IMPLEMENTING PROJECT-BASED LEARNING TO IMPROVE FIFTH-GRADE STUDENTS' ENGLISH LEARNING

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Abstract: Project-based learning (PjBL), a teaching method, improves students' skills through projects. This study aimed to assess the impact of implementing PjBL on fifth-grade English language skills. Data collection used a qualitative approach through questionnaires and surveys. The questionnaire responses were analyzed to describe the findings, and qualitative data were gathered from a survey on students' interest in learning English. This study focused on how PjBL was implemented in fifth-grade English lessons at SDN Soronalan 2 Sawangan and students' perceptions of the method. Before using PjBL, many students (85%) had scored below 80, showing low performance. Only a few students (15%) had scores above 80. After the exposure of PjBL, many students (85%) obtained high scores above 80, and a few students (15%) got low scores. It indicated that there was a significant improvement in learning outcomes. The study concluded that PjBL effectively enhanced English learning outcomes for fifth-grade elementary students.

Keywords: descriptive, elementary school, project-based learning

INTRODUCTION

English is a foreign language learned from elementary school until high school. Many methods and strategies are used in English lessons. One is project-based learning, which focuses on student-centered activity in class. Project-based learning is an approach frequently used in the Merdeka Curriculum. According to Ngadiso et al. (2021), teaching in its application aims to increase student collaboration in completing projects to reflect their knowledge, such as

project-based learning; this method is one of the new things that can be used in the classroom. Learning that focuses on student activity and environmental influences can be linked to education in the surrounding life and is transformative and sustainable education (Wahbeh et al., 2021). The method allows the students to practice teamwork by collaborating with their peers and group. Therefore, the methods that are suitable for use in elementary school to improve student creativity and collaborative learning.

Based on Hamidah et al. (2020), Project-based learning has standard main principles, including disagreement on a topic, long-term observation, originality, student wishes, reflection, criticism, and revision. The principal must promote active learning while the active

student is in the classroom. On the other hand, starting in the classroom, going out into the world, and returning to the classroom (Pham, 2018).

Implementing PjBL in the Independent Curriculum is critical to achieving learning objectives. According to Hamidah et al. (2020), Project-based Learning consists of three main stages: planning, implementation, and reporting. To design the learning, teachers often use these strategies to prepare the activity to create a good learning environment and help students implement the learning to understand the English lesson. Teachers can also design how to make creative learning to get active students. The third stage is reporting, which is how the students can present their results in front of the class and how the teachers give some feedback,

including excellent and critical feedback, for students to develop and revise their results. Teachers can give achievement to students so that students are interested in the lesson and the method used in the learning. Creative learning is essential in creating a new learning environment. Furthermore, students are more bored with monotonous systematic learning; students can also interact more with their friends, foster self-confidence when expressing their opinions to friends, respect each other with their peers, and increase the spirit of cooperation among students in completing a job. Therefore, teachers can use several methods or techniques to create creative classroom learning. Teachers can apply project-based learning in English lessons.

Project-based learning has several stages. Chen et al. (2022) established that a project-based teaching-learning approach encompasses five phases. The first task in the course structure involves mapping the course of its structure in terms of stage, phases, and expected achievement. The second stage addressed the requirement for conceptualization and assessment of teaching activities alongside the evaluation of creativity. This is succeeded by the third phase, which concerns the elaboration of these activities besides measuring creativity. The fourth stage is the practical activity with the planned projects implemented in project-based learning courses. Last of all, the fifth stage features projections of the project outcomes and the evaluation of the learning process.

School is a formal learning environment in which students gain knowledge. The learning process occurs in communication between the teacher and students using open and environmental materials. One of the education levels for students is elementary school. Children older than five have grown and changed a lot since they were toddlers. They can think more carefully, and their behavior and feelings have also changed (Elihami, 2022). Elementary school education further introduces students' thinking, so it becomes an essential level in education. One of the teachers' efforts in free learning is to present learning with various learning models adapted to their students' potential and learning motivation.

One of the learning models that teachers can apply is project-based learning. In this study, the researchers found a problem in teaching elementary school students: they are more bored following English lessons because of more conventional learning with manual and teacher-centered strategies; students also cannot interact more with friends only focus on individual results and do not create a culture of discussing well to increase student confidence so that with this method can improve students' abilities in projects. In this research, the authors aim to improve previous research by specifying improvements in students' learning abilities in English. The authors found several previous studies that related to this research. Ngadiso et al. (2021) found that the PjBL method could make class situations more effective and positively impact students and teachers. Cintang et al.

(2018) also claimed that learning with this method cooperatively increases students' abilities in foreign languages.

Additionally, Chen et al. (2022) mentioned the five stages of implementation of project-based learning such as planning, designing, developing the material, implementation, and pre-presentation. Another study showed that there are three stages of project-based learning. According to Hamidah et al. (2020), Project-based Learning consists of three main stages: planning, implementation, and reporting. Based on several problems above, this study aims to implement the PBJL methods to improve learning outcomes in elementary school. Therefore, this study has two research questions: How was PjBL implemented in the fifth grade of elementary school

students? How were the students' outcomes after the implementation of PjBL?

METHODOLOGY

This study applies qualitative methods using project-based learning with a survey approach. In qualitative research, a theory is often seen as a broad explanation for behaviors and attitudes. It is typically stated in terms of constructs or variables, which are interrelated and specified in propositions or hypotheses, outlining the direction or magnitude of relationships between them (Creswell, 2018). Participants in this research were fifth-grade students. The participants were students at an elementary school in Indonesia. Furthermore, the fifth-grade students were divided into several study

groups to implement these project-based learning methods.

Data collection was taken from questionnaires and surveys. In qualitative research, questionnaires can be designed with closed-ended and open-ended questions to explore participants' perceptions, experiences, and insights, allowing for a deeper understanding of the subject matter beyond statistical data (Roopa & Rani, 2012). For a survey to be successful, the questionnaire must be appropriately constructed. The survey consists of a questionnaire about the research topic (Gürbüz, 2017). The questionnaire was created to guarantee that it was transparent and pertinent to the study's goals, enabling participants to supply correct and significant data. The survey included closed-ended and open-ended questions to increase the validity and

dependability of the data gathered, providing respondents with a combination of structured alternatives and elaboration chances.

This exploration is carried out by collecting data in the form of important information using long-term techniques. Therefore, researchers used a survey and questionnaire with a descriptive qualitative approach. Qualitative research focuses on understanding phenomena from participants' perspectives, emphasizing context and meaning through in-depth exploration (Creswell & Poth, 2016). Researchers want to know how important it is to implement projects in elementary schools. Therefore, researchers conducted research by implementing project-based planning in carrying out learning activities to determine the influence that would

have on student responses. The researcher made several teaching groups and explained how this method could be realized in learning. In the next activity, the researcher can start student activities to create projects that have been designed previously. Finally, the researcher can evaluate the knowledge that has been implemented.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The Implementation of PjBL in the fifth grade of elementary school students

Concerning the implementation of PjBL among fifth-grade students of elementary school, the writers designed project-based learning implemented in elementary school, especially in English lessons. Implementing project-based learning involves three stages: planning, implementation, and reporting. First, the planning stage included some steps such as (1) determining the material and preparing the project assignment: In this section, the teacher prepared the material that would be applied to the project assignment. (2) when designing plans, students and teachers determine planning before learning related to selecting activities and material tools that support the project's success. (3) setting the schedule explaining when the project will be implemented and when the introduction will be given.

Second, the implementation stage included teaching activities such as (1) Teachers can prepare tools and media used in the implementation of project-based learning. (2) Teachers explain the topic, the learning material's objectives, and the project workflow to students. (3) Teachers

design collaborative learning by creating several groups consisting of several students. (4) Teachers provide tools and materials used in making the project. (5) Students listen to the teacher's directions when the teacher explains the project given. (6) Students carry out projects with groups that have been made before; students can also customize their results according to their creativity. (7) Students can present their work well in front of the class to achieve learning objectives.

Third, reporting that covered the teacher's activities such as (1) assessing how students understand the material by applying project-based learning. (2) seeing how students work together to complete the project. (3) determining the student's ability to present their work. (4) evaluating whether the learning objectives have been achieved. (5) asking whether the students are happy with the English subject. (6) giving a questionnaire to determine whether students can accept the learning provided.

In the Merdeka Curriculum, there is no doubt that project-based learning (PjBL) is a staple approach. It was intended to be self-organizing and to improve students' ability to work in groups. PjBL can be implemented in high school education systems. However, it was found to be a relatively new concept in elementary school settings. This study focused on implementing PjBL in a fifth-grade English class, following three main stages: planning, implementation, and reporting. These stages provide a structured framework for effectively applying PjBL in elementary education.

The study reveals that the use of PjBL in fifth grade had a positive impact on students. It enhanced the students' learning motivation, their performance in applying critical thinking skills to complete the projects, and their performance in working in groups. Moreover, it transformed the practice from doing business in a teacher-focused method to a more fascinating student-focused method.

Overall, PjBL has a positive impact on elementary school students, fostering motivation, collaboration, and critical thinking while creating a more interactive and engaging learning environment.

The Student's Engagement during the Implementation of PjBL in Elementary School

Project-based learning method excites students as they can work closely with peers, complete projects together, express creativity, and gain knowledge. It also shifts the learning environment from teacher-centered to student-centered, encouraging collaboration and fostering mutual respect among group members.
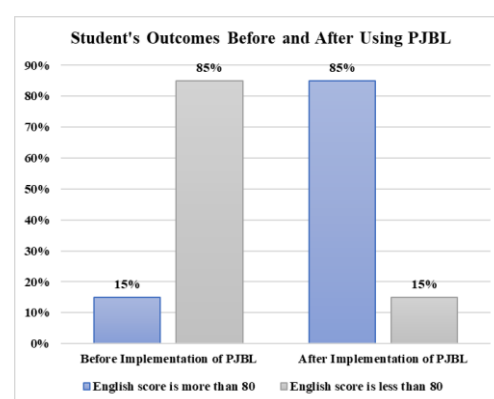

Figure 1. Students' outcomes Before and After Using Project-based learning

The diagram shows improved English learning outcomes with Project-Based Learning. Before its use, 85% of students scored below 80, while only 15% scored above 80, indicating generally low performance in English.

With Project-Based Learning (PjBL), students became more active

in English lessons, improving their results. 85% scored above 80, and only 15% scored below, showing that PjBL effectively boosts learning outcomes in elementary schools.

Project-based learning (PjBL) involves three main stages: planning, implementation, and reporting (Hamidah et al., 2020). During the planning stage, teachers prepare materials, set learning objectives, and outline PjBL stages. They also guide students and arrange tools and media for collaborative learning. According to Chen et al. (2022), PjBL includes five stages: planning course phases and achievements, designing and developing teaching activities while evaluating creativity, implementing the course, and pre-assessing project outcomes. PjBL has been shown to improve learning outcomes in elementary schools.

Students follow the teacher's guidance to complete their projects, allowing them to express creativity and achieve learning objectives in a student-centered approach. In the reporting stage, the teacher evaluates the results and assesses whether PjBL met its goals. Teachers can provide feedback or praise to student groups after project completion. Overall, PjBL has a positive impact, making learning more active and student-centered.

Implementation of project-based learning methods has some positive impact on students in elementary school, significantly improving learning outcomes. According to Kartika and Susilo (2022), using PjBL has significantly improved students' critical thinking skills. The result showed that students like English lessons, but some also

dislike English lessons. One of the things that causes students to dislike English lessons is that the methods used are not appropriate, the way teachers teach is boring, and there needs to be more motivation for students to learn English. This is what we need to change and motivate students to learn English. Therefore, the writers introduced a new teaching method to students: project method learning. Students' perception of project method learning is excellent, and students can more easily understand learning with this method. Project method learning positively impacts students by promoting critical thinking and a deeper understanding of the material (Zhang et al., 2023). This is due to students' motivation to learn English with a project-based learning method. This teaching method is varied. There is a

discussion session with a group of friends and a place to create their creativity in learning. In addition to students, teachers also feel the difference between using project-based learning teaching methods and previous teaching methods; it can be seen how enthusiastic students are when completing projects, how students can understand teaching materials with collaborative learning and make the classroom atmosphere which initially only listens to the teacher explaining the material becomes student-centered.

Research indicates that PjBL fosters a more engaging learning environment where students are actively involved and motivated (Huang et al., 2023). Thus, Students' views on implementing learning using this method positively influence students in elementary schools.

CONCLUSION

Project-based learning (PjBL) is a common method in the Merdeka Curriculum. It promotes independent learning and enhances students' collaborative skills. However, the method is often used in high schools and is a new teaching method in elementary schools. In this study, the researcher implemented learning English in fifth-grade elementary school. The teacher has three stages in its implementation: planning, implementation, and reporting. These three stages contain how project-based learning can be implemented well in elementary school. Implementing project-based learning in fifth grade has many positive perceptions for students. Among them

are increasing students' motivation to learn, their way of thinking to complete the project, their ability to apply collaborative learning, and changing the teaching technique from teacher-centered to student-centered. To sum up, project-based learning has a positive and good perception for students.

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