The Implementation of Project-Based Learning in Teaching Writing to Junior High School Students: A Case Study

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Abstract

Writing skills are very important to be mastered by the secondary students in order to meet the roles of English as an international language. The study explored the implementation of Project-Based Learning (PjBL) method in teaching writing procedure text to junior high school students. The subjects of the study were an English teacher and 46 junior high school students who participate in teaching and learning activity using PjBL method. This study applied the case study method and gathered the data through an interview, questionnaire, and some artifacts. The teacher would implement the PjBL method supported by Canva and Instagram to the students. Then the students were asked to make a procedure text use Canva and uploaded the result on Instagram. The findings showed that the implementation of the PjBL method was going well. Although, there were still some obstacles faced by the teacher but it showed positive outcomes from the students. In this circumstance, PjBL method could become the alternative method. From the implementation of the PjBL method, the students became more enthusiastic and creative during the writing class. Although, there were still some challenges and obstacles in implementimg the PjBL method. Therefore, the teacher should motivate the students and provide an excellent environment to engage the students when implementing PjBL method during the teaching and learning process.

Keywords: Project-Based Learning (PjBL) method; Writing skills; Junior high school students

INTRODUCTION

Nunan (2003, p. 88) stated, "Writing is the process of thinking to invent ideas, thinking about how to express them into good writing, and arranging the ideas into statements and paragraphs clearly". It indicates that the students are expected to explore the ideas and arrange them into good paragraphs. In order to support the students to explore their ideas creatively, one of the strategies was implement Project-based learning (PjBL) method in

teaching and learning process during writing activity. The PjBL approach is an effective way to develop 21st-century capabilities by promoting critical thinking as well as problem-solving, interpersonal communication, information and media literacy, cooperation, leadership and teamwork, innovation, and creativity (Häkkinen et al., 2017). Gómez Pablos et al. (2017) noted that the PjBL approach is one of the best academic options because it represents a student-based learning process that considers the interests of students and encourages them to participate actively in the learning process, which should be considered a research process goal. Therefore, PjBL encompasses many benefits of applying this methodology to students. These range from enhanced comprehension of concepts to widening one's knowledge base, improving communication and interpersonal and social skills, enhancing leadership skills, and increasing one's creativity.

In supporting the teaching method which means PjBL method, the artificial tools or mobile applications were needed. Mobile applications are also utilized to improve students' writing skills and self-efficacy (Haerazi, Utama, & Hidayatullah, 2020; Blake, 2011). In this case, the teacher supported the teaching method by using Canva application. Canva was recommended as an adorable application for writing practice. The Canva Application is a recently published public application that provides various digital writing templates such as making advertisements, curriculum vitae, short information, and so on. Moreover, the use of Canva application make easier for teachers to design learning media focusing on writing correction or grammatical checkers. It could be said that this media is expected to solve problems and make positive changes in the teaching and learning process especially on writing.

Although many studies have examined the implementation of PjBL method in writing activity, there are still few studies within the scope of junior high school students facilitated by artificial tools. Therefore, the study looked at students' perceptions and implementation of PjBL method in the context of learning writing for junior high school students. The finding had implications for the teachers, prospective teachers, and future research that may be utilized as a reflection to examine the PjBL method in the writing class. Therefore, this study focused on answering the following research questions: (1) How was the PjBL method implemented in teaching writing procedure text?; (2) What difficulties did the teacher find in implementing the PjBL method in teaching writing procedure text?; (3) What's the students' perception about the implementation of the PjBL method in learning writing procedure text?

LITERATURE REVIEW
1. Writing to Secondary Students

Nunan (2003, p. 88) stated that writing is the mental work of inventing ideas, thinking about how to express them, and organizing them into statements and paragraphs that will be clear to a reader. Nunan (2003, p. 88) also stated, "Writing is the process of thinking to invent ideas, thinking about how to express them into good writing, and arranging the ideas into statements and paragraphs clearly". It indicates that the students are expected to explore the ideas and arrange them into good paragraphs. Manshour (2016, p. 24) stated that writing is a system of communication which signifies language through the writing of signs and symbols. Moreover, Lado (2006) cited in Qalby (2016) stated that writing is also a form of thinking, but it is

thinking for a particular audience and for a particular occasion. Writing skills are very important to be mastered by the secondary students in order to meet the roles of English as an international language.

Nunan (1991, p. 3) also stated, "successful writing involves mastering the mechanics of letter formation and obeying conventions of spelling and punctuation, using the grammatical system to convey one's intended meaning, organizing content at the level of paragraph and the complete text to reflect given/new information and topic/comment structures, polishing and revising one's initial efforts, and selecting an appropriate style for one's audience". In writing skill, one of the best known and most widely used analytic scales created by Brown (2010, p. 261) which is related to five indicators of writing. They are control of content, format/organization, sentence structure/grammar, vocabulary, and mechanics (punctuation, spelling, capitalization, and letter formation).

Table 2. 1

The indicators of writing by Brown (2010, p. 261)

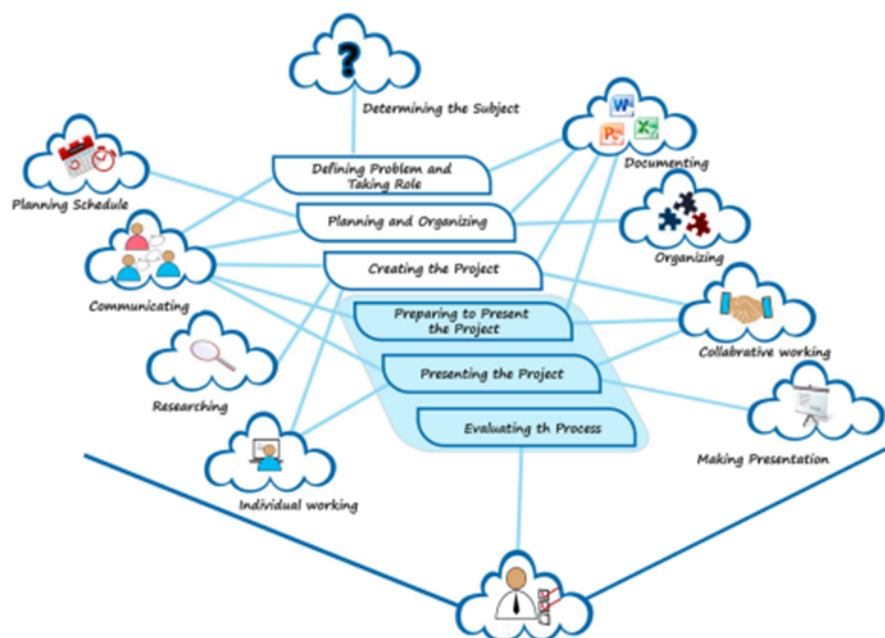| No.	Aspects	Criteria	Score
1.	Content	The topic is complete and clear, and the details are related to the topic.	4
		The topic is complete and clear, while the details are almost related to the topic.	3
		The topic is complete and clear but the details are not related to the topic.	2
		The topic is not complete and clear, and the details are not related to the topic.	1
2.	Organization	The identification is complete and the description is arranged with proper connectives.	4
		The identification is almost complete and the description is arranged with proper connectives.	3
		The identification is not complete and the description is arranged with few misuses of connectives.	2
		The identification is not complete and the description is arranged with misuses of connectives.	1
3.	Vocabulary	Effective choice of words and their form.	4
		Few misuses of vocabulary and word form but did not change the meaning.	3
		Limited range confusing words and their form.	2
		Very poor knowledge of words, their form, and did not understand.	1
4.	Mechanics	It uses correct spelling, punctuation, and capitalization.	4
		It occasionally has errors of spelling, punctuation, and capitalization.	3
		It has frequent errors of spelling, punctuation, and capitalization.	2
		It is dominated by the errors of spelling, punctuation, and capitalization.	1

5.	Grammar	Very low grammatical or agreement inaccuracies.	4
		Few grammatical or agreement inaccuracies but not affect on meaning.	3
		Numerous grammatical or agreement inaccuracies.	2
		Frequent grammatical or agreement inaccuracies.	1

2. Project Based Learning in Teaching Writing

The PjBL method encourages critical thinking as well as problem-solving, interpersonal communication, information and media literacy, cooperation, leadership and teamwork, innovation, and creativity, and is an effective way to develop 21st-century abilities (Häkkinen et al., 2017). Furthermore, the PjBL method and learning are primarily aimed at producing functional and powerful information through the use of authentic contexts and tasks (Brown et al., 1989). According to Korkmaz and Kaptan (2001), a typical PjBL implementation involves the following stages: defining problems and taking roles, planning and organizing, creating projects, preparing to present the project, presenting the project and evaluating the process.

Figure 2. 1

The Stages of PjBL (Korkmaz and Kaptan (2001))

The implementation of PjBL method was brought several advantages to the teaching and learning process. Project-Based Learning has been shown to reduce student anxiety (Boaler, 2002) and enhance student learning quality when compared to traditional teaching techniques (Thomas, 2000). Furthermore, this theoretical framework promotes self-directed learning by utilizing problem-centered authentic frameworks that integrate multimodal representations of information (Mills &

Treagust, 2003). Kzkapan and Bektaş (2017) studied whether a project-based learning strategy had a substantial effect on seventh-grade students' academic progress in the structure and properties of matter. The outcomes show that there is no significant difference in the scores of the experimental and control groups acquired from their "Achievement test" post-test performance.

Praba, Artini, and Ramendra (2018) evaluate the effect of Project-Based Learning on students' writing skills in grade 9 at SMPN 3 Kuta Selatan in their study. The findings revealed that Project-Based Learning has a substantial impact on students' English writing ability (sig. =.000 =.05). Through collaborative work, project-based learning has the potential to improve students' critical thinking, communication, and creativity. Alotaibi (2020) investigates the effect of a project-based learning approach on the persuasive writing skills of Saudi EFL secondary students in his research. The results revealed a substantial difference between the control and experimental groups' posttest mean scores in favor of the experimental group. It was concluded that after obtaining the explicit project-based learning approach, participants' persuasive writing skills improved significantly.

RESEARCH METHOD
Research Design

A case study was used by the researcher. A case study, according to Woodside (2010), is an investigation that focuses on describing, comprehending, forecasting, and/or controlling the unit being studied. In this study, the researcher uses a mixed methodology to explain the findings. Chen (2006) stated that mixed methods research is a systematic integration of quantitative and qualitative methods in a single study for purposes of obtaining a fuller picture and deeper understanding of a phenomenon. Through interview with the English teacher and teacher's artifacts as the qualitative data, it can assist us in understanding further the implementation and difficulties of PjBL method in language learning and teaching. Therefore, the data would be from questionnaire about the students' perception about the implementation of PjBL method in writing activity which presented as the quantitative data.

Data Collection

Collecting data for this study was conducted through an online platform asynchronously. First, the researcher sent the interview question to the teacher via Whatsapp. Second, the teacher was asked to answer the interview question through Google docs. Third, to obtain data from participants, the interview procedures were utilized. The researcher constructed a number of procedures, including (1) creating instruments from theories and concepts linked to the topic to organize research questions, (2) conducting interviews with participants, and (3) transcribing the interview data. In the interview process, the researcher asked about how was the implementation of PjBL method and the difficulties faced during the implementation of the PjBL method. Last, the researcher gave questionnaire to the students to gain the students' perceptions about the implementation of the PjBL method in writing activity.

The Participants

The participants of this study were an English teacher and the seventh grade students at one of Junior High Schools in Surakarta. The total number of participants was one teacher and 46 students who involved in the teaching and learning process using PjBL method. They were assigned pseudonyms for ethical concerns to conceal the participants' identities.

Data Analysis

In the study, to analyze the data, the researcher adjusts the stages from Miles and Huberman (2014). The stages of data analysis, according to Miles and Huberman, are data reduction, data display, and conclusion drawing/verification. It was used to analyze the interview and questionnaire results. The methods for reducing data in analyzing the interview results are selecting, creating a summary or brief description, classifying the data into patterns through the creation of transcripts, researching to emphasize, shortening, focusing, cutting out parts that aren't important, and also drawing conclusions. Then, the questionnaire's responses were utilized well by the researcher. Relevant data and raw data will be selected from the data set. For the data presentation process, relevant data were prepared in accordance with the research problems and objectives. The researcher presents all of the collected data in a tabular format in this study. The researcher has calculated the total score and percentage for each question in the table. Next, the average percentage for each question is calculated to determine the category achieved in each aspect.

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

The findings were organized by the research question. The questions were: 1) how was the PjBL method implemented in teaching writing procedure text? 2) what difficulties did the teacher find in implementing the PjBL method in teaching writing procedure text? 3) what's the students' perception about the implementation of the PjBL method in learning writing procedure text? The research participants were an English teacher and 46 students who joined the writing class which implementing the PjBL method.

1. **The Implementation of PjBL Method in Teaching Writing Procedure Text**

   Before implementing the PjBL method in the teaching process, of course the teacher should have to comprehend the concept of the PjBL method. The teacher explained that PJBL stands for Project-Based Learning. It means that students in the learning process would produce something as a result. Then, the teacher said that there are seven steps in implementing the PjBL method, as conveyed by the teacher in her interview:

   "PJBL stands for Project-Based Learning. It means that students in the learning process would produce something as a result. There are 7 steps in PJBL, namely: 1. Challenging problems or Questions, 2. Sustained Inquiry, 3. Authenticity, 4. Student voice and choice, 5. Reflection, 6. Critique and Revision, 7. Public Product."

   (IT.1.TU)

   The teacher conveyed in the interview that the PjBL method was a learning method which required the students to produce something as the project result. It is in line with Poonpon (2011)'s statement that Project-Based Learning was appropriate for English

teaching and learning needs because it was an instructional approach that contextualized the learning by providing learners with issues to solve or products to develop. The teacher applied the teaching stages from John Larmer, John Mergendoller, Suzie Boss (ASCD 2015) as follows: 1. Challenging problems or Questions, 2. Sustained Inquiry, 3. Authenticity, 4. Student voice and choice, 5. Reflection, 6. Critique and Revision, 7. Public Product. It quite similar with the stages from Korkmaz and Kaptan (2001), those were defining problems and taking roles, planning and organizing, creating projects, preparing to present the project, presenting the project and evaluating the process but it was more complex.

In addition, the teacher believed that through the implementation of the PjBL method in teaching writing, the students would be able to show improvement and positive outcomes in writing procedure text.

> *"Yes, my students change to become active and creative in their writing activity. My students dare to write, after I implemented the PjBL method. The skills of my students are improving a lot in writing."*

<div align="right">(IT.1.TPC)</div>

According to the teacher, student's writing activities have evolved to become more active and imaginative. The students also set out to write since the teacher applied the PjBL approach, so their writing skills improved significantly. It was also confirmed by the findings of Alotaibi's (2020) investigation, which revealed a substantial difference between the posttest mean scores of the control and experimental groups in favor of the experimental group. It was discovered that after obtaining the explicit Project-Based Learning model, participants' level of persuasive writing performance greatly improved.

The teacher should consider certain principles in order to make the teaching and learning process successful, especially while teaching writing. From the artifact of the teacher, which was the teacher's lesson plan, she considered the writing indicators from Brown (2010, p. 261) which was related to five indicators of writing: control of content, format/organization, sentence structure/grammar, vocabulary, and mechanics (punctuation, spelling, capitalization, and letter formation). It means that the teacher was conducted the teaching method well because she was not teach without any references but applied the indicators from an expert.

2. **The Difficulties that the Teacher Faced in Implementing PjBL Method in Teaching Writing Procedure Text**

There were some obstacles, challenges, and difficulties the teacher found in implementing the PjBL method in teaching writing procedure text. For example, during the preparation of teaching, as stated by the teacher:

> *"Sometimes I need a wide place to conduct the dialog or conversation, but there is no place, because the school yard is used by the sport teachers. Also there is sometimes a lack of internet signals in my class."*

<div align="right">(IT.2.DP)</div>

The obstacles were narrow place and a lack of internet access in the classroom, which slowed down the teaching and learning process, leading to the conclusion that the

teaching and learning process was ineffective and time consuming. It is in line with Helle et al. (2006); Kemdikbud, (2013a) findings that PjBL requires a significant amount of time to tackle complicated issues. As a result, there will be limited time for the material/content, and the development and management of project-based learning may be time-consuming. A strong lesson plan might help teachers in anticipating the time problem.

Another challenge was faced by the teacher during the implementation of PjBL in the classroom, as the teacher's statement while interview:

"As the teacher I must be patient to guide my students with various backgrounds of problems. I also must motivate my students if they have problems."

(IT.2.DI)

Furthermore, the teacher stated that she needed to be patient in order to guide the students who had a variety of issues. If students experienced difficulties, the teacher had to motivate them so that they were not passive and was more involved in the learning process. It is in line with Helle et al. (2006)'s finding that teachers' material understanding, students' lack of experience in project-based learning, and their preference for traditional-structured approaches that emphasize passive learning are all factors.

3. **The Students' Perception about the Implementation of PjBL Method in Learning Writing Procedure Text**

The researcher used a questionnaire (closed-ended questionnaire) and the Likert scale to collect data on students' perceptions of the implementation of the PjBL method in learning writing procedure text. The questionnaire was completed by 46 students. The points of view about students' perception focused on the perceiver, target, and situation.

The overall results of the percentage of students' perception could be seen in table as follows:

Table 4.2

The overall result of students' perceptions

Aspects	Average (%)	Category
The Perceiver	64.6%	Not good enough
The target	79.2%	Good
The situation	67.4%	Not good enough
Overall average	**70.4%**	**Good**

The first aspect of perception, the perceiver aspect, revealed that the result was insufficient, at 64.6%. This factor included motivation, emotional state, and experience. It is in line with Matthen's (2015) statement that perception is about one's own experiences involving the five senses and feelings. The perception of the target/object being perceived was the second part. The percentage result of this aspect was 79.2%, according to the research data above. It signifies that the outcome was positive, and it can be stated that the teacher's involvement in adopting the PjBL method to teach writing procedural text was

successful. The beneficial affection for the teacher would result from the students' positive perception. It is in line with the statement stated by Lee et al., (2016), who mentioned that when someone has a positive impression of something, he will accept and support it.

Last but not least aspect was this situation. Situation/environment is defined as "the sum of all external conditions and influences affecting an organism's life and development" (Webster's New Collegiate Dictionary in Hadikusumo, 1996: 74). Environmental education, on the other hand, involves all situations and influences that exist outside of educational activities (Hadikusumo, 1996: 74). The studies revealed that the outcome of this element was unsatisfactory. It might be argued that the teaching and learning situation/environment has not gotten better for a number of students after the PjBL approach was applied in the classroom. Based on such findings, the teacher should create a better and more pleasant learning situation/environment in the classroom, because a positive learning environment can lead to higher student accomplishment. It produced students who were at ease, confident, and who were not afraid to take risks or make mistakes.

CONCLUSION

The result showed that the teacher utilized the PjBL approach to teach writing procedure text in junior high school, drawing on the theory of John Larmer, John Mergendoller, and Suzie Boss (ASCD 2015). Before adopting the PjBL approach, the instructor needs to prepare a lesson plan, teaching materials, a learning design, a PowerPoint presentation about the material, and teaching media. Furthermore, the technical implementation of the PjBL approach was divided into three steps: 1) Preparing the lesson plan and implementing it in the learning process; 2) Attempting to create the time schedule and implementing it in the learning process; and 3) Guiding the students and assisting or facilitating them in obtaining the project result. Therefore, the teacher discovered some obstacles/challenges in using the PjBL technique, including diverse backgrounds of problems from the students and the students' passive behavior. It required the teacher to be passionate about encouraging and mentoring the students during the teaching and learning process. An additional obstacle was the lack of internet access in the classroom, which slowed down the teaching and learning process, implying that the teaching and learning process was inefficient and time consuming. The responses of students to the PjBL method's implementation varied from one another. The majority of students expressed that they were passionate about learning and that they had no challenges or fears. They also stated that their writing ability has improved since the implementation of the PjBL approach. However, there were a few students that struggled to understand the learning process. Furthermore, the use of the PjBL approach in writing activities made the classroom environment less conducive, leading to a less effective learning process.

The implication and suggestion: The findings of this study could be beneficial for English teachers, prospective teachers, and other researchers. The research findings, which provide information about the implementation of the PjBL method during writing activities, will assist teachers in evaluating and improving their teaching method and approach.

Furthermore, it would assist prospective teachers in self-reflection and taking the first step toward teacher professional development. Finally, the findings would be helpful in any further research that may be undertaken to investigate similar concerns, as there were numerous unresolved questions about the PjBL approach. English teachers might create a great environment by providing an icebreaker before the teaching and learning activity began. It may increase the students' enjoyment and enthusiasm for the learning process. It was also urged to prospective teachers that they use the research findings as a guide to enhance their teaching methods and be more prepared. It was suggested that future researchers compare or investigate the implementation of the PjBL method in different approaches, for example, to see the differences in terms of influence, which might be on the students' skills, scores, and so on.

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