

THE IMPLEMENTATION OF PROJECT-BASED LEARNING MODEL TO ENHANCE THE CREATIVITY AND INDEPENDENCE OF JUNIOR HIGH SCHOOL STUDENTS IN ENGLISH LEARNING

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Abstrak - Penelitian ini bertujuan untuk mengkaji peningkatan kreativitas dan kemandirian belajar siswa melalui penerapan model Project-Based Learning (PBL) pada pembelajaran Bahasa Inggris di SMPN 46 Palembang. Penelitian ini menggunakan metode Classroom Action Research (CAR) dengan model Kammiss, yang dilaksanakan dalam dua siklus yang terdiri dari tahap perencanaan, tindakan, observasi, dan refleksi. Peserta penelitian adalah 85 siswa kelas VIII yang dibagi ke dalam 12 kelompok belajar heterogen. Hasil penelitian menunjukkan adanya peningkatan yang signifikan. Kreativitas siswa meningkat dari 62,6% (kategori sedang) pada Siklus 1 menjadi 82,5% (kategori tinggi) pada Siklus 2, sedangkan kemandirian belajar meningkat dari 59,8% (kategori sedang) menjadi 81,5% (kategori baik). Refleksi menunjukkan bahwa siswa menjadi lebih aktif, percaya diri, disiplin, dan mampu menyelesaikan proyek secara mandiri, menghasilkan bahan ajar Bahasa Inggris yang kreatif dan sesuai dengan konsep pembelajaran. Penelitian ini menunjukkan bahwa penerapan PBL efektif dalam meningkatkan kreativitas dan kemandirian siswa, sekaligus mempersiapkan mereka menjadi pembelajar yang bertanggung jawab dan inovatif.

Kata kunci: kreativitas, kemandirian belajar, pembelajaran berbasis proyek, Bahasa Inggris, SMP.

Abstract - This study aims to examine the improvement of students' creativity and learning independence through the implementation of the Project-Based Learning (PBL) model in English lessons at SMPN 46 Palembang. The research employed Classroom Action Research (CAR) using the Kammiss model, conducted in two cycles comprising planning, action, observation, and reflection stages. The participants were 85 eighth-grade students divided into 12 heterogeneous learning groups. The results showed significant improvement. Students' creativity increased from 62.6% (medium category) in Cycle 1 to 82.5% (high category) in Cycle 2, while learning independence improved from 59.8% (medium category) to 81.5% (good category). Reflections indicated that students became more active, confident, disciplined, and capable of completing projects independently, producing English learning materials that were creative and aligned with lesson concepts. This study demonstrates that the implementation of PBL is effective in enhancing students' creativity and independence, while also preparing them to become responsible and innovative learners.

Keywords: Creativity, Learning Independence, Project-Based Learning, English Learning, Junior High School

1. INTRODUCTION

Education plays a vital role in developing competent, moral, and competitive individuals. The National Education System Law emphasizes that education aims to develop students' abilities and character to form a dignified and knowledgeable generation (Zabadi, 2013). In particular, English as a foreign language (EFL) has strategic importance in preparing students for global communication, critical thinking, and problem-solving (Suyitno et al., 2021; Redjeki & Muhajir, 2020; Sholah, 2019). English learning is not merely about memorizing grammar rules but involves applying language strategies in meaningful contexts, such as comprehending texts, composing coherent paragraphs, and creating dialogues in realistic scenarios (Kusumadewi & Widayastuti, 2018; Oktavia et al., 2021; Dar et al., 2010).

Field observations at SMPN 46 Palembang indicate that many students face difficulties when encountering English problems that deviate slightly from teacher examples. This suggests that their problem-solving skills in English are still underdeveloped. One effective approach

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to address this issue is the Project-Based Learning (PBL) model, which positions students in authentic, context-based problems, enabling them to construct knowledge, develop higher-order thinking skills, and foster independence and confidence (Osakue et al., 2011; Larmer et al., 2015; Tanaka, 2023).

PBL comprises five stages: problem orientation, problem formulation, individual and group investigation, solution development and presentation, and evaluation of both process and outcomes (Jaya et al., 2019; Puspitasari, 2020; Rozak et al., 2012). In English learning, PBL can be applied through tasks such as analyzing English texts to identify problems, composing solutions in writing, discussing appropriate language use in groups, and presenting outcomes either orally or in written form (Lee, 2023; Maftukhin, 2020; Sari, 2020).

Through such activities, students not only improve their English skills—including reading, writing, listening, and speaking—but also develop creativity and self-directed learning skills essential in EFL contexts (Wu, 2018; Miller et al., 2021; Crespí et al., 2022). Creative students are able to produce original written texts or language-based projects, while independent learners can manage tasks and solve problems without excessive guidance. Consequently, the implementation of PBL in English learning aligns with current educational goals to cultivate active, critical, and autonomous learners (Camelia & Maknun, 2021; Al-Bahadli et al., 2023; MacArthur et al., 2018). This study aims to examine the effect of PBL on students' creativity and independence in English learning, considering different initial ability levels (high, medium, and low) to determine how the model can enhance EFL learning outcomes at SMPN 46 Palembang.

2. METHOD

This research applied Classroom Action Research (CAR) using the Kammis model. The research focused on enhancing students' creativity and learning independence in English through PBL.

2.1 Research Subjects and Objects

The subjects of this study were eighth-grade students of SMPN 46 Palembang, divided into three classes. Each class was subdivided into four heterogeneous study groups, comprising students with high, medium, and low abilities, resulting in a total of 12 groups. The objects of this study were students' creativity and learning independence during the Project-Based Indonesian Language learning process.

2.2 Research Design

The study was conducted in two cycles, each consisting of four stages:

- **Planning:** Preparing lesson plans, administering a pre-test to determine initial ability, and introducing English project materials such as writing activities, dialogues, or multimedia literacy projects.
- **Action:** Students identified English learning problems, gathered information, conducted research, developed solutions, and produced projects individually and collaboratively.
- **Observation:** Teachers observed student engagement, creativity, problem-solving, and independence during project execution.
- **Reflection:** Collaborative evaluation between teacher and students to identify challenges, make improvements, and enhance the effectiveness of subsequent cycles.

2.3 Research Instrumen

- **Creativity Assessment Sheet:** Measured fluency, flexibility, originality, and elaboration in English projects.
- **Learning Independence Assessment Sheet:** Evaluated students' initiative, discipline, confidence, and responsibility.
- **Pre-test:** Measured initial student ability in project-based English tasks.cycle.

2.4 Data Collections Techniques

Data in this study were collected using direct classroom observation and questionnaires, analyzed descriptively using qualitative methods. The aim was to evaluate students' creativity and learning independence during Project-Based English learning activities. The data collection process followed structured procedures to ensure reliability and validity.

Observation:

Teachers observed students during project-based learning activities, focusing on indicators such as:

- **Creativity:** fluency in generating ideas, flexibility in approach, originality of solutions, and elaboration of ideas.
- **Learning Independence:** confidence in identifying problems, initiative in task execution, discipline in completing tasks, and responsibility for outcomes.

Observations were recorded systematically for each group and each individual student, and percentages were calculated to categorize performance.

Questionnaires:

Students were asked to complete questionnaires to self-assess their learning independence and perceived creativity. A Likert-type scale was used with the following scoring criteria:

Scale	Criteria
0	Indicator did not appear
1	Poor
2	Fair
3	Good
4	Very Good

Categorization of Scores:

Creativity (%)	Category
80% - 100%	High
60% - 79%	Medium
<60%	Low

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Learning Independence (%)	Category
81% - 100%	Very Good
61% - 80%	Good
41% - 60%	Fair
21% - 40%	Low
0% - 20%	Very Low

3. RESULT AND DISCUSSION

3.1 Result

3.1.1 Cycle 1 Research

1) Planning Stage

A pre-test was administered to measure students' initial ability in project-based English tasks. The results of the pre-test for each class are shown below:

Class	Number of Students	Average Pre-test Score
VIII-A	30	14.5
VIII-B	28	12.0
VIII-C	27	13.2
Average	85	13.2

2) Action Observation Stage

Students conducted project-based English activities, including problem identification, project planning, and project execution. Their creativity and learning independence were measured using rubrics based on fluency, originality, flexibility, elaboration, confidence, initiative, discipline, and responsibility. The results for Cycle 1 are summarized in the table below:

Meeting	Creativity (%)	Category	Learning Independence (%)	Category
5th	57.2	Low	54.3	Low
6th	59.1	Low	60.2	Low
7th	71.5	Medium	64.8	Medium
Cycle 1 Average	62.6	Medium	59.8	Medium

3.1.2 Cycle 2 Research

1) Planning Stage

Improvements were made based on Cycle 1 reflection, including rearranging seating, pairing students by ability, emphasizing literature and references, and providing focused guidance on English lesson concepts.

2) Observation Stage

Meeting	Creativity (%)	Category	Learning Independence (%)	Category
8th	75.0	High	70.5	Good
9th	80.2	High	78.0	Good

10th	84.5	High	83.0	Very Good
11th	90.3	High	94.0	Very Good
Cycle 2 Average	82.5	High	81.5	Good

3.2 Discussion

3.2.1 Improvement of Students' Creativity

The average creativity score increased from 62.6% (medium) in Cycle 1 to 82.5% (high) in Cycle 2. The significant improvement is attributed to:

- Opportunities to independently identify and solve real English learning problems.
- Project-based tasks requiring idea generation, planning, and execution.
- Collaborative group discussions that allowed students to refine ideas and explore multiple solutions.

3.2.2 Improvement of Learning Independence

Learning independence improved from 59.8% (medium) to 81.5% (good), showing that students became more confident, disciplined, proactive, and responsible. Cycle 2 interventions—like paired seating, emphasis on references, and structured guidance—helped students overcome dependence on peers and teachers.

3.2.3 Relationship Between Creativity, Independence, and Learning Outcomes

Higher creativity and independence positively affected project outcomes. Creative students produced more original and relevant English learning materials, while independent students completed projects effectively without relying on others. This demonstrates a mutually reinforcing relationship between creativity and independence in project-based learning.

3.2.4 Supporting Factors and Challenges

Factors supporting success:

- Clear guidance and examples from teachers.
- Structured group discussion and project design.
- Contextual, meaningful English project assignments.

Challenges encountered:

- Uneven ability levels within groups.
- Limited English learning materials.
- Additional time needed for project preparation and presentations.

Through reflection and adjustments, these challenges were minimized in Cycle 2, ensuring the effectiveness of the PBL model.

4 CONCLUSION

Based on the results of the study and discussion, it can be concluded that the implementation of the Project-Based Learning model in Indonesian Language lessons at SMPN 46 Palembang is proven effective in enhancing students' creativity and learning

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independence. Observations showed that in the first cycle, students' ability to design and produce learning media projects was still at a moderate level, with average creativity scores of 62.6% and learning independence of 59.8%. At the initial stage, students tended to rely on group members, were less confident in identifying problems independently, and the media products they produced were not fully aligned with the concepts of Indonesian Language lessons.

However, through improvements made in the second cycle, such as the rearrangement of learning groups, emphasis on literature and references, and more focused guidance on lesson concepts, significant progress was achieved. Students' creativity increased to 82.5% (high category), as evidenced by their ability to generate ideas that were original, fluent, flexible, and well-elaborated. Learning independence also improved to 81.5% (good category), indicated by students' courage to identify problems, discipline in completing projects, high initiative in task execution, and greater responsibility for their work outcomes.

The discussion shows that the increase in students' creativity and learning independence was not only quantitative but also qualitative, as students were able to produce learning media that was relevant and aligned with the concepts of Indonesian Language lessons. Project-Based Learning allows students to actively engage in investigation, problem-solving, and group collaboration, thereby improving critical thinking skills, teamwork, and responsibility. Furthermore, reflections conducted after each cycle demonstrated that teachers could monitor and adjust teaching strategies, minimizing obstacles such as student dependency, uneven group abilities, and limited learning media resources.

Therefore, it can be concluded that Project-Based Learning effectively encourages students to become more creative, independent, and responsible, while providing meaningful learning experiences (Maulana et al., 2019; Pardede, 2020; Nguyen & Habók, 2022). This study reinforces the theory that students' creativity and independence can be developed through contextual learning that emphasizes hands-on experience, the development of real products, and collaborative learning processes. The implications of this study suggest that Indonesian Language teachers can implement this model to improve teaching quality, equip students with critical thinking, creativity, and independence skills, and prepare them to become active, innovative individuals capable of facing learning challenges autonomously.

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