the task", "It is hard to communicate my thought or my opinion", "It difficult to gather different ideas", "Difficult to adjust the work time properly. Most of the division of labor in the group is not evenly distributed", "My member does not contribute to the task", "Time management of the team and also unify everyone's opinion", "Difficult to share responsibility", "I have a difficulty about what ideas should I write since there's a lot of references", "Being forces by the deadline", "We have to wait for others to finish their part".

The results of two open-ended questions showed students' reactions to the introduction of project-based learning. In response to the first question, most students agreed that project-based learning enhances employability skills like leadership, time management, teamwork, critical thinking, and communication. It aligns with the answers from the close-ended questions above which most students agree that project-based learning enhances their knowledge, skills, and teamwork.

In previous research, Crespí et al.,(2022) found the same result that students'

abilities to work together and communicate effectively benefit greatly from participating in project-based learning. Dwi & Sagala (2019) also found that students' teamwork and communication skills improved through Project-Based Learning, and there was a positive interaction between the two. Therefore, project-based learning is a powerful method for fostering students' learning, teamwork/collaboration, and communication abilities.

Furthermore, an open-ended inquiry inquires how challenging it is to implement project-based learning for students. The findings revealed that student implementation of project-based learning faces some challenges. Lack of motivation, time management, difficulty in gathering different ideas, and lack of member responsibility are the difficulties that students experience. Thus, based on the close-ended questionnaire, it is understandable that some students may lack enthusiasm because of these problems. The findings contradicted a prior study that found that project-based instruction improved students' motivation and organizational skills (Prasetya & Prasetiawan, 2022; Susanti et al, 2022). Furthermore, Andriyani & Anam (2022) found that students' motivation, cooperation, communication, creativity, and problem-solving skills increased with Project-based learning. As a result, it is safe to say that the institution in question needs to refine its approach to implementing project-based education.

According to the findings, it is clear that most students believe that project-based learning has the potential to improve student's abilities in both personal and interpersonal skills. Students believed that participating in project-based learning helped them enhance their leadership abilities, ability to manage their time effectively, ability to collaborate with others, critical thinking, and communication skills. However, there are some students who believe that, despite their best efforts, they are still unable to complete project-based learning successfully. They believed it was difficult to motivate group members, manage their time effectively, come to a consensus on a single topic, and delegate tasks. Therefore, it is clear that project-

based learning needs to be refined in the future to achieve a higher level of success in terms of the students' acquired knowledge and abilities.

CONCLUSION

According to the findings, one of the benefits of project-based learning is that it helps students improve their capabilities in terms of their personal talents and interpersonal skills. However, these results were unsatisfactory as some students complained about the problems they encountered in implementing project-based learning, such as lack of motivation, ideas, and teamwork, which were far from their expectations. Teamwork is an aspect or an important aspect of project-based learning itself that promotes a positive learning environment and relationships between colleagues and teachers. Therefore, the researchers suggest that an evaluation is needed.

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