

THE IMPLEMENTATION OF USING PROJECT BASED LEARNING IN MERDEKA CURRICULUM TOWARDS STUDENTS WRITNG SKILLS IN RECOUNT TEXT

Winantuningtyas Ratri Pramesti ✉

English Education Study Program
UIN Raden Intan Lampung

Indonesia

Muhammad Nawawi

English Education Study Program
UIN Raden Intan Lampung

Indonesia

Article Information	Abstract
<p>Received: November 2, 2024 Revised: November 20, 2024 Accepted: December 11, 2024</p>	<p>This research examines the implementation of the Project-Based Learning (PBL) model in the Merdeka Curriculum for teaching recount text writing to Grade X students at SMK Al Huda Jati Agung. The study highlights students' low writing skills and interest in English as its background. Using a qualitative case study approach, the research focused on a Grade X English teacher. Results reveal that while PBL improved students' recount writing skills, exceeding minimum standards, significant time constraints posed challenges. Limited class time and insufficient student equipment delayed project activities, often requiring work outside class hours. Despite these challenges, the teacher successfully implemented PBL, fostering two-way communication, critical thinking, and student engagement, demonstrating the model's effectiveness in improving writing skills.</p> <p>Keywords: Implementation; Project-based Learning; Writing Skill</p>

Introduction

The COVID-19 pandemic has greatly changed schools all over the world, and Indonesia is also affected. Before and during the pandemic, the education system in Indonesia was mainly based on the 2013 Curriculum. This curriculum wanted to improve the quality of education by focusing on skills and competencies. The pandemic made problems worse, causing many students to lose learning and do not do as well in school (Widyastuti, 2022). The Indonesian government has started to use the Merdeka Curriculum. This is a new plan to help schools improve and make learning better after the pandemic.

Corresponding author: ratriprames1@gmail.com

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The Merdeka Curriculum is a new version of the 2013 Curriculum. It focuses on project-based learning (PBL). This method helps students develop important skills like integrity, leadership, teamwork, and good communication. This curriculum matches the Pancasila Student Profile. It focuses on building character and developing important skills that help students grow in many ways (Rafsanjani et al., 2021). The Merdeka Curriculum is flexible and diverse. It lets students explore their interests and talents. At the same time, it focuses on important educational content and activities that build character.

The Ministry of Education and Culture, together with the Ministry of Research and Technology, has made a plan for the Merdeka Curriculum. This plan will start as an optional framework from 2022 to 2024. This program wants to help schools get the tools they need to bounce back from the problems caused by the pandemic (Rafsanjani et al., 2021). Right now, schools can choose one of three programs: the 2013 Program, an emergency program, or the Merdeka Program (Hidajat et al., 2017). The Merdeka Curriculum was made by Minister Nadiem Anwar Makarim. It aims to make learning fun and interesting, like in developed countries. In this curriculum, students can choose how they want to learn (Vijayan, 2021).

The main goal of the Merdeka Curriculum is to make learning easier and better. It focuses on important topics and skills that students need to learn. This curriculum helps students and also gives support to teachers so they can teach well (Alam et al., 2022). The Pancasila Student Profile helps students to work on important projects. These projects let students find out what they are good at and what they like. SMKS Al Huda Jati Agung has started using the Merdeka Curriculum for grades X and XI. Teachers and students are still getting used to how it works.

Using Project-Based Learning (PBL) is a good way to help students think creatively (Satria et al., 2020). This teaching method gets students involved in learning. It gives them chances to work together and on their own, using what they have learned and the ideas they know. Choosing to use PBL is based on its new ideas and how it can help students feel more motivated, learn new skills, and finish projects.

In learning English, it is important to be good at four main skills: speaking, listening, reading, and writing. Writing is very important. It helps students express their ideas clearly. Writing is a process that helps us think. It means coming up with ideas, organizing them into clear sentences and paragraphs, and sharing a message in a good way. Many students and English teachers say that writing can be hard for learners. This is because students often do not understand the topic well, have unclear goals for their writing, and find it tough to organize their ideas. This challenge is made harder because students often do not like writing. This is usually because they think learning the language is too difficult.

Old teaching methods usually mean the teacher talks a lot and then gives homework. This can make it hard for students to be interested and to talk with each other. On the other hand, Project-Based Learning gives students a way to work on their own and be creative. It helps them do tasks in ways that match what they like and what they can do. Students usually write tasks by themselves, but the PBL method helps them work together and talk to each other. This makes learning better.

This study looks at how Project-Based Learning is used to teach writing recount texts in the Merdeka Curriculum at Al Huda Jati Agung Vocational High School. It will look at the problems and answers that teachers face during this time. The research question is, "How can we use Project-Based Learning to teach writing recount texts in the Merdeka Curriculum, and what problems do teachers have when doing this?" this study wants to give important information about how the Merdeka Curriculum works and how the PBL model helps improve learning results.

Methods

This research employs a qualitative approach utilizing a case study methodology (Creswell, 2013) to explore the implementation of Project-Based Learning (PBL) in teaching recount texts. The study has two primary objectives: first, to describe how PBL is utilized to enhance students' writing skills, and second, to identify the challenges and solutions encountered by teachers during

the implementation of this pedagogical strategy. The population for this study consists of tenth graders at SMKS Al Huda Jati Agung, specifically selected due to their engagement with PBL in learning to write recount texts. The researcher observed one of the tenth-grade classes, which included twenty-three students who had already experienced PBL in their curriculum. This setting provides a rich context for investigating the application of PBL in the teaching and learning process. To gather the necessary data, the researcher employed three instruments: observation, in-depth interviews, and document analysis, which are essential for capturing the complexities of educational practices (Ary et al., 2009) (Brooks & Normore, 2015). These methods facilitate a comprehensive understanding of the subjective experiences of both students and teachers, thereby contributing to the broader discourse on qualitative research in educational settings (Damaskinidis, 2017) (Maxwell, 2012).

Findings and Discussion

The results of this study were obtained from three instruments to answer the research questions. The instruments used are observation, in-depth interviews and document analysis. Then the results will be displayed and further explained descriptively to make it easier for readers to read and understand.

The observation was conducted for three meetings. The first meeting was on Monday, September 2nd 2024. The second meeting was on Tuesday, September 3rd 2024. Then the third meeting on Monday, September 9th 2024. Every meeting lasted roughly 90 minutes. The researcher watched the class's teaching and learning process during each session. In this instance, SMKS Al Huda Jati Agung's English instructor employed project-based learning. The observation checklist and an extra piece of blank paper for taking notes were prepared by the researcher. The following were the findings of the observation:

First Meeting

In the first meeting, the teacher started the class with greetings and checked the attendance of the students, she asked about the condition of the students. Then she asked some questions in accordance with the theme to be studied. Then, the teacher gave some examples of recount texts that had been printed and copied. Then the teacher asked students to read one of the examples of recount text. After a few minutes, the teacher asked the students to observe and identify the text according to the content, structure and language use. After identifying the text, the teacher asks the students about any information related to the given text. She also gives other students the opportunity to answer questions first, then the teacher gives additional explanations or simply corrects the answers.

After that, she goes over the project's materials. By giving them an overview, the students should be better able to comprehend the subject matter and work on the assignment easier. The teacher then gives the class material-related exercises. She requests that they proceed with the activity. Multiple-choice is the format of the task. The students then discuss the exercise's answers in class. A brief explanation of the project the students will be working on was then given by the teacher. The assignment required the students to work in groups to establish a sort of bulletin board with recount paragraphs that were produced by them according to the group's topic.

Second Meeting

On the second meeting, the teacher continued the process. First of all, she greeted the students as usual. She also checked the students' attendance and asked about the students' condition. There were no students who were absent at that time. Then, she briefly reviewed the material. After that, the teacher divided the students into four groups, three groups consisting of six people and one group consisting of five people. After dividing the groups, the teacher asked the students to write a recount text based on the topic that would be given in groups. The topics given are different from one group to another. Each student in the group will create a recount text based on the topic that has been determined. As mentioned earlier, there were 4 topics used: Holiday, Cooking experience, August 17th competition, Family. After a few minutes, the teacher

asks the students to exchange their writing with the writing of their group members. Here, they collaborate to check and remind their partner about the writing. After that, the teacher asks the students to submit their writing for grading. Since the class time is over, at the end of the lesson, the teacher gives information about the tools and materials to be brought for the next meeting, then the teacher asks the students to rewrite the writing based on the corrections given and rewrite the revised writing to be pasted on the Styrofoam board in the next meeting. The teacher will share the results of the writing along with the grades and corrections with the students during the break time.

Third Meeting

On the third meeting, she continued the process. First of all, she greeted the students, checked the attendance list and asked about their condition as usual. Before proceeding further, she briefly reviewed the material to refresh students' memories of the learning objectives. After that, she asks the students to work in groups to complete their assignments, and advises them to cooperate well so that the assignments can be completed on time. She also asked the students to evaluate their writing before posting it on the bulletin board. While the students worked in groups, the teacher monitored and guided them. They cut out colourful paper, paste the paper, make decorations related to the topic, and so on. At this stage, they collaborate to complete their Styrofoam board. The recount text has been printed and revised by the students based on the corrections from the teacher.

It took about 50 minutes to make the bulletin board. After that, the teacher asked the students to present their work in front of the class. The students talk about the theme of their Styrofoam board and read the text one by one aloud. Then, the teacher asked other students to give responses or comments. After all the groups have presented their projects, the teacher asks the students to hang the Styrofoam boards they have made on the wall. Finally, at the end of the class, the teacher reflects on the learning process with the students. Based on interviews conducted on Monday, October 28, 2024, teachers assess students' final assignments using two assessment criteria, the first she gave scores to the project dealing with the connection to the topic, the organization, the team work and the aesthetic and then to see students' ability in writing, teachers use criteria adapted from (Jacobs et al., 1981).

To answer the next question, which is about the problems and solutions faced by teachers when implementing project-based learning, researchers present based on interviews conducted on September 9, 2024. The following are the results of interviews with respondents:

Teacher's Problem and Solutions in Implementing Project Based Learning in Teaching Writing Recount Text

From the results of interviews conducted on September 9, 2024, with tenth-grade English teachers, it is evident that educators face several challenges in implementing Project-Based Learning (PBL) models for teaching recount texts. One teacher noted, "Of course there are several problems, one of which is about the allocation of time. PBL learning requires more time. However, the time allocation provided from the school is short so that their work must be completed at home or continued at the next meeting." This statement highlights a common issue where teachers struggle to allocate sufficient time for project-based learning, often necessitating that students continue their work outside of regular class hours. This aligns with findings by Markula & Aksela, (2022) and Dahlgren et al., (1998), who assert that many teachers perceive PBL as time-consuming and feel unable to cover as much material as in traditional lecture-based formats. Similarly, the implementation of PBL can be hindered by time constraints, as teachers often find it challenging to balance project work with curriculum requirements (Tiwow, 2023).

Another significant challenge identified is the limited facilities and infrastructure available, such as the presence of only one LCD projector at the school, which complicates the implementation of learning activities that require visual aids. Nur Zuhdiyyah et al., (2023) supports this observation, stating that successful project implementation in PBL often necessitates specific tools, materials, or technology. If schools lack adequate access to these

resources, both teachers and students may encounter substantial obstacles in executing projects effectively. The inadequate technological resources can significantly impact the effectiveness of blended learning environments, which are often integrated with PBL (Apsari et al., 2019).

Additionally, the issue of student collaboration emerged during the interviews, with teachers noting that students sometimes exhibit a lack of independence and engagement in teamwork, which can hinder the effectiveness of learning projects. This finding is consistent with research that emphasizes the importance of collaborative skills in project-based learning environments (Apsari et al., 2019). Lastly, teachers expressed concerns regarding the complexity of evaluation and assessment in PBL, as it requires assessing not only the final product but also the processes of student work, critical thinking skills, and cooperation. Developing an objective and fair assessment rubric is time-intensive and often presents a significant challenge for educators. Arya notes that the multifaceted nature of assessment in PBL necessitates careful planning and clear criteria (Arya, 2023), which can be daunting for teachers already pressed for time.

To address these difficulties, several strategies have been proposed. Teachers are encouraged to develop clearly structured project plans that include schedules and deadlines for each stage, helping students understand expectations and manage their time more effectively (Capraro et al., 2016). Furthermore, utilizing information and communication technology, such as WhatsApp groups, can facilitate monitoring of project progress and enable teachers to provide timely feedback without consuming excessive class time. This approach also allows for enhanced collaboration among students, even outside of the classroom (Vyas et al., 2016).

Conclusion

Based on the results and discussion of the research data that have been written in the previous chapter, the researcher then makes the following conclusions. Project-based learning can be implemented in teaching recount text writing to grade X students of vocational high school. In this study, the students are grade X Pharmacy 2 students of SMKS Al Huda Jati Agung. This can be known from the data results, which show that teachers can implement project-based learning in accordance with the procedures and lesson plans. Based on the data, teachers can conduct two-way communication and encourage students to be more active and critical. At the end of the class, the teacher can also achieve the learning objectives in teaching recount text writing to her students. Most of the written works of students in class X Pharmacy 2 SMKS Al Huda Jati Agung are above the minimum standard. This means that most students have successfully achieved the learning objectives. The students' written work became better. This means that the implementation of project-based learning in teaching writing recount texts is beneficial for students, especially to help students related to knowledge and skills in writing recount texts.

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