

PROJECT-BASED LEARNING TO ENHANCE STUDENTS' CREATIVE THINKING SKILL ON LANGUAGE LEARNING

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Abstract

This research investigates the effectiveness of project-based learning in enhancing students' creative thinking skills in language learning. The aim is to explore the impact of project-based learning strategies, collaboration, technology integration, and real-world contexts on students' creative thinking abilities. Qualitative research approach was utilized, including surveys, observations, and project assessments. This research was applied to students at MTS Muhammadiyah 13 Solokuro who are currently starting to use the independent curriculum (Kurikulum Merdeka) in grade 7. The results indicate a positive impact of project-based learning on students' creative thinking skills, with improvements observed in idea generation, critical thinking, and problem-solving abilities. Collaboration and communication were found to be crucial elements in fostering creative thinking. The integration of technology and real-world contexts further enhanced students' creativity. The study highlights the importance of project-based learning in promoting students' motivation and engagement in language learning. However, there is a need for further research to explore long-term effects, individual differences, assessment strategies, teacher professional development, comparative studies, and generalizability. These findings provide insights for educators to effectively implement project-based learning and cultivate students' creative thinking skills in language education.

Keywords: Creative thinking skills, language learning, project-based learning

INTRODUCTION

In the realm of language learning, fostering creativity and critical thinking skills among students is essential for their overall linguistic development. Traditional approaches often focus on rote memorization and rigid exercises, which may limit students' ability to think creatively and use language in innovative ways. However, project-based learning offers a dynamic and engaging framework that can enhance students' creative thinking skills while improving their language proficiency. For nowadays the creativity skill is really needed to engage the life (Kaplan, 2019). in line with the curriculum currently enforced by the government, namely the independent curriculum (Kurikulum Merdeka) which prioritizes the student's center.

Project-based learning involves designing and implementing projects that require students to actively engage with the language, explore real-world contexts, and apply their knowledge in meaningful ways. By integrating creativity, problem-solving, and collaboration,

project-based learning not only enhances language skills but also nurtures students' ability to think outside the box, express their ideas effectively, and engage with language learning in a more meaningful and authentic manner. As stated by Kusadi et al (2020) that students which are involved in Project based learning are involved in authentic projects that the form concepts are proved as applicable in real world. Kusadi et al., (2020) also said that several studies related to PJBL have yet to find a satisfactory point because learning a project-based subject is still difficult to do and implement in class due to several constraints such as time, curriculum, availability of tools/materials and also most importantly related to teacher understanding about project-based learning (Kubiatko & Vaculova, 2011).

This paper explores the concept of project-based learning as a means to enhance students' creative thinking skills in language learning. There are some various strategies and practical ideas that educators can employ to implement project-based learning effectively. By embracing this approach, teachers can create an environment that stimulates students' imagination, encourages innovation, and cultivates a lifelong love for language learning. In project-based learning, students are at the center of the learning process, then the teachers can elaborate more about the way of teaching (Jalinus et al., 2017). Widayat (2018) stated that the purpose of learning for this era is “to develop the talents, interests and potential of students so that they are characterized and competent”. From this point, teachers must carry out assessment and learning activities in which relevant to the characteristics of this century learning so that they can achieve the learning objectives.

In the process of project-based learning “the emergence of project work can be seen in the process, creativity, and student activities which will have an impact on improving student learning outcomes”(Rati et al., 2017). Creative thinking plays a crucial role in language learning as it enables students to go beyond mere memorization and repetition. When students engage in creative thinking, they are more likely to generate unique ideas, explore different perspectives, and find innovative solutions to language-related challenges. Creative thinking enhances their ability to express themselves fluently and effectively, adapt to different communication situations, and develop a deeper understanding of the language.

Meanwhile, project-based learning is an instructional approach that centers around the completion of meaningful projects. In the context of language learning, projects can be designed to address specific language skills such as speaking, writing, listening, or reading. These projects should provide opportunities for students to use the language creatively, solve problems, and collaborate with their peers. A study that was conducted by Syarifah & Emiliyasi (2019) which studied the use of project-based learning to examine the abilities and creativity of students in writing one of text, which is narrative text and the students' perceptions in writing subjects of learning implementation.(Syarifah & Emiliyasi, 2019) The research

showed that project-based learning can help students improve their abilities and creativity in a variety of ways to write narrative text. The National Council for Excellence in Critical Thinking (2020) famous that it is an savvy people taught prepare of conceptualizing and applying data coming about from perception, involvement, thinking, deduction, or communication, as a chunk of prove for conviction and activity (“The National Council for Excellence in Critical Thinking (NCEC), Defining Critical Thinking,” 2021).

By doing project based learning, that can have some benefits, they are engagement and motivation: Project-based learning captures students' interest and promotes active participation, leading to higher engagement and motivation levels. The meaningful and authentic nature of projects ignites students' curiosity and passion for language learning. Language Integration and Authenticity: Projects encourage students to apply their language skills in real-world contexts, making the learning experience more authentic. By using language creatively, students develop a deeper understanding of its nuances, cultural implications, and communicative functions. Critical Thinking and Problem-Solving: Project-based learning cultivates students' critical thinking and problem-solving abilities. Through projects, students encounter challenges, analyze information, make decisions, and find innovative solutions. These cognitive skills are transferable to various areas of their lives beyond language learning. Collaboration and Communication Skills: Collaborative projects foster teamwork, effective communication, and the exchange of ideas. Students learn to listen actively, negotiate meaning, and express. Thus, project based learning can be characterized as the exercises carried out by an person or bunch to realize clear and particular objectives in a social setting, with all crave and eagerness (Al-Halfi & Al-Mousawi, 2019).

Hence, the research questions of this study are: (1) how does project-based learning impact students' creative thinking skills in language learning? And (2) how does project-based learning influence students' motivation and engagement in language learning? Then, the aim of this research is to investigate the effectiveness of project-based learning in enhancing students' creative thinking skills in language learning. The research seeks to explore the impact of project-based learning strategies, collaboration, technology integration, and real-world contexts on students' creative thinking abilities. Additionally, the study aims to examine the benefits and challenges of implementing project-based learning in language classrooms and its influence on students' motivation and engagement.

METHODOLOGY

To achieve the aim of investigating the effectiveness of project-based learning in enhancing students' creative thinking skills in language learning, qualitative research approach will be utilized. Descriptive qualitative methods gather comprehensive data and provide a deeper understanding of the research topic. The method used by the researcher was descriptive method, using a qualitative approach. The qualitative research method is a naturalistic research method because of the research carried out in natural conditions (natural settings), and the data collected was analyzed qualitatively (Sugiyono, 2014). Through this qualitative analysis, according to Creswell (2012), a broad, detailed and complete understanding of the perceptions and views of the informants will be obtained. (Cresswell, 2012)

This study used a qualitative approach with descriptive methods. Qualitative approaches are used to describe situations and social phenomena to some extent, the results of which are obtained in the form of descriptive and narrative descriptions, and are also used in the analysis of natural objects. In this study, a descriptive method was selected to explain various facts found in practice regarding the implementation of PBL in order to increase students' responsibility in learning social sciences.

The participants of this study were a language teacher of class VII and her MT students of class VII. MTs. Muhammadiyah 13 Solokuro Lamongan, there are 20 people. Data collection techniques in this study utilized observation, interviews, and document research. The research instrument is an important instrument in research activities in order to obtain and collect the data needed. Some instruments used in this study were observation guidelines, interview guidelines and documents. In analyzing the data, the researcher used Miles and Huberman (in Sugiyono, 2015). It is suggested that the activities in qualitative data analysis were carried out interactively and take place continuously until complete, so that the data can be saturated.

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

Findings

To achieve the aim of investigating the effectiveness of project-based learning in enhancing students' creative thinking skills in language learning, qualitative research approach was utilized. Descriptive qualitative methods gathers comprehensive data and provide a deeper understanding of the research topic. The method used by the researcher was descriptive method, using a qualitative approach. The qualitative research method is a naturalistic research method because of the research carried out in natural conditions (natural settings), and the data collected was analyzed qualitatively (Sugiyono, 2014). This qualitative analysis, according to

Creswell (2012), a broad, detailed and complete understanding of the perceptions and views of the informants are obtained.

Classroom observations was conducted to observe students' engagement, collaboration, and creative thinking during project-based learning activities. The researcher took notes and recorded relevant observations to gain insights into the implementation of project-based learning strategies and their impact on students' creative thinking skills. There were some steps that were done by the researcher. First, at this observation stage, the researcher asked permission from the language teacher to be allowed to interview regarding learning in the classroom first. Material in the first semester of the 2023/2024 academic year, the first is descriptive text, then narrative text and the last is procedural text. coincidentally, when the researcher made observations in the classroom, the learning that was taking place was about narrative text; travel in the world of imagination (*Berkelana di Dunia Imajinasi*).

“In this independent curriculum, teachers and schools are required to provide projects to students with the name of strengthening the profile of Pancasila students (P5) in at least 3 projects in 1 year. For subject teachers themselves, they also at least provide student projects in their respective classes according to the subjects taught.” (Ms. Fatin, 2023, Language teacher of MTs.M 13)

The researcher and the teachers also created lesson plans to provide projects to students in accordance with the material being taught, namely narrative texts. After finding a project that suits the material, the next step was determine the schedule for implementing the material and the project. There are two projects that were given to students in this period. The first was reading folklore which was recorded and then uploaded to the YouTube channel which was later called audio story telling. The second was telling a story using a pop-up book that was designed using a fable theme.

The projects completed by students as part of their project-based learning activities will be assessed for their creativity, language proficiency, problem-solving, and critical thinking skills. Students have completed the first and second assignments, the first project is related to audio story telling by having 2 teams. The project can be seen in this channel <https://youtu.be/Zy1opTeu5PQ?si=P07WLWIQP8tjhFTJ> entitled *Legenda Kota Lamongan*, and <https://youtu.be/0eFbaHL0YOA?si=5mNGFvDuyK9T2gAC> entitled *Legenda Desa Solokuro*. By viewing students' work digitally, teachers can see their work and hear how the story is told.

How students create content related to digital audio story telling on YouTube, students learn several things at a relatively young age, such as how they use digital platforms such as YouTube and make videos that are interesting to watch and listen. Then they also learn to make

good sentences so they can be understood easily. Of course, the main thing is that they try to tell a story very well. How they manage intonation, pauses, and so on.

The second project is telling the story by using pop-up book, before telling the story, the students should create their own pop-up book. According to the students, this is the first time they have seen or used a picture book that stands out as a learning medium, especially for language learning. They made a pop-up book and tried to write a fable inside it. And it's a new experience to tell the fable in class with all your friends listening. They also pride themselves on being able to create pop-up books that are very beautiful and certainly have a selling point. Classroom experiences definitely influence the way students think and understand. The 3-dimensional pop-up is sure to make a good impression during language learning, especially the Realia picture book is very colorful. (Arifatin, 2022)



Picture.1 Taking photos with some of the students and their pop-up book work

By having students' own work, they really enjoy language learning, as can be seen from several interviews conducted by the researcher. The interview used 2 statements that students agreed or disagreed that learning using pop-up books was fun and could improve students' creative thinking. The figures below displayed the students' result in answering the questions being asked when they were interviewed.

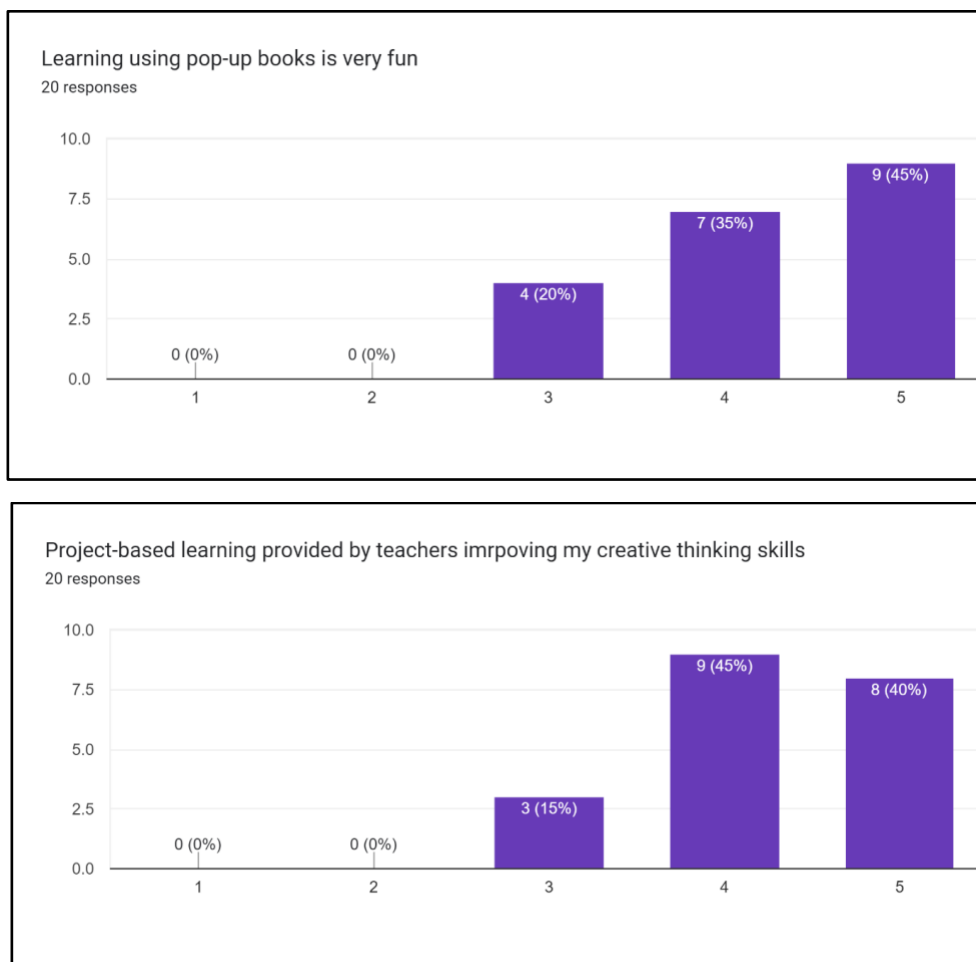


Figure 1. The Result of Students' Answer in Giving their Opinion in Using Pop -Up Books

The researcher conducted interviews by asking the students to fill out the questions from Google Form with five categories. From the results of the interview, it can be seen that out of 20 students, 45% answered that they strongly agreed that learning using pop-up books was very fun and 35% of students answered agree, and 20% thought this was normal. Thus, 80% of students think that learning using pop-up books as a form of project based learning is very fun. From the figure above, it can be seen that from the project results collected by students, language teachers, they are very satisfied in using this project-based because students can complete the task on time and their learning outcomes are achieved. Of the 20 students, 85% of students agreed that learning this project could improve their creative thinking skills. With details, 40% strongly agree, while 45% agree and 15% are okay.

Discussion

This project-based learning is given to students at the junior high school level in learning Indonesian. The researcher conducted class observations in order to find out what projects were appropriate for students. After the observations were made the researcher decided to give various projects for each class. With details of class 7 making a pop-up book with a

fable theme, class 8 doing a drama performance, and class 9 making a persuasive speech video which were uploaded to the YouTube channel.

The results of the research study on the effectiveness of project-based learning in enhancing students' creative thinking skills in language learning revealed several key findings. The data analysis indicated a significant improvement in students' creative thinking skills after engaging in project-based learning. The surveys and questionnaires showed that a majority of students reported increased abilities in generating innovative ideas, thinking critically, and solving problems creatively. This suggests that project-based learning provides a conducive environment for fostering and developing students' creative thinking skills.

The research findings also highlighted the importance of collaboration and communication in project-based learning for enhancing creative thinking. The observations and interviews demonstrated that students who actively participated in group projects and engaged in meaningful discussions with their peers demonstrated higher levels of creative thinking. Collaborative activities allowed students to share and exchange ideas, negotiate meaning, and benefit from diverse perspectives, thereby stimulating their creative thinking processes.

The results indicated that the integration of technology in project-based learning positively influenced students' creative thinking skills. Students who utilized digital tools and multimedia platforms to create and present their projects demonstrated higher levels of creativity and innovation. The use of technology provided opportunities for students to explore different modes of expression, engage in digital storytelling, and present their ideas in visually appealing formats.

Moreover, the research findings emphasized the significance of incorporating real-world contexts in project-based learning for enhancing creative thinking in language learning. Projects that connected language learning to authentic situations, such as community service projects or interactions with native speakers, were found to have a greater impact on students' creative thinking abilities. Working on projects that mirrored real-world scenarios stimulated students' imagination, problem-solving skills, and ability to apply language creatively.

There is also a positive relationship between project-based learning, motivation, and engagement. The surveys and interviews revealed that students who participated in project-based learning activities reported higher levels of motivation and engagement compared to traditional language learning approaches. The meaningful and authentic nature of projects, combined with the sense of ownership and autonomy provided to students, contributed to their intrinsic motivation and sustained engagement throughout the learning process.

The discussion of the research findings emphasizes the effectiveness of project-based learning in enhancing students' creative thinking skills in language learning. The integration of

collaboration, technology, and real-world contexts within project-based learning fosters creative thinking, problem-solving abilities, and motivation among students. These findings highlight the value of project-based learning as an innovative and engaging approach to language instruction that promotes not only language proficiency but also the development of crucial 21st-century skills. The project based learning that implemented in class 7th has a good implication, it was pop-up book is one of interesting books for young readers. Pop-up book can be used for teaching to motivate students to learn English or other subjects and topics.(Arifatin, 2022) Likewise, grade 8 with their drama performances and also grade 9 with their persuasive speech which can be found on Fais Wahidatul Arifatin's YouTube channel, they are very enthusiastic in completing the project and this once again adds to the enthusiasm for learning so that the impact is also good. (Arifatin et al., 2023)

It is important to note that while the research findings consistently demonstrated positive outcomes, there were some challenges identified during the implementation of project-based learning. These challenges included time management, assessing individual contributions within group projects, and providing adequate support for students who required additional guidance. Addressing these challenges through effective planning, scaffolding, and ongoing support can further enhance the effectiveness of project-based learning in promoting creative thinking in language learning.

Overall, the results of this research study support the implementation of project-based learning as an effective pedagogical approach to enhance students' creative thinking skills in language learning. Educators can leverage project-based learning strategies, collaboration, technology integration, and real-world contexts to create meaningful and engaging language learning experiences that foster students' creativity, critical thinking, and problem-solving abilities. While the research findings on the effectiveness of project-based learning in enhancing students' creative thinking skills in language learning are promising, there are still some research gaps that warrant further investigation. These research gaps include:

The current study focused on short-term outcomes immediately after engaging in project-based learning activities. However, further research is needed to explore the long-term effects of project-based learning on students' creative thinking skills and language learning outcomes. Longitudinal studies that track students' progress over an extended period would provide insights into the sustainability and transferability of creative thinking skills developed through project-based learning. This study also examined the overall impact of project-based learning on students' creative thinking skills, but it did not delve deeply into individual differences. For future research, factors such as students' prior language proficiency, learning

styles, and cultural backgrounds influence their response to project-based learning and their development of creative thinking skills can be investigated.

The research study assessed students' creative thinking skills through self-reported measures, observations, and project assessments. However, exploring additional assessment strategies that effectively capture the multidimensional aspects of creative thinking in language learning would contribute to a more comprehensive understanding of students' creative abilities and their growth over time. While the focus of the current study was on students' creative thinking skills, investigating the role of teacher professional development in effectively implementing project-based learning for enhancing creativity in language learning would be valuable. Exploring how teachers can be supported in designing and facilitating project-based learning experiences that effectively foster creative thinking skills would contribute to the successful implementation of this approach.

Addressing these research gaps would further enrich the existing knowledge base and provide educators and researchers with a deeper understanding of the role of project-based learning in fostering students' creative thinking skills in language learning. Such investigations would help refine instructional practices, inform curriculum development, and promote evidence-based pedagogical approaches in language education.

CONCLUSION AND SUGGESTION

The research on the effectiveness of project-based learning in enhancing students' creative thinking skills in language learning demonstrates show its positive impact and potential in language education, especially in MTs. Muhammadiyah 13 Solokuro. Project-based learning offers a dynamic and engaging approach that promotes creativity, critical thinking, collaboration, and problem-solving skills among students. By integrating real-world contexts, technology, and collaborative activities, project-based learning creates an environment where students can actively engage with the language, think creatively, and apply their knowledge in meaningful ways.

The research findings highlight the benefits of project-based learning, including improved creative thinking skills, increased motivation, enhanced language proficiency, and a deeper understanding of language and culture. Through project-based learning, students develop the ability to generate innovative ideas, think critically, and communicate effectively, which are essential skills for their language learning journey and beyond. However, there are still research gaps that need to be addressed. Future studies should explore the long-term effects of project-based learning, consider individual differences among students, investigate diverse assessment strategies, examine the role of teacher professional development, conduct comparative studies, and explore the generalizability of findings across different contexts.

In conclusion, project-based learning offers a promising avenue for enhancing students' creative thinking skills in language learning. It provides an engaging and authentic learning experience that empowers students to become active participants in their own language learning process. By implementing project-based learning effectively, educators can nurture students' creativity, critical thinking, and problem-solving abilities while facilitating their language development and fostering a lifelong love for language learning.

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