

AN EXPERIMENTAL STUDY OF AN ATTEMPT IN IMPROVING THE STUDENTS' WRITING SKILLS

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Abstract

This study was designed at identifying the effect of Project Based Learning implementation toward the secondary students' writing skills at tenth grade of senior high school 21 Batam. The design of this research was running by quasi experimental research non-equivalent control group design. The research variable consist of control class as dependent variable and experiment class as independent variable. To meet the purposes of the research, the researcher selected to all the tenth grades students to be the participants of this research. Both of the classes first science class and second science class were the sample of this research. The data were collected through running written test which consist of pre-test and post-test (in which the participants wrote the simple recount text). The analysis of data used one sample t-test with a significance level 5%. The statistic process showed that t-test is bigger than t-table. Means, the result of this study showed that the Project Based Learning gave the effect toward the secondary students' writing skill in simple recount text.

Keywords: *Attempt, Improving, writing skills, Project-Based Learning.*

INTRODUCTION

An attempt of writing process is one of the studying activities that should be targeted to improve the students' writing skills by preparation, practice, and evaluating. An attempt was made because the standard of student writing ability had not been achieved. According to Manshour, et al (2016:24) stated that writing is a system of communication which signifies language through the writing of signs and symbol. Moreover, Lado (2006) cited in Qalby (2016) says that writing is also a form of thinking, but it is thinking for particular audience and for a particular occasion. Writing skills is very important to be mastered by the senior high school students in order to meet the roles of English as a determinant subject for graduation from the high school level to the higher level. The role of English around the world as the most widely used language has shown its charm for students who wish to continue their education in higher level (Nuraeni: 2019). Therefore, the mastering English has become the main target in learning language, especially writing skills.

In reality, writing in the second language seems to be difficult for most of students at senior high school. However, it connects to the notion that learning English writing as a foreign language is similar to learning Bahasa Indonesia as the first language for Indonesian EFL learners

(Sukandi, 2019, p. 148). Based on the empirical studies which conducted by the writer that the students' difficulties on writing were addressed to the selective words, using of noun singular and plural in writing the complex sentences, using of verb tense, using of article, using of punctuation, using of subject verb agreement, using of word form, and sentences fragment (Pohan, 2018). The finding of this research showed that the difficulties which dominant of using word form and using verb tenses. In addition, students also have difficulty in connecting the main thoughts between one sentence with another sentence. So that it makes it difficult for students to develop reasoning based on the truth of the existing writing topics and write down the influence of other people's attitudes and opinions in order to strengthen their writing (Merry, 2019, p. 235).

The explanations above was the main cause to the researcher to design an attempt experimentally. By implementing the Project Based Learning as one of the requirement solutions on how to overcome those problems mentioned. So, the researcher applied the Project Based Learning as an attempt to solve the problems which experienced by senior high school students in writing recount text.

The Nature Of Writing

English, being the lingua franca and a common mode of academic life, bears a paramount importance so is the case of writing in English. Their ability to write effectively in English possesses enormous importance in academic and professional growth (Trzeciak and MacKay 1994). Today it is an inevitable fact for students to learn writing skills to study in his discipline and steer their careers successfully. That is why it is believe that writing skill is the highly dominant skill in the lives of students (Baynham, Lea et al. 2002).

Writing was culturally specific, learned behaviors which were acquired only if someone was taught, much likes the ability to swim (Brown., 2003, p. 334). He made analogies of the difficulties of writing to those of swimming, for even though one might learn to swim and to write, this did not imply that the skill would be mastered, even if one was proficient in a language. Moreover, writing was a complex, cognitive process that required sustained intellectual effort over a considerable period of time (Nunan., 1999, p. 273). It was a well-known fact that writing required the writer's full attention and concentration (Farooq., Uzair-UI-Hassan., & Wahid., 2012, p. 185).

According to Pohan (2018) defines that writing is one of active skill in language learning. By writing, the students can communicate, give opinions and transfer their idea in written form. Besides that, in writing activity the students must make the reader understand easily and comprehend about what the students write and explain. According to Lado (2006) cited in Qalby (2016) says that writing is also a form of thinking, but it is thinking for particular audience and for a particular occasion.

According to Brown (2001), there are five types of writing performance:

1. Imitative or writing down. At this stage of writing, students only need to write down English letters, words, and sentences to learn the conventions of the orthographic code. At some points, the teacher may do some dictations to students as well.
2. Intensive or controlled writing commonly appears in controlled-written grammar exercises and does not offer much creativity on the writer's side. Intensive writing usually presents students with a paragraph in which they need to correct a given structure. Other than that, intensive writing often appears in the form of dicto-comp in which students need to rewrite the paragraph. Controlled writing may loosen the teacher's controls but can function as stimulators.
3. Self-writing
Self-writing is writing with only the self in mind as the audience. There are several forms of writing which fall into this writing category, such as note-taking and journal writing.
4. Display writing is highly related to academic world. It is a requirement in which the students need to master in the school context as at school they need to be able to take short answer exercises, essay examinations, as well as the research methods. Those short of things can be categorized into display writing.
5. Real writing aims at transferring and communicating information and messages to the audience who needs the messages.

Project Based Learning

According to Sholihah (2017) Project Based Learning (PBL) is a model that organizes learning around projects. However, in this research PBL only refers to Project Based Learning. PBL formerly was not a specific model to language teaching. According to Beckett (2006) cited

in Pohan (2018) PBL can be traced back to the mid-1800s, and it was first created by David Snedden who taught science in American agriculture classes.

The activities during the development of the end product can be characterized as follows (Kosasih, 2014).

1. There is something students need, both in the form of activities or tangible works, related to the basic competency that is being studied
2. Requires deepening of the main material so students find meaningfulness of the material with their daily needs
3. Needs faced by students expressed in the formulation of problems that describe a design of activities that students can do through the learning process, both in the classroom or outside of class hours.
4. Students design or the products they will produce, through planning, the process of activities, to the product.
5. Students carry out these activities collaboratively or individually by utilizing the experience or main subject matter as well as other information.
6. Learning assessment is carried out since the planning activities, the process of activities, until the results, which include cognitive, psychomotor, and affective aspects of students.

Fathurohman (2015) states that the implementation of project-based learning promotes not only active student involvement but also enhance the student's skill to act as a team with their friends in solving the problem. Project-based learning is a learning model that focuses on creativity and needs that are meaningful to students (Kosasih, 2014). Then they get involved by utilizing their own experiences and abilities to do something and produce work that they find useful to themselves or others. The specific objectives of the learning model are as follows:

1. Students get meaningfulness or benefits that can be felt directly from the lessons they follow for their daily lives.
2. Students can create, innovate and develop their own potential in the form of activities and work from the learning process that they have done, either individually or in groups.
3. Potential students can be more active and optimized, not only their intellectual potential, but also their physical, emotional, social and spiritual potential.

4. Students are also expected to be able to develop their abilities and skills in managing and utilizing resources, materials, and the potential of the environment, society, and culture to be meaningful to themselves and others (living together).

According to Keser and Karagoca in Kosasih (2014) Project-Based Learning is carried out in six steps as follows:

1. Project Determination

Students determine the type of activity or work they will do, according to their individual needs. Interest, ability, and availability of facilities and infrastructure must be taken into consideration by students in this step.

2. Project Design

Students design the steps of project implementation activities from the beginning to the end of the implementation.

- a. At the initial stage, in the form of planning tools, materials, time needed, and other things.
- b. At the implementation stage, in the form of this design the activities that students will do, including mapping the obstacles they might face along with the possibilities of how to overcome them.
- c. At the final stage, it is in the form of a follow-up design if the project is completed.

3. Scheduling

Under the guidance of the teacher, students schedule all activities that they have designed. The schedule shows how long the project must be completed step by step. The intended schedule is adjusted to the program available to the teacher itself, as well as the students' ability to complete the project it is designed.

4. Project Completion

At this stage each student performs assignments in accordance with previously designed divisions. Teachers play a role in motivating, directing, coordinating so that students' activities and projects can ensure that they are completed properly and on time. At the same time, teachers need to monitor student activities in the framework of the process assessment, in accordance with the indicators that have been set, both for the affective, psychomotor, or cognitive aspects.

5. Delivery of Results Activities

In the scientific step, is this included in the communication step. the form of delivery depends on the student's project.

Some studies reported that the Project Based Learning improved the students' writing skill (Dian & Yajid., 2019, p. 83). The research finding showed that all of the students (100%) increased or improved their writing scores for at least 10 points better or higher to which they gained in the initial test. Then, (Hidayati & Widiati., 2019, p. 146) proved that the implementation Project Based Learning was an effective teaching learning model in teaching writing and it facilitated the students to improve their writing ability in writing descriptive text better than in the preliminary study. Regarding to the students' writing test result showed that the students' writing skill to write descriptive text improved after the implementation of project based learning. The students could improve 26,09 points from 49,09 in the preliminary study to 75,16 in the final writing test.

The Research Hypothesis

The hypothesis is a temporary answer to the formulation of the research problem, where the formulation of the research problem has been stated in the form of sentence questions (Sugiyono, 2015). Technically, the hypothesis is a statement about the state of the population to be tested for truth through data obtained from the research sample. Research hypothesis are expressed as follow:

1. H_a if the t_{count} is $>$ than t_{table} it means the Project-Based Learning is effective toward the students' writing skill.
2. H_o if the t_{count} is $<$ than t_{table} it means that Project-Based Learning is not effective toward the students' writing skill.

METHODOLOGY

The research was undertaken in the basic of research hypothesis. To pursue the answer of the research question, the researcher applied the quasi experimental study non-equivalent control group design as research method. According to (Sugiyono, 2015) experimental research study can be defined as a method of research use to locate a particular influence to one another in condition

completely. This research was quasi experimental research which consist control class and experiment class. The researcher gave the treatment to find out the result of the effect of Project Based Learning to improve the students' writing skill. The researcher divided the students into two groups. They were experimental group and control group at tenth grade students' of SMA Negeri 21 Batam in the academic year 2019/2020.

Population and Sample

The students of senior high school 21 Batam were selected as population of this research. The total of population was 100 students who came from different classes. Students of ten grade of first science and the second science participated to be the sample of this research. The number of samples of this research were 50 students were from X IPA 1 and X IPA 2.

Data Collection

The whole data were collected by researcher in procedurally. Researcher visited the institution to approach the school management to set up the teaching schedule, then collecting data by giving pre-test and post-test. As proposed in the sampling a total of 50 students participated in this research which divided into two groups. The school management were requested to give four meetings for teaching practice with a total number of two hours for each meeting. The students were asked to write the recount text based on their real experienced. All the students were volunteer participants and the researcher carefully considered that no student was forced to participate without his or her ability.

Data Analyze

As the chief aim of the research was to identify the effect of Project Based Learning on improving students' writing skill, hence in the light of the nature of the study, the researcher applied the SPSS analytical statistics 20. However, the researcher has also used t- test on the data analysis to answer the research questions. Whereas, t-test was applied to find if there was any significant Project Based Learning on improving the students' writing skill with the writers under research at ($t\text{-test} \leq 0.05$).

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Result

The Table 1 shows the result both of the pre-test and post-test scores of the control class which collected. The mean value of the pre-test of control class is 67.04. Meanwhile, the mean of the post-test is 76.80. Thus, the mean score of the pre-test is lower than the post-test score. Besides the improvement of the mean value, it means that the writing skill of the control class improved after treated by using conventional strategy.

Table 1. Statistical Data of the Pre-Test and Post-Test Scores of the Control Class

<i>Data</i>	<i>Pre-Test</i>	<i>Post-Test</i>
Number of Cases	25	25
Maximum	80	89
Minimum	55	67
Mean	67.04	76.80
Standard Deviation	7.133	5.439

In addition, the mean for the pre-test was 67.04 while the post-test was 76.80. Thus, the mean of the post-test was higher than the pre-test. Then, it can be interpreted that the students' writing skill of the control class based on the pre-test and post-test scores is effective.

The Table 2 shows the comparison of pre-test and post-test score in the experimental class. The mean value of the pre-test of the experimental class was 66.44. Meanwhile, the mean of the post-test was 82.88. Thus, the mean score of the pre-test is lower than that of the post-test score. Besides the improvement of the mean value, it means that the writing skill of the experimental class improved after being treated using Project Based Learning.

Table 2. Statistical Data of the Pre-Test and Post-Test Scores of the Experiment Class

<i>Data</i>	<i>Pre-Test</i>	<i>Post-Test</i>
Number of Cases	25	25
Maximum	76	92
Minimum	50	75
Mean	66.44	82.88
Standard Deviation	6.752	4.807

In addition, the mean for the pre-test is 66.44 while the post-test was 82.88. Thus, the mean of the post-test is higher than that of the pre-test. Then, it can be interpreted that the students' writing skill of the experimental class based on the pre-test and post-test scores is effective by use Project Based Learning.

The comparison both of the result of the control class data and experimental class data can be seen to the following histography below.

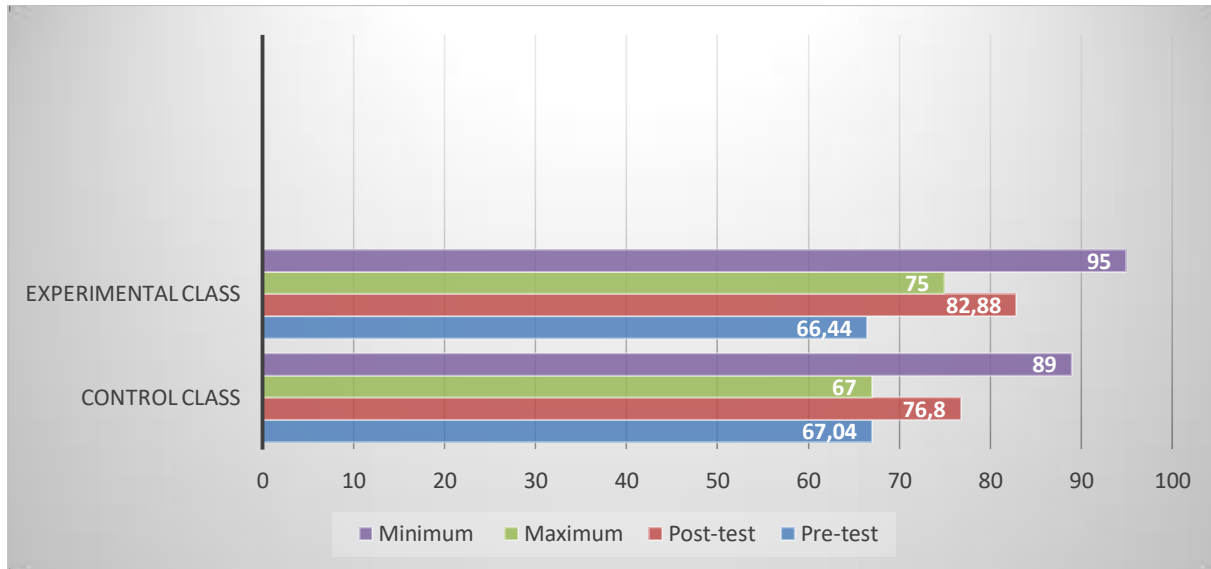


Figure 1. The Comparison of Control Class dan Experimental Class

The chart above shows the comparison of the pre-test and post-test scores which obtained by students between the control class and the experimental class. The pre-test score in the control class is 67.04 and the experimental class is 66.44. The difference in value both of the two classes was 0.6% where the pre-test score of the control class was higher than the experimental class.

Furthermore, the chart above also shows the comparison of the post-test which obtained by students after gave the Project Based Learning strategy treatment. Where the post-test score of the control class is 76.80 and in the experimental class is 82.88. The percentage difference of value both of the classes was 6.08% where the experimental class score was higher than the value in the control class.

For answering the formulation of the problem proposed above, the hypothesis t-test was used to use paired sample t-test and independent samples t-test. Paired samples t-test was conduct to determine the effect of Project Based Learning and conventional model on improving the students' writing skills. While the independent samples t-test was conduct to determine the differences in the effect of Project Based Learning toward the students' writing skill.

The effect of Project Based Learning and conventional model on class experiment and control class. For the result of paired samples t-test the effect of Project Based Learning and conventional mode on experiment class and control class can be seen in the Table 3:

Table 3. Result of Paired Samples T-test

		Paired Samples Test							
		Paired Differences					T	df	Sig. (2-tailed)
		Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean	95% Confidence Interval of the Difference				
					Lower	Upper			
Pair 1	Pre-Test Experiment - Post-Test Experiment	-16.440	7.303	1.461	-19.455	-13.425	-11.255	24	.000
Pair 2	Pre-Test Control - Post-Test Control	-9.760	7.865	1.573	-13.006	-6.514	-6.205	24	.000

It was known that the t_{count} was higher than t_{table} ($-11.255 > -6.205$), then as the basis for making the decision above. It can be concluded that H_0 was rejected and H_a was accepted. It means that there is a significant effect of the Project Based Learning toward the students' writing skill on pre-test and post-test. So, it can be concluded that the Project Based Learning did not give a significant effect to the students' writing skill.

Meanwhile the t_{count} for control class was higher than t_{table} ($-6.205 > 2.064$), then as the basis for making the decision above, it can be concluded that H_0 was accepted and H_a was rejected. It means that there is a significant effect of the Project Based Learning on improving the students' writing skills on pre-test and post-test. So, it can be concluded that the conventional model gives a big effect the students writing skill.

In order to know the difference effect both of Project Based Learning and conventional model was done by testing differences in the difference data between the two groups, in this case carried out with an independent sample t-test. The results of independent samples t-test can be seen to the Table 4.

Table.4. The Result of Independent Samples Test

Independent Samples Test	
Levene's Test for Equality of Variances	t-test for Equality of Means

		F	Sig.	T	Df	Sig. (2-tailed)	Mean Difference	Std. Error Difference	95% Confidence Interval of the Difference	
									Lower	Upper
Hasil Belajar Siswa	Equal variances assumed	.005	.946	4.18	48	.000	6.080	1.452	3.161	8.999
	Equal variances not assumed			4.18	47.28	.000	6.080	1.452	3.160	9.000

To find the hypothesis proposed, from the table of independent test of post-test experiment and control group above, the mean difference score was (6.080) based on equal variances assumed. The table above also shows that t_{count} was 4.188 compared with t_{table} with $dk = n_1 + n_2 - 2 = 25 + 25 = 50 - 2 = 48$ in significance 5%, t_{table} (2.011). It shows that t_{count} was higher than t_{table} ($4.188 > 2.011$). Therefore H_0 was rejected and H_a was accepted, this means that there are significant differences between Project Based Learning and conventional model.

Discussion

Based on the results of the processing, it can be concluded that students learning outcomes through Project Based Learning has significant differences. In this study the Project Based Learning has a better effect than the conventional model on students learning outcomes in writing skills. In the learning process of Project Based Learning, students could participate the writing process totally. It is in line what the Fathurohman (2015) as cited Dian (2019, p. 77) stated that the implementation of Project Based Learning promotes not only active student involvement but also improve the student's skill to act as a team with their friends in solving the problems. So, the students could be actively involved in the learning activities. In Project Based Learning, students could solve the problems by grouping or individual through the scientific stage Zamroni, et al (2019).

The writing skill means that the students are able to write a text by express their ideas by using correct grammar, effective vocabulary, and good writing organizational. By implementing of Project Based Learning students were able to develop their grammar knowledge and vocabulary mastery. It was because that Project Based Learning was effective in engaging the student in all the activities in teaching learning process (Hidayati, 2019, p.147).

According to the data collected that from the experimental class revealed that the students' engagement during the teaching and learning activities in the process of applying the Project Based Learning was categorized very high. They could change their ideas and sharing the new vocabulary. It is in line with Barell (2007); David (2008); Ghosh (2010); Laboy-Rush (2011); Mergendollar, Maxwell, and Bellisimo (2007) cited in Bender (2012) who asserts that "PBL as an effective instructional approach that results in high levels of student engagement and achievement."

To sum up, the result of the study revealed that the Project Based Learning was significantly successful since the average of students' score in experimental class was 82.88. It was categorized very good criteria because the students' score before gave the treatment was 66.44. The finding of this study provide confirmatory evidence in support of the results obtained by Pratom Dian & Yazid (2019) and Hidayati & Widiati (2019) which showed that implementing Project Based Learning gave significant effect to the students' involvement and participation in the teaching learning process. Consequently, the result of this study had fulfilled the second criteria of success since criteria of success related to the students' score in this study is considered to be successful if the students' score in experimental class higher than in the control class.

CONCLUSION AND SUGGESTION

Conclusions

Based on data analysis, it can be concluded that Project Based Learning was effective to enhance the secondary students' writing skills.

Based on the output above, that the students learning outcomes between Project Based Learning with conventional model were different.

It can be known that Project Based Learning has the higher effect than conventional model to enhance the secondary students' writing skills.

Suggestions

The educationalist, especially English teachers for secondary school, may fully realize this teaching way and learn to apply Project Based Learning for teaching process. By the result

of the research, this strategy has been proven that it played very well on enhancing the secondary students' writing skills.

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