



The Effectiveness of Using Project-Based Learning (PjBL) on Students' Ability in Writing Descriptive Text at a Junior High School in Tangerang

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Abstract

The objective of this research is to determine the effectiveness of using Project Based Learning (PjBL) on students' ability to write descriptive text at SMPN 26 Kota Tangerang. This research took a quasi-experimental design involving two English classes each as an experimental and a control group which consisted of 36 students respectively. The result of this research indicates that the use of the project-based learning (PjBL) is effective to improve the students' ability in writing descriptive text. It can be seen by comparing the $t_{(count)}$ is higher than the $t_{(table)}$ at 8,83 ($t_{(count)} \geq t_{(table)} / 8,83 \geq 1,99$). Therefore, the project-based learning is effective to improve students' ability in writing descriptive text.

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INTRODUCTION

When learning English, students need to acquire four skills: reading, speaking, writing, and listening. One of those skills is writing. Writing is the physical act of communicating words and ideas to the medium (Sokolik, 2003, p. 87). It can help people express their thoughts and thoughts contained in their minds through the appropriate media. It is helpful for them in their daily life and future, starting from writing notes, office assignments, reports, applications, etc.

However, many students still find it difficult to write. This is also supported by the opinion of Senel (2018, p. 115), where

“Writing is viewed as the most challenging and most difficult language skill among EFL students”. When someone writes, different skills need to be integrated so they can create a good text. The skills that need to be considered for writing class include mechanics, grammar, organize ideas, and generate content.

Moreover, those difficulties also happened in SMPN 26 Tangerang City. Based on the interview with an English teacher, she explained that: First, the students had difficulty adapting to the learning system. The students find it difficult to write English, especially for 7th graders, where they transition learning levels from elementary school to

junior high school. They need to adapt from online learning to hybrid learning. Moreover, the reduced study time following the emergency curriculum is also the trigger. The emergency curriculum is a curriculum that is used in certain special conditions set by the government to give adaptability to the instruction unit to decide the educational program as indicated by the advancing requirements of the students following Kepmendikbud Number 719/P/2020 concerning rules for executing the educational plan in instructive units under special conditions. In addition, because learning hours are cut, it causes limitations in the use of models and learning media. Then, the students had difficulty in organizing their idea. Last, the students also had difficulty in writing because lack of vocabulary and grammar to express their thoughts become coherent writing. It can also make it difficult for them to create cohesion, coherence, and draw conclusions in writing. As a result, students find it difficult to write in English.

In junior high school, students learn to write in several texts and one of them is descriptive text. The student's ability to write descriptive text is important. It is also in line with Knapp & Watkins (2005, p. 98), "The description genre is one of the essential functions of any language system and one of the first skills acquired by language users under development". On the other hand, students often have difficulty writing descriptive text. Therefore, getting students to write well is a challenge for teachers.

One of the strategies that can be used by the teacher is Project-Based Learning or PJBL. Larmer et al (2015, p. 2) stated "Project-based learning is an educational technique that may help you and your students move beyond the topic covered and acquire the deep understanding in today's complex environment". It means project-based learning can be implemented not only in the classroom, but elsewhere. Considering the importance of this research and according to the problem above, a researcher will design the study with the title "The Effectiveness Using Project Based Learning (PJBL) Toward Students' Ability in Writing Descriptive Text at 7th Grade of SMPN 26 Kota Tangerang".

METHOD

This research was conducted by using quasi-experimental study. Based on Creswell (2012, p. 310), "A quasi-experimental study is a research that assigns intact groups the experimental and control". Moreover, a researcher needed to know the causal relationship when used experimental and control classes at the same time. Therefore, it was possible to contrast what happened before treatment and after treatment so the result more precisely. The sample was class VII.E as experimental class and VII.H as control class which consisted of 36 students each class. The research was conducted in four meetings. The instruments used by the researcher was test. Test conducted to get the students' scores in pre-test and post-test. The researcher also used writing rubric by Brown 2007 to assess the

students' writing skill. The data were calculated by using validity test, reliability test, normality test, homogeneity test, hypothesis test, and effect size test.

RESULT

The objective of this research aimed to determine the effectiveness of using Project Based Learning (PJBL) toward students' ability to write descriptive text at 7th-grade students of SMPN 26 Kota Tangerang. In this study the data processed through several processes such as validity, reliability, normality, homogeneity, t-test, and effect size. In the validity test, the instrument used approval from the English teacher at SMPN 26 Tangerang City. This research based on the continuous curriculum, namely descriptive text material and focused on students' writing skills.

This research was conducted through four offline meetings. In the first meeting, a researcher distributed pre-test questions to both the control class and the experimental class. The students had 30 minutes to make descriptive text about objects, people, or places. The results of the data from the pre-test showed that the average experimental class was 52.14 and the control class was 48.28. The minimum score for both classes was 25 and the maximum score for the experimental class was $75 \geq 72$ for the control class. A researcher also asked help from the English teacher at the school to check the validity and the results were valid. Then, a researcher measured the reliability of the distributed pre-test. It found

that the result of the experimental class was 0,647 and the control class was 0,679. From the calculation of the reliability test that has been carried out on the pre-test scores of the students in the experimental and control classes, it indicated that there was a good agreement between the two raters. Therefore, it could be interpreted that the results of the students' pretest scores in this experimental class was reliable. Moreover, in the pre-test for normality test used the graphical method and showed a normal curve. It concluded that the data has been normally distributed. Then, a researcher measured the homogeneity among variances. This test carried out by compared the results of $F_{(count)}$ with $F_{(table)}$. It found that $F_{(count)} \leq F_{(table)} = 1.079 \leq 3.982$ which indicated the data was homogeneous.

At the second meeting in the experimental class, a researcher explained about descriptive text. After that, a researcher also explained about project-based learning to the students. A researcher and students were plan projects that would be carried out at the next meeting. Moreover, in the control class, a researcher provided material and explanations about descriptive text. Then, a researcher asked the students to look for information related to descriptive text.

At the third meeting in the experimental class, the students made a project leaflet about Banten. The students worked on the project in groups. In addition, students also presented their project work. Moreover, in the control class, a researcher asked questions

through the worksheets and asked them to write descriptive texts in textbook.

At the fourth meeting, a researcher gave a post-test to both the experimental class and the control class. The students had 30 minutes to make a descriptive text. The results of the post-test data showed that the average experimental class was 70,11 and the control class was 64,67. The minimum score for the experimental class was 45 and for the control class was 25. The maximum score for the experimental class was $96 \geq 90$ control class. Then, a researcher also asked for help from the English teacher at the school to check the validity and the results were valid. After that, a researcher measured the reliability of the post-test that was distributed. It was found that the result of the experimental class was 0,816 and the control class was 0,722. The calculation of the reliability test that has been carried out on the post-test scores of the students in the experimental and control classes indicated that there was a good agreement between the two raters. Therefore, it could be interpreted that the results of the students' pretest scores in this experimental class was reliable. Then, in the post-test normality test used a graphical method that has indicated a normal curve. These results indicated that the data has been normally distributed. The next thing that a researcher did was to measure the homogeneity among variances. This test calculated by compared the results of $F_{(count)}$ with $F_{(table)}$. It found that $F_{(count)} \leq F_{(table)} = 1,782 \leq 3,980$ which indicated the data was homogenous.

A researcher then conducted a hypothesis test to found out which hypothesis was accepted. This hypothesis calculated with an independent sample t-test. It was done by compared $t_{(count)}$ with $t_{(table)}$. The result of $t_{(count)}$ value was 8,83 and the degree of freedom value 70 with the level significance 0,05 (5%) was 1,99. The result showed $t_{(count)} \geq t_{(table)} = 8,83 \geq 1,99$. It could be concluded that H_a (alternative hypothesis) was accepted and H_o (null hypothesis) was rejected.

Furthermore, a researcher measured the level effectiveness of project-based learning in improving students' writing skills on descriptive text material. The value was $d = 1.47$. It interpreted that, the level of effectiveness of project-based learning techniques toward students' ability in writing descriptive text at 7th-grade students of SMPN 26 Tangerang City was strong.

Based on the explanation of the data above, it concluded that the use of project-based learning in improving students' writing skills on descriptive text material has been effective. In addition, the level of effectiveness of this project-based learning was strong. It can be seen by the difference between the results of the post-test scores of students who were taught by project-based learning and those who were not taught by project-based learning. This can be seen through the scores of students in the experimental class which increased after being given treatment with project-based learning. This study was in line with several studies by Latifah (2019);

Andriansah (2019); Simbolon (2019). These studies showed that PJBL can improve students' creative thinking and students' achievement in the teaching-learning process even though there were differences from the research design and the sample was different from a researcher. The results of the students' achievement can be seen through the difference in the pre-test and post-test scores. The students in the experimental class got high scores compared to students in the control class. Both classes showed an increase in the average value, but the experimental class had a higher average score than the control class. It was conformable with Yiyang (2015); Alotaibi (2020); and Prachagool (2021). They found that students' motivation and interest of learning English were enhanced, and their ability of using their knowledge to acquire, analyze, and synthesize information was improved. Therefore, it was effective to use project-based learning in improving students' ability in writing a descriptive text at 7th-grade students of SMPN 26 Tangerang City.

DISCUSSION

In the Discussion section, the study's findings are explored, explained, and interpreted. This section should focus on the relevance of the study's findings rather than repeating them. It is also customary to combine the Results and Discussion sections. Extensive citations and discussion of published material should be avoided. The findings are analyzed to see if the study's hypotheses were confirmed. This part allows

you to give your interpretation of the results and explain what they signify. If the results differ from what the hypotheses expected, you must offer speculative explanations for the discrepancy.

CONCLUSION

Based on the result of the data analysis, this study proved that classes taught through project-based learning had higher scores than classes that are not taught through project-based learning. It can be seen with the hypothesis tested as the result. This is done by compared $t_{(count)}$ with $t_{(table)}$. Based on the calculated, $t_{(count)}$ value was 8,83 and the degree of freedom value 70 with the level significance 0,05 (5%) was 1,99. The result showed $t_{(count)} \geq t_{(table)} = 8,83 \geq 1,99$. It meant that H_a (alternative hypothesis) was accepted and H_o (null hypothesis) was rejected. It can be concluded that it is effective to use project-based learning in improving students' ability in writing a descriptive text at 7th-grade students of SMPN 26 Kota Tangerang.

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