Project-Based Learning on English Learning Based on Students' Perception

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ABSTRACT

English is the language used as a medium of instruction in many international activities and serves as a global lingua franca. In Indonesia, where English is not the mother tongue, its learning at every educational level is crucial for preparing students to compete in the global arena. One of the methods applied in English learning is Project-Based Learning (PBL), a model that emphasizes independent learning, problem-solving, collaboration, and the production of tangible outcomes or real projects. This study aims to explore students' perceptions of PBL in English learning, focusing on its impact on engagement, motivation, skill development, and overall learning experience. Using a descriptive survey method, data were collected from 94 respondents consisting of school and university students through questionnaires, interviews, observations, and documentation. The findings reveal that most respondents perceive PBL positively, reporting increased enthusiasm, activeness, motivation, and enjoyment in learning English. Additionally, PBL was found to enhance presentation skills, foster creativity, strengthen problem-solving abilities, and provide meaningful learning experiences connected to real-world contexts. The study concludes that PBL is not only effective in improving language proficiency but also suitable for implementation across all levels of education in Indonesia. These results suggest that integrating PBL into English language instruction can significantly contribute to developing 21st-century skills and preparing students for both academic and professional success.

Keywords: Project Based Learning; English Learning; Student's Perception

INTRODUCTION

English, as one of the subjects taught in schools and universities, is a subject that every student must master to compete effectively on the international stage. This is because English is an international language, the language used for international communication. Specifically, learning English will improve each student's academic performance, thereby enhancing their competitiveness in the global

marketplace. English language skills will boost their confidence in competing nationally and internationally. English is currently used as an international language. In Indonesia, English is not the mother tongue of native Indonesians, so its teaching in schools and universities is crucial to ensure Indonesian students develop internationally recognized language skills.

The learning process currently implemented by educational institutions is based on a government-mandated curriculum. This learning is project-based. In this project-based learning, students are given project assignments based on the material they have studied to hone the knowledge they have gained from their teachers and lecturers. According to Thomas (in Wena, 2008), project-based learning is a learning model that provides teachers with the opportunity to manage classroom learning by involving project work. Project-based learning (PBL) is an application of active learning. Simply put, project-based learning is defined as teaching that attempts to connect technology with everyday life problems familiar to students, or with school projects. Meanwhile, Trianto (2011) states that the project-based learning model has enormous potential to create a more engaging and beneficial learning experience for students.

In the big Indonesian dictionary "A project is a work plan with specific targets and with a firm completion time". Joel L Klein et. Al in Widyantini (2014) explains that "Project-based learning is a learning strategy that empowers students to gain new knowledge and understanding based on their experiences through various presentations". Thomas, et al (1999) in Wati (2013) stated that Project-based learning is a learning model that provides opportunities for teachers to manage learning in the classroom by involving project work. Thomas, et al (Wina, 2009) stated that Project Based Learning is learning that provides opportunities for teachers to manage learning in the classroom by involving project work.

Students who participate in project-based learning will gain a more engaging and beneficial learning experience. According to the Buck Institute for Education (M. Hosnan, 2014), project-based learning is a systematic learning method that involves students in learning knowledge and skills through the process of investigating real-world problems and creating carefully designed works. Meanwhile, according to Ridwan Abdullah Sani (2014), it is a teaching and learning process that involves students working on a project that is useful for solving community or environmental problems.

The characteristics of project-based learning according to the Center for Youth Development and Education Boston (M. Hosnan, 2014) are: 1) Students make their own decisions within a predetermined framework. 2) Students attempt to solve a problem or challenge that does not have a single definitive answer. 3) Students are encouraged to think critically, solve problems, collaborate, and try various forms of communication. 4) Students are responsible for finding and managing the information they collect. 5) Evaluation is carried out continuously throughout the project. 6) Students regularly reflect and contemplate what they have done, both the

process and the results. Project work in project-based learning is seen in the process, creativity and activities of students in the learning process so that it will have an impact on improving student learning outcomes.

Based on this opinion, it can be concluded that Project-Based Learning is a model that emphasizes students being able to learn independently by solving problems they face which can ultimately result in a real project or work. Departing from the opinions of experts which are then concluded as above, the author raises the theme of "Project-Based English Learning Based on the Perceptions of Students and College Students" which aims to find out about project-based English learning based on the perceptions of students and college students, with the hope that it will become a consideration in the teaching and learning process in every formal and non-formal educational institution.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Learning

The conscious and deliberate process of changing behavior to achieve specific goals is called learning. Experts have different definitions, but generally speaking, learning is understood as the interaction between students and the learning environment, teachers, and learning resources to acquire knowledge, skills, and attitudes. Learning is a conscious and deliberate process of behavioral change aimed at achieving specific goals. Experts offer various definitions, but generally, learning is understood as the interaction between students and the learning environment, including teachers and learning resources, to acquire knowledge, skills, and attitudes. Sudjana (2012) stated that learning is an effort made by teachers to encourage students to engage in learning activities. Meanwhile, Andi Andi Setiawan (2017) stated that learning is a conscious and deliberate process of change that leads to systematic activities for improvement. And, Ihsana (2017) said that learning is the process of going from not knowing to knowing, from not understanding to understanding, and from not being able to being able. From these definitions, it can be concluded that learning is an active process that involves interaction and efforts to achieve positive changes in the individual.

Project Based Learning

An activity designed to achieve a specific goal with specific limitations, resources, and a clear end result that is temporary and unique is called a project. In a project, to produce the desired results, the series of tasks must be well organized and coordinated. Rani (2016) stated that a project is an activity carried out with limited time and resources to achieve a specified end result. In achieving the end result, project activities are limited by budget, schedule, and quality, known as the triple constraint. One form of learning that provides children with the opportunity to solve problems independently is project-based learning. Trianto (2011) states that learning is a complex aspect of human activity that cannot be fully explained. In

other words, learning can be simply defined as the product of ongoing interactions between development and life experiences. Learning, in its complex sense, is a teacher's conscious effort to educate their students (directing their interactions with other learning resources) in order to achieve desired goals. The emergence of the Project Based Learning learning model cannot be separated from the theoretical principles put forward by several figures, including a. Piaget and Vygotsky with constructivism, Piaget stated that students' knowledge will develop when students face new experiences that will build and modify initial knowledge, while Vygotsky is famous for social constructivism where in constructing an individual's thoughts, they are influenced by their social environment with scaffolding and ZPD theories.

METHOD

Design and Sample

This study employed a descriptive survey method, which is a problem-solving procedure that describes the condition of a subject or object based on observed facts without making broader generalizations. The aim was to obtain factual information on students' perceptions of Project-Based Learning (PBL) in English language instruction. The research was conducted in South Tangerang, Banten, involving a total of 94 respondents, consisting of both school students and university students residing in the area.

Instrument and Procedures

The instruments used for data collection included questionnaires, interviews, observations, and documentation. The questionnaire was designed to measure students' perceptions of PBL based on several aspects such as engagement, motivation, skill development, and learning challenges. Interviews were conducted to obtain deeper qualitative insights, while observations allowed the researchers to record student behavior and participation during the learning process. Documentation, such as lesson plans and student project outputs, was also collected to support data triangulation. Data collection followed these steps: (1) administering questionnaires to all respondents, (2) conducting interviews with selected participants, (3) observing PBL sessions, and (4) gathering relevant supporting documents.

Data Analysis

The data were analyzed using a quantitative descriptive approach. Responses from the questionnaires were tabulated and presented in the form of frequency distributions and percentages for each research variable. The results were then illustrated through tables, charts, and graphs to facilitate interpretation. Qualitative data from interviews and observations were used to complement the quantitative findings, providing richer insights into the participants' perceptions of PBL in English learning.

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

The analysis of the survey responses reveals that students generally hold positive perceptions of Project-Based Learning (PBL) in English language instruction. Beginning with comprehension, 72.3% of respondents agreed that PBL helps them better understand the material being studied. By actively applying concepts in real projects, students were able to reinforce their grasp of the content, moving beyond rote memorization. A smaller portion, 21.3%, maintained a neutral stance, while 6.3% disagreed, suggesting that for some learners, more traditional instructional approaches might remain preferable.
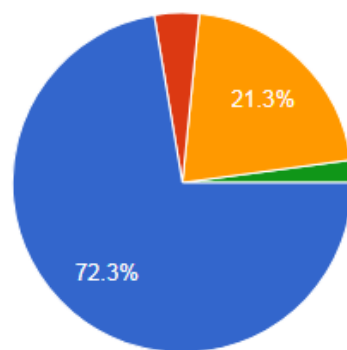
Figure 1: PBL helps Students to understand

Building on this, students also reported that PBL makes learning more engaging and enjoyable. A total of 71.3% found it to be interesting and fun, appreciating the collaborative work and creative activities that replaced repetitive exercises. The 19.1% who were neutral and the 9.6% who disagreed may have experienced less satisfaction due to factors such as group dynamics or the nature of the assigned projects.
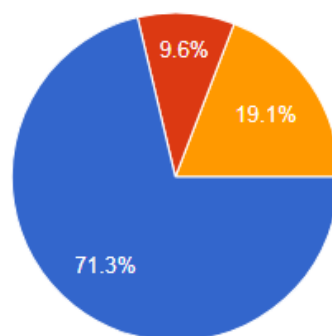

Figure 2: PBL is Engaging and Fun

In addition to enjoyment, PBL was perceived as an effective tool for developing problem-solving skills. Nearly four out of five respondents (79.8%) agreed that the method encouraged them to think critically and find solutions to challenges encountered during their projects. Only 19.1% were neutral, and a mere 1.1% disagreed, indicating a strong consensus on the cognitive benefits of the approach.
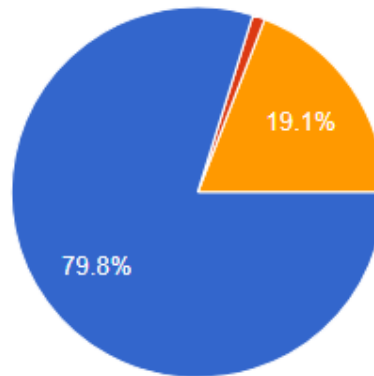
Figure 3: PBL helps in developing problem solving skills.

This problem-solving emphasis also appears to have contributed to notable improvements in students' presentation abilities. The highest level of agreement was recorded here, with 88.3% acknowledging that PBL enhanced their skills in delivering presentations before an audience. By preparing and showcasing project outcomes, students developed both confidence and fluency in spoken English. The small number who were neutral (8.5%) or disagreed (3.2%) may have had limited opportunities to present or experienced anxiety during public speaking.
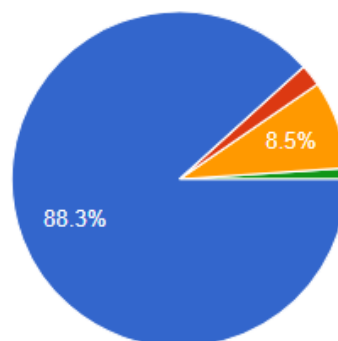

Figure 4.PBL helps in improving skill presentations

Alongside these skill-related benefits, PBL was found to boost motivation. The same 71.3% who appreciated its role in comprehension also reported that the method increased their willingness to engage in learning tasks. The motivational boost likely stems from the sense of ownership students feel over their work, although 19.1% remained neutral and 9.5% disagreed, possibly due to workload concerns or lack of interest in the project topic.
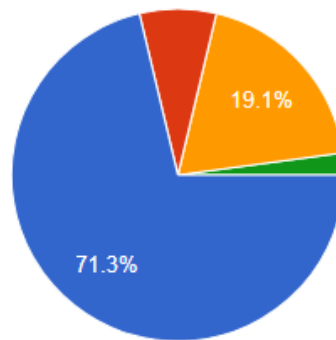
Figure 4. PBL increases learning motivation

Motivation was further reinforced by the unique challenges inherent in PBL, which 85.1% of respondents agreed made them more active participants in their learning. These challenges often required planning, researching, and collaborating— activities that pushed students to take initiative. Similarly, 76.6% felt that these same challenges made learning more exciting, indicating that the combination of novelty and personal responsibility can energize the learning process.
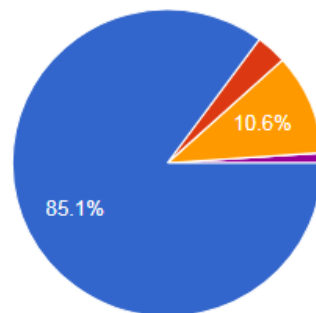

Figure 5.PBL provides unique challenges to become more active in learning

When considering the broader applicability of PBL, opinions were more varied. While 61.7% of respondents believed it is suitable for every educational level in Indonesia, a significant 25.5% felt it should be reserved for higher education, and 9.6% suggested limiting it to upper primary grades. These differing perspectives may reflect concerns over cognitive readiness, resource availability, and curriculum demands at various stages of schooling.
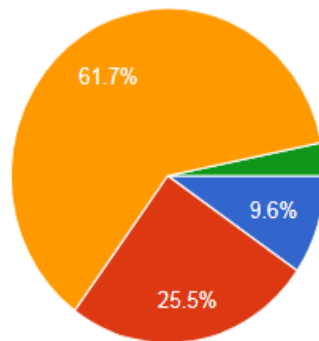
Figure 8: PBL for every level of education

Taken together, the results suggest that PBL is widely viewed as an effective, engaging, and skill-enhancing approach to English language learning. It is particularly valued for its capacity to improve comprehension, foster active participation, develop problem-solving and presentation skills, and increase motivation. While its universal applicability remains a point of debate, the overall evidence from this study supports PBL as a valuable method for fostering both language proficiency and essential 21st-century competencies.

The current research aligns well with recent theoretical advancements and empirical findings on Project-Based Learning (PBL) in English education. According to Sedubun and Nurhayati (2024), PBL fosters meaningful language use, learner autonomy, and communicative competence—elements strongly reflected in our findings on comprehension, engagement, motivation, and skill development. Kokotsaki et al. (2016) reviewed PBL literature and highlighted its role in promoting learner engagement and the development of 21st-century skills—findings echoed in our data, where students reported increased engagement, motivation, and presentation abilities

Imbaquingo and Cárdenas (2023) demonstrated that PBL notably improves reading comprehension, reinforcing our respondents' views that PBL enhances understanding of material. Similarly, Jumaniyazova (2025) emphasized PBL's effectiveness in cultivating communicative competence and learner autonomy key outcomes perceived by our participants. Moreover, Maulina's classroom action research (2022) found that PBL promotes student engagement, motivation, and language proficiency, particularly in speaking and writing consistent with improvements reported by our respondents.

When it comes to motivation specifically, our results align with Dörnyei's process-oriented model, which frames motivation as dynamic and evolving through goal-directed action, intentional effort, and reflection. The autonomy and project ownership inherent in PBL appear to facilitate such motivational mechanisms especially notable in our findings on increased engagement and active learning.

While most respondents viewed PBL favorably, the diversity of views on its suitability across educational levels aligns with the challenges noted in the literature. Wang and Qi (2022) flagged implementation complexities in ELT due to factors like teacher readiness and curriculum structure. This study reinforces the contemporary theoretical consensus that PBL is not merely a pedagogical method but a holistic framework that enriches language instruction, fosters autonomy, and nurtures essential skills. While the broad enthusiasm among students underscores PBL's transformative potential, careful adaptation to educational levels, teacher support, and systemic structures remains critical for its effective implementation.

CONCLUSION

From the discussion above, it can be known that 72.3% of students agreed that "Project Based on learning helps to understand the material being studied", 71.3% of respondents agreed "Project Based on Learning is Engaging and Fun",79.8% of respondents agreed that "Project Based on Learning Helps in developing problem solving skills", 79.8% of respondents agreed that "Project Based on Learning helps improve presentation skills", 88.3% of respondents agreed that "Project Based on Learning Increases learning motivation", 85.1% of respondents agreed that "Project Based on Learning provides its own challenges that can make learning more exciting", 76.6% of respondents agreed that "Project Based on Learning provides its own challenges that can make learning more exciting", 61.7% of respondents stated that they agreed that "Project-based on learning is suitable for every level of education in Indonesia". It can be concluded that project-based on learning in English can help students understand the material, increase enthusiasm, engagement, and motivation, improve problem-solving and presentation skills, and increase interest and enjoyment in learning English. And, importantly, project-based on learning is suitable for implementation at all levels of education in Indonesia.

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