

Project-Based Learning to Enhance Writing Skills of Rumah Belajar Students

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ABSTRACT : *This study aims to observe and describe the implementation of project based learning in elevating the students' ability on writing and to know the students' opinion of the implementation of project based learning in teaching writing. The participants of the research were 20 students of Rumah Belajar English Course. The collected data were obtained through observation, writing test and interview. The data were taken while this English course's teaching and learning process was ongoing. In analyzing the data, this study used a descriptive qualitative method. The data were presented informally in the form of words, phrases, and clauses. As result, it was found that the implementation of project-based learning in teaching writing worked well. It could be seen from the students' responses during the implementation of this method as they gave positive opinion toward the method used; they actively involved in the learning process. Besides, the project given engaged the students in solving a real problem and answering it.*

KEYWORDS-*Classroom Action Research, Project-Based Learning Method, Teaching and Learning Method, Writing skills*

I. INTRODUCTION

Writing as one of the language skills has a significant role in learning a language. Students may struggle with writing skills in English class due to various factors. At the same time, English teachers face the challenge of selecting suitable teaching strategies to overcome student apprehension about writing, especially in Indonesia, where English is treated as a second language. Several activities have been designed to give students experience of the writing process and the separate components, such as journal writing, peer conferring, collaboration in small groups, brainstorming, outlining, and peer revision.

Writing needs process and it will take time for the students to write well. According to Harmer (2007), writing is different from speaking; the final product of writing is not nearly instant. It means that a process is needed for the students; they have to think of the ideas, select vocabulary, write, edit, and then publish it. Besides, the teachers have an important role to help the students to develop their writing. So, the teachers are expected to implement suitable methods or strategies in teaching writing.

In consequence, this needs the teacher's roles to assist and guide the students in order to achieve the learning objectives. The traditional approach is not effective for educational solutions that should refer to active learning. Therefore, this perspective in the process of teaching and learning writing should be changed from using the

teacher-centered approach to the student-centered approach. One of the methods used in the process approach is Project-Based learning (PjBL).

PjBL is a method that allows students to design, plan, and carry out an extended project that produces a publicly exhibited output such as a product, publication, or presentation. PjBL is underpinned by learning theories of constructivism and situated learning theory and is strongly influenced by the ideas 'learning by doing' features. Based on the preliminary research, it was found that students learned the concept from the teacher's explanation. The explanation of the material, presenting the text is still dominated by teachers which cause the students to be rarely involved in the learning process and it is usually teacher centered, teachers usually become the only source of learning in the classroom, and a textbook is the only learning material. It indicates that the teacher role only is not enough. The students are expected to participate actively in the classroom.

Regarding the potential of Project-based Learning and the complexity of writing, research on this needs to be conducted. This problem leads to the need for conducting research in investigating the effect of Project-Based Learning on students' writing skill. This research aims to describe the implementation of project-based learning in elevating the students' ability in writing and on describing the students' opinion of the implementation of project-based learning in teaching writing.

II. METHOD AND THEORY

2.1 Research Method

This study used a qualitative method with Classroom Action Research. The subject of this research is 20 students of class B of English Course in Bali named Rumah Belajar. The techniques used were pre-test, treatment and post-test, note-taking techniques, and structured interview techniques. The objective of this research is to describe the implementation of teaching writing using Project-Based Learning (PjBL) to improve the ability of the students on writing. Narmaditya, Winarning, and Wulandari (2017) asserted that classroom action research is defined as one of the problem-solving strategies that uses specific actions and capacity-building processes to identify and solve problems. This research consists of four stages, namely: planning, doing, observing, and reflecting. In other words, teachers know the problems in the classroom and find out the solution to solve the problems. In this research, writing became the problem of the students and lecturer offered project-based learning as the solution of the problem that were faced by students. This action research is planned in two cycles.

2.2 Theoretical Framework

2.2.1 Project Based Learning

Project-based learning is a learning model used in this study. By implementing this learning model, it is expected that students' morphological abilities in writing in English can be improved. The project-based learning model was developed by Dewey (1886) as a critique of traditional learning at that time. Project based learning helps students to inquire. Students drive their own learning through inquiry, as well as work collaboratively to create projects that reflect their knowledge. Moreover, project-based learning fosters students to critical thinking. It causes students to get engaged in critical thinking to construct their own meaning by applying what they learn. In addition, Project-based learning consists of recognizable units of work with a beginning, middle, and end which are linked to form a tangible final-product in which the students can gain a real sense of achievement. Project-based learning is an individual or group activity which is done within a determined timeline, resulting in a product, presentation, or performance.

Based on the theories defined by the experts above, it can be inferred that project-based learning is a teaching technique in which students are given a problem or challenge as a means of gaining new knowledge or skills. Project-based learning is a student-centred approach as it requires students to be an active learner and gives them a chance to explore knowledge and skills through the given project. It engages students to critical thinking and

enables students to work cooperatively with others. Brown (2001) states the term of technique is used throughout this thesis because technique is the specific activities manifested in the teaching and learning process in the classroom to realize the learning objective

Project-based learning is a learning model that provides students with the opportunity to plan, implement, and evaluate projects. It can be concluded that project-based learning is a systematically structured learning model that involves students actively working together to build knowledge and develop skills through project work that includes designing, problem solving, decision making, project creation and presentation of results.

2.2.2 English Language Teaching

The existences of English language as a mean of international communication cannot be denied anymore. Globalization era also proves that English language as media that is more needed to get communication. Thus, mastery of English is very important, particularly as medium of instruction for science and modern technology. It indicates the role of the teacher in English language teaching is very important.

It has been suggested that students of EFL tend to be learning so that they can use English when traveling or to communicate with other people, from whatever country, who also speak English. ESL students, on the other hand, usually live in the target language community. Harmer explains that around the world English is taught in a bewildering variety of situation. In many countries it first appears in the primary curriculum, but many universities in those and other countries continue to find that their entrants are insufficiently competent in English use.

According to Harmer (2007) on his book English teaching, like many other professions and diciplines, is almost overwhelmed by acronyms and initials. Although English is not their native language, they still need to learn the language for the purpose of getting immersed with their local communities and get themselves integrated in the immigrant's region. In the context of Asia, we can take Malaysia for an example, as English is one of their official languages and that they have historical links to British occupation, English is treated as their second language and the term for teaching it there is ESL. As for the TESOL, linguists usually use the term for giving emphasize to the metodologies of learning and teaching English as a profession.

The movement towards English as a foreign language began at independence, and English is now the main foreign language being learned in Indonesia. English is taught for eight or nine years from primary school through high school. The main objective is to provide reading skills to enable Indonesians to read science-related materials in English.

2.2.3 Writing Skills

Generally, language is divided into two major skills, receptive skills and productive skills. Receptive skills are skills needed to perceive and understand the language. Receptive skills consist of reading and listening. Meanwhile, writing and speaking belong to the productive skill of the language. Harmer (2007) states productive skills are skills which enable students to produce language by themselves. On the other hand, productive skills are required for learners to be able to build communication through the language.

Furthermore, Brown (2004) states that writing is the only skill which enables learner to produce a real product, in which the product is touchable, readable, as well as keep able for a long period of time. Written language can be re-read again in accordance with what the readers need. People also need permanent records which could be referred to repeatedly. Furthermore, written language tends to be more exact and precise than spoken language. Therefore, it will not cause any confusion, misunderstanding, or misinterpretation to the readers.

Other than that, writing can be defined as a learning process which involves critical thinking to convey one's ideas and thoughts. It is also an action or a process of discovering and organizing ideas into a paper as well as reshaping and revising. It is something which can be learnt through. Oates (2000) claims that writing is a unique way of learning since writing is integrative, requiring the active participation of both the right and left hemispheres of the brain, resulting in the production of meaning.

Therefore, it can be concluded that writing is a productive language which requires critical thinking process and is used as a means of communication to aspire someone's thoughts. Students of EFL can learn about writing in order to be able to be a good writer as well as convey and express their ideas as it is a learning process.

III. RESULT AND DISCUSSION

This part only focuses on discussing the result of the study about the implementation of project-based learning to improve students' writing ability in Rumah Belajar English Class. The first point of finding reflected the result of students' learning writing using Problem-Based Learning. The research was conducted using Classroom Action Research which consisted of two cycles. Before doing the cycle 1, the teacher began with pre-cycle. In this step, the teacher did the pre-test for the students to know their ability before the PBL was implemented. Here is the detail information of the result of implementing CAR to the students:

Pre cycle :

The researchers conducted the research within two months from April – June 2024. Every cycle consists of four steps; they are planning, action, observation, and reflection. In the first meeting, the researchers did pretest by asking the students to write two paragraphs regarding the topic that the students chose. The topic given was related to descriptive text. They were getting the opportunity to choose the topics by themselves to make them feel free to write, so that it could reflect their genuine ability of writing. The result was then used as the beginning score before implementing project-based learning as the score of pre-test 1. The mean score of pre-tests in this pre cycle was 60 and it was considered as a 'not good enough' score regarded to the minimum standart of score. Therefore, project-based learning was offered to be implemented to solve this problem. Then, the next step was cycle 1.

The researchers conducted the study over a two-month period, from April to June 2024. Each cycle consisted of four phases according to the CAR method: planning, action, observation, and reflection. During the first meeting, the researchers conducted a pre-test by asking students to write one paragraph on a selected topic. The given topic was linked to a descriptive text. Students were given the opportunity to freely choose the topic to write about, reflecting their actual writing ability. This result was then used as a starting point before implementing project-based learning as the score of pre-test 1. The average pre-test score of this pre-test was 60 and was considered "not good enough" compared to the minimum score standard. Therefore, project-based learning was proposed to address this issue. Then, the next step is cycle 1.

Cycle 1

After getting the score from pre-test in the pre cycle, the researchers did a planning step. They discussed about lesson plan and the topics that would be implemented in the classroom. Cycle 1 was conducted into three meetings and post-test for the fourth meeting.

1) Planning

The teacher wrote down five topics: education, my best friend, my favorite food, holidays, and animals. Each student could choose a subject based on their passion. Then they formed a group of 5 people. In a group, each student had the opportunity to choose a sub-topic about education and not every student could choose the same sub-topic, they had to have different views, but the goal was the same, education. They could choose topics based on real problems in society and find solutions. The teacher explains topic sentences and supporting sentences and asks students to analyze a paragraph before the cycle.

2) Action

Students were informed about the project and were required to submit mini essay at the end of the project. The teacher explained the steps involved in project-based learning, it is project initiation, project development, reporting, and evaluation. The teacher also explained editing and proofreading.

3) Observation

The teacher asked the students to write a paragraph in a group. They could discuss with their friends related to the content, vocabulary, etc of the text. Then, the students did peer correction. Peer correction was based on the criteria of proofreading that the students have already got in the previous meeting.

4) Reflecting

This meeting was used to conduct Post-Test 1. Post-Test was conducted by asking students to write an essay in the form of a descriptive text. In this part, students were free to choose the topic according to their interests. After students wrote the text, the researchers analyzed the results based on the writing component rubric. The results showed that the average score of cycle 1 after test 1 was 70. This means that there has been improvement based on the students' performance in the previous cycle. In the reflection phase, students have made good progress between the previous cycle, 60, and cycle 1, 70. Most students have good answers and are able to discuss actively. Students' critical thinking has emerged in the learning process, and it is meaningful to them. This can be seen in the peer comments they make with their peers in their group. They can share and analyze the text. However, some students are still confused and have no ideas to write. Some students cannot develop and write topic sentences and supporting sentences when writing essays. Grammar and punctuation errors are still present in students' writing. In summary, the activities performed by students are shown in Table below.

Table 3.1
The activities performed by students on cycle 1

Meeting	Topic	Activity
1	Gave 4 topics to students to be chosen	The students formed a group of 5 people and chose the topic
2	Explained about PjBL used in the activity	Set their plan and idea on the project given
3	Asked the students to finish the text and peer correction	Wrote a text and discussed it with group member, submitted the text, and peer correction with another group
4	Gave a post-test	The teacher gave the post-test

Cycle 2

The reflection gained from cycle 1 is used to review the outline for cycle 2. The teacher tried to explain more to the students about topic sentences and supporting sentences. The teacher gave the students some examples of grammar errors and punctuation and asked them to correct them. The teacher gave feedback and corrections to the students. Cycle 2 was divided into four meetings. The sessions conducted are:

1) Planning

The teacher asked the students to do individual exercises on subtopics. In this step, the teacher gave some topics to the students and the students had the opportunity to practice and develop their skills to develop concepts and create pieces of work. They wrote sentences on their topics.

2) Action

This meeting was held for the purpose of peer correction of students. Students realized their own writing mistakes by allowing their classmates to correct them. Students should also be given the opportunity to find mistakes in their friends' work. Recognizing mistakes helps them write better and helps them create a good

paper. Moreover, having a friend correct their work is less scary than having a teacher correct theirs. Through peer correction, students can learn better and correct any mistakes or errors they make.

3) Observation

The students designed their own layout for a mini essay that incorporated the expository essays they had already written. Each student had to collect their own writings and present them together as a mini essay in their group. The result of the project was a mini essay. After some revisions, students submitted a complete mini essay to their teacher that combined the essays of all their team members. The teacher then graded the students' writings as a grade for the writing subject. At this meeting, the teachers also conducted the post-test for cycle 2. The post-test was an individual test conducted in the classroom. Students had to write their own essays based on the mini essays they had written previously. They were given only 30 minutes to write their explanatory essay. After the post-test, the results were announced. The average grade in cycle 2 was 75. This means that the students improved quantitatively from the previous cycle to cycle 1 and from cycle 1 to cycle 2. The errors in grammar and punctuation were reduced, but some mistakes and errors were still found. However, there were fewer mistakes and errors than in the first meeting, which was good progress. This is the result of some steps implemented regarding the project-based learning chosen. Moreover, this project allowed me to develop my students' critical thinking skills, as they had to work both in groups and individually. This meant that they had the opportunity to discuss the content with their friends and then learn more individually. Moreover, the project being carried out could be something important to them.

5) Reflecting

In the last meeting, the students were asked some questions related to project based learning. It was done to reveal their responses toward the use of Project-based learning in teaching writing descriptive text in their class. Interview was conducted to the students. The result showed that most of the students had positive responses to project-based learning. It could happen since they felt that the method use could effectively improve their ability which measured through several tests: pre-test, post-test 1, and post-test 2. Moreover, the project given engaged the students in solving a real problem and answering it. For easy checking, Table 2 serves the summary of the activities in cycle 2.

Table 3.2
The activities performed by students on cycle 2

Meeting	Topic	Activity
1	Write individual text	Asked the students to write individual text with the same topics given
2	Peer correction	The students read and revised their friend's writing
3	Design layout and post test	Collect their own text and compiled it to attach in mini essay, revised it and made final decision, and students did their writing activities
4	Reflection	Students answered some questions delivered by the researcher

There are some improvements in Cycle two, as follows:

1. The students' score of the posttest two is increased. From 70 in the post test one became 76 in the post test two. This score showed that the students understand the topic and they can apply this topic in their real life.
2. During the lesson, the students seem more interesting and enthusiastic in learning English. They can discuss with their group they start to communicate what they get at the end of the lesson. So, when the students did the project the reseracher observes the activity of the students

The students showed improvement after Treatment One, where they were taught using project-based learning. They discussed and worked on projects with guidance from the researcher, leading to more active participation and enthusiasm among the students. The class atmosphere and varied skills within the groups motivated students to work on their projects diligently.

IV. CONCLUSION

Through all the analysis and observation during classroom activities, the instruction of expository writing with project-based approach in Rumah Belajar English Course, Denpasar was good. Students from different schools are constantly improving their English skills. This condition has a positive impact on English teachers who teach English lessons in the classroom. The researcher conducted two cycles of eight meetings in total, three meetings for inspection and five meetings for treatment. The cycle includes the steps of planning, acting, observing, and reflecting. From the data collected by the researcher, it can be concluded that using project-based learning in writing classes improves students' grades and English learning activities. The improvement is twofold: (1) The post-test scores have improved, increasing from 60.00 in pre-test to 70.00 in post-test 1 and 75.00 in post-test 2; (2) There is an improvement in the quality of the learning process, as students are seen to be more active and enthusiastic in learning English.

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