

Project-Based Learning Model as an Alternative Learning to Build Student's Writing Skill

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ABSTRACT

Writing skills is the most complicated and complex level in the language learning process. Therefore not a few students have difficulties on writing. To help overcome these difficulties, research has been carried out using the project based learning model using the lesson study method. This Research subject is students of Mandarin Education Departement Unesa class of 2019. Through the project based learning model students are stimulated through questions as a stimulus as well as to arouse student motivation and creativity. Students are asked to understand the stimulus provided then asked to respond by bringing up ideas and thoughts as outlined in the form of written discourse text. During the process of compiling ideas and thoughts in the structure of written text students are given assistance to help when students encounter difficulties and or problems. The composing written text process and the accompanying process go hand in hand until the compiled written text is considered sufficient. As an evaluation the student's work presented in the presentations to be given appreciation, advise, and suggestions as a guide to be used as a reference for improvement. The improvement process is done independently by students and is made as the second cycle stage. The improvement results showed a huge increase. From the the structure of the text has shown, the use of language elements include the accuracy of choice of diction such as conjunctions, variations of diction and adherence to the use of language pattern. From the content, it is reflected in the ruffle of the presentation of events and ideas that reflect a systematic way of thinking and have a linkage aspect between the first idea with the other next ideas. The integrity of the concept of ideas presented in one written discourse text indicates the existence of a process of exploration of potential and creation by students. This proves that the project based learning model shows a very effective role to help students overcome difficulties and to build student writing competencies.

Keywords: *Understanding structure, Stimulus, Motivation, Creation, Concept of idea*

1. INTRODUCTION

Writing skills are the most complicated and complex levels in the foreign language learning process. In line with this opinion [1] states that compared to the other three language competencies, writing competence in general can be said difficult to master even by native speakers of the language concerned. So that in learning foreign languages writing skills still leaves problems. One of the clear evidence is that the students' writing skills are still low. [2] states that various research results show that the ability to write from elementary school to tertiary level is still a concern. Therefore, it stands to a reason that in the foreign language learning process, the implementation of writing skills is placed at the last stage among the other four language skills. In addition, in reality, many students experience difficulties when implementing writing learning. This opinion is supported by [3] that states

that writing is not only an activity of converting sound into writing as an effort to express ideas into written language but it also requires a number of potential elements to achieve that it requires seriousness, willpower, and even serious study. The description above is also found in the students of class A of 2018/2019 Mandarin Education class. The results of the observation is that there are still many errors that vary, ranging from errors in the use of vocabulary, sentence structure, flow sequences stories found in student essays in Mandarin Advanced Writing course before implementing the project based learning (PBL) model. The following pictures are the examples of errors in discourse text written by students.



Figure 1 Examples of Errors in Discourse Texts Written by Students.

The results of interviews with students also obtained similar results, 13 out of 15 students or 86.7% said it was difficult and only 2 students or 13.3% said it was "difficult, but they liked it".

On the other hand, writing skills play very important role in everyday life. Writing skills are one of the prerequisite in various fields or activities. This proves the importance of writing skills and abilities in everyday life because writing is also one of the language skills used in indirect communication. [4] mentions that it is very important to equip students with good writing skills to achieve success. Esselink (in [5]) also shows a high need in effective writing for text forms of communication.

One solution to solve learning problems is the accuracy of using the learning model [6]. In this regard, to help overcome these difficulties, a research had been carried out using a *project based learning* (PBL) model and using the *Lesson Study* method for class A of Mandarin Education students, Unesa, year 2018 / 2019 with essay writing material and the results are quite significant. PBL was chosen because it can be used when educators want to control active learning that is focused on students where they were given a more interesting and meaningful learning experience and, produced a work based on real (contextual) problems that occurs in everyday life. Although it does not mention explicitly, [7] also proposes one of the characteristics of PBL, namely, learning starts from asking challenging questions about a phenomenon, then assigning students to carry out an activity. PBL is rooted in the progressive education movement, which advocated for more student-centered and experiential approaches to education that support "deeper learning" through active exploration of real-world problems and challenges [8] [9]. PBL is a learning model that involves students to acquire knowledge and skills through process development, structured inquiry (inquiry) to authentic and complex questions and assignments and products that are designed to make learning becomes meaningful (see [10]).

1.1. Model Project Based Learning

The learning model is the whole pattern of a series of learning processes that serves as a guide for implementing learning. [11] states that the learning model is a plan or a pattern that is used as a guide in planning classroom learning or learning in tutorials. Furthermore [12] and [13] also mention that each model directs us in designing learning to help students achieve learning goals. [14] states that the learning model must be able to direct students to be more active so that it gives freedom to design and construct their own understanding according to the experiences they have experienced.

As a student-centered learning model, PBL is active, independent, provides freedom and independence, and able to produce work products. [15] states that PBL refers to the philosophical constructivism, which states that knowledge is the result of cognitive construction through student activities, so that students can construct their own and meaningful knowledge through real experiences. Supported by [16], constructivism develops a learning atmosphere that requires students to compile their own knowledge. It can be understood that, BPL is a learning model that gives students the freedom to plan learning activities, carry out collaboratively, produce work products, and can be accounted for through presentation activities to the public. The learning process is more aimed at forming activity, creativity, accuracy, independence, productivity, and responsibility for students through meaningful learning experiences (see [17]). The learning process in the PBL model requires the teacher acts as a facilitator for students to get answers from questions as a stimulus and, students are accustomed to work collaboratively, assessments are carried out authentically, and learning resources can be very developed (see also [18] and [19]). The learning syntax of the PBL model is, (1) *Starts With the Essential Question*, namely the problem identification stage, (2) *Design a Plan for the Project in the form of activities to compile project planning*, (3) *Creates a Schedule*, namely, compile a project schedule, (4) *Monitor the Students and the Progress of the Project* or implementation, monitoring, and mentoring stages (5) *Assess the Outcome*, namely the results / presentation testing phase, (6) *Evaluate the Experiences* or implementation of evaluation and reflection (see [10]). Thus, the syntax flow of the PBL model can be described as shown in the following chart (see also [20]).

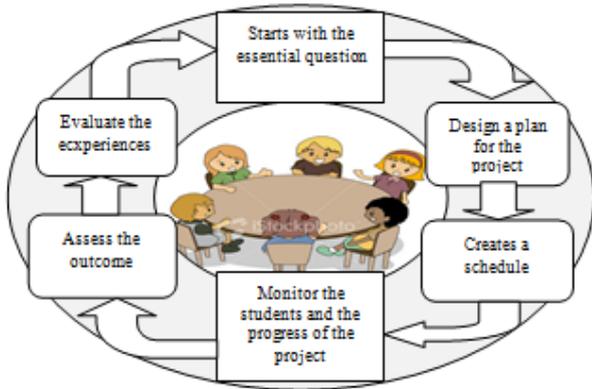


Figure 2 Flowchart of PBL Model Implementation

1.2. Writing Competencies

Writing is a productive and expressive process / activity to express thoughts and feelings as a form of communication with written language as the medium. Writing includes various abilities such as, the use of language elements appropriately, the ability to organize ideas and thoughts coherently into the form of written discourse, selection of diction, use of linguistic patterns and rules and others appropriately. The writing process must go through interrelated stages, starting from the stage of the emergence / acquisition of ideas and ideas, the stage of developing and organizing ideas and ideas to producing ideas into written discourse (see also [2]). Writing competence requires mastery of various linguistic elements and elements outside the language itself which it will become the content of the essay. Due to the complexity of the elements involved in writing activities, writing is considered the most difficult language skill compared to other language skills (see also [1]). Therefore, to build writing competence, of course it will not be possessed in a short time, it needs a process, sufficient training intensity, and it needs sharpness and sensitivity to capture objects and ideas from the environment of everyday life.

2. METHOD

This study was conducted with an action research approach that further underlies the concept of *lesson study* [21] [22] [23]. *Frame work lesson study (jugyou kenkyuu)* Matoba, emphasizes four main aspects, namely, observation, planning, implementation, reflection and / or evaluation with the aim of seeing, changes in learning behavior that lead to a process of improvement, namely, professional development for the teaching process of teachers and student learning (see also [24] and [25]). The subjects of this study were 40 students of class A of

Mandarin Education, Unesa year 2018 and they were divided into 8 groups. Meanwhile, the data of this research were the form of student essays from group work as many as 16 essays consisting of 8 essays in the first cycle and 8 essays in the second cycle. The research was conducted in 2 cycles with 5 times of face to face sessions. Data analysis was performed by referring to the PBL model syntax. Furthermore, the results of suggestions at the presentation and discussion stages were used as material for improvement in the second cycle. What was used as an indicator of neatness was that it referred to the process and the results of student's work using descriptive methods and statistical calculations were not carried out because all data were qualitative data types and if there was a percentage calculation it is only to strengthen the results of the data description.

3. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

3.1. First Cycle

3.1.1. Beginning with the Essential Question

The first cycle was carried out 3 times of face-to-face sessions, the first session focused on making rules and other agreements related to the process of composing students' written discourse texts. Meanwhile, the second and third meetings were conducted for the assessment and evaluation. At the first meeting, lecturer told students about the objectives and learning materials, learning methods and techniques, as well as assessment mechanisms and others that bind the implementation of lectures. Furthermore, the lecturer asked the students to form groups into 8 groups. After making sure that all students were ready, the lecturer began by asking inducement questions orally as an effort to lead the students' thinking flow to the theme of the learning material. As students had focused on the theme of the material the lecturers were verbally submitting guiding questions accompanied by displaying a table format on the power point display. At this stage, it can be interpreted that the lecturer has made very thorough preparations as evidenced by the smooth and systematic steps that have been carried out. The ability of the lecturer to manage the learning atmosphere and motivate the interest in student active participation is a very good. Evidently, when lecturers asked a question, there were always students who responded immediately. On the other hand, when lecturers gave students the opportunity to ask questions when something was not understood, students also made good use of it and asked questions. The technique of the lecturer in responding to student questions was also very good which before the lecturer answered, the questions were thrown back to all students. This strategy was a

manifestation of the lecturers' efforts to implement the PBL model concept, namely, inviting students to become active actors of the learning process and lecturers as mediators. The emergence of various kinds of responses from students indicates that psychologically, students have entered the atmosphere and the success of the lecturers has attracted students' interest to take an active role. The following is the material table format used by the lecturer.

Theme : Social Media	
Activity 1 : Group Discussion Activity 2: Presentation	
Keywords: 网 社交媒体 聊天	
Questions:	
1.How do you think of the existence of social media?	Reason:
2.How about the positive aspect?	Reason:
3.How about the negative aspect?	Reason:
4.How should it be?	Reason:

Table 1. The Material Table Format

The theme selection has met the criteria as assigned in the BPL model where students can observe and use objects, events, etc. around everyday life as a means of finding answers. Determination of activities 1 and 2 were the implementation of two syntax stages of the PBL model, namely the third and sixth stages. The essential questions used are also the types of questions that provide flexibility and freedom for students to express opinions freely according to their respective perceptions. This is an implementation of the PBL model that places students as individuals with varied characters, free, and independent so that students can respond to each stimulus according to their respective abilities. This form of questioning can also be used to measure language competence starting from vocabulary skills, sentence patterns, etc.

3.1.2. Design a Plan for the Project

The lecturer immediately asked students to compile a written discourse text framework which would later be used as a reference for compiling written discourse text as a whole based on the material table displayed. In this stage, the lecturer team had provided assistance as well as monitoring as a form of the concept of collaboration between educators and students. The lecturer went around checking the performance of each group in turn while

providing explanations when there were questions or difficulties faced by students. The lecturer strategy to respond to questions was correct, namely, to re-submit questions from one group to the entire group. This strategy was used to avoid the same questions reappearing from other groups. In addition to fulfil the principles of effectiveness and efficiency, this strategy also aimed to place the problems faced by one group as a common problem with one class. So, the completion was also done together. The lecturers returned the question to the other group to participate actively in solving the problem before the lecturer reinforces the student's answer. This strategy was in line with the constructivism philosophy referred to by PBL, namely, providing opportunities for students to independently construct their understanding.

3.1.3. Creates a Schedule

The preparation of the schedule used the project framework as a guide with the hope that the time allocated to the volume of activities can be proportional. The lecturer provided examples and explains the project schedule development model. Furthermore, students were asked to discuss with their group friends to identify the form and character of project activities as a basis for determining the time vulnerability needed. Time allocation still used the type and volume of activities as a basis for determining the ideal amount of time. In order to make the presentation carried out immediately and there is no need to set the schedule anymore, the lecturer also asked students to determine a presentation schedule after the project schedule preparation process has been completed. The arrangement of the presentation schedule was completely left to the students and it was agreed that, at the time of the presentation schedule, no group should declare that the project is not ready. After the schedule preparation stage was complete and to fulfill the remaining time, the lecturer asked students to discuss about the division of tasks and developed their framework into a draft written discourse text. As the implementation of monitoring, the lecturer team shared their ideas while providing assistance to all groups in turn.

Even though it was in the spare time, students seemed to take it seriously by showing a good response. Students discussed with fellow group members as a form of collaboration, synergy, and variation among group members. Furthermore, the lecturers instructed that the completion of the project may be continued at home, and before the learning process was ended, the lecturer ensured the next meeting activities and which groups that would do presentations.

3.1.4. Monitoring the Students and the Progress of the Project

Monitoring the process and student work was the responsibility of the lecturers' team. Student activities during the project preparation process were monitored by a team of lecturers. Monitoring that was carried out was not only in the form of monitoring student performance but also in the form of tutorials when students need help. In addition, monitoring was also carried out by teaching students how to work in a group. Each student could choose their respective roles without neglecting the interests of the group.

3.1.5. Assessing the Outcome

The assessments were carried out in two aspects, namely, assessment of written discourse text products and performance assessments which include mastery of the material and teamwork during the presentation. From the written discourse text the following results were obtained. In general, the text structure of written discourse was good and had met the criteria including the use of sentence structures, the use of varied vocabulary, the aspects of cohesion and coherence of each text are clear, meaning that the entire text can be understood by the narrative flow and its overall meaning. The average number of vocabulary used in each group was 368 words, the highest number was 414 vocabularies and it was occurred in 1 group and the least number of vocabulary words was 347 words that was also occurred in 1 group. The average error percentage in all aspects was 0.83%, the highest error was 1.03% in 1 group and the lowest error occurred in 2 groups, namely 0.80%. The most errors were in the aspect of using synonymous words such as the word / 或者 / (or) with / tangk / (or), / / (thought) with / 觉得 / (thought) and the like, which was 1.43% of errors. However, students had been able to generate new vocabulary, where this vocabulary had never been taught. This shows that students have developed their own potential by taking the initiative to develop their own knowledge based on the knowledge that has been obtained in learning. Each group averaged 3 to 4 new vocabulary words, although not all of the new vocabulary were correctly used, it should be appreciated for the development initiatives that have been made. The following images are example of an error case in a written discourse text product and its improvements.



Figure 3 Text before the correction made



Figure 4 Text after the correction made

The results of the assessment of student performance during the presentation are that all groups could present the oral discourse text of their work properly. The arguments and ideas that had been put in writing can be clarified during the presentation. The distribution of tasks between group members during the presentation was also proven good, all members made presentations and when questions arose they were responded in turn and / or other members helped complete or clarify answers from their group friends. Simultaneously, the aspects of mastery of the material and collaboration between members were immediately presented by most students. Each group showed their seriousness and responsibility in particular, when a question arose there was enthusiasm to solve it with the group's internal ability. When there were questions that are beyond their limits (the case of the accuracy of sentence patterns), students took the initiative to ask the lecturer team for help. The interaction between students in one group and between groups had also been very good, resulting in a transfer of knowledge between students.

3.1.6. Evaluate the Experiences

Evaluation was carried out at the end of each group presentation for 30 minutes. At this stage, the evaluation was still focused on providing suggestions to students based on the results of the assessment of written discourse texts and performance during presentations. Suggestions were used as material for improving student work which will be discussed in the second cycle. The delivery technique that was used by the lecturers was displaying the work of students that have been marked in red on the part where an error occurred with the aim that all students could

learn from the experiences of others. This strategy allows the transfer of knowledge between fellow students and from lecturers. The method used in the discussion was that every finding of an error, lecturer always returned to the student with a guiding question, "why is this wrong?" and "then, how should?". From this strategy there were three aspects that were at once affordable, namely, the occurrence of interactive and communicative, as well as measuring student understanding, and the implementation of the philosophy of constructivism. In addition to presenting the parts that need improvement by students, the lecturer also presented parts that were considered important and difficult but, there were groups that had been able to apply them correctly in their projects. At this point the lecturer also gave appreciation to the students and / or groups involved.

3.2. *Second Cycle*

3.2.1. *Assessing the Outcome*

The second cycle was more focused on the implementation of the *assessing the outcome* and *evaluating the experiences* stage to see the results of the improvements from the same stage in the first cycle after receiving suggestions from friends during the presentation and suggestions or discussion from the lecturer in the *evaluate the experience* stage. After getting suggestions in the first cycle, the product of students' written discourse text showed very significant results, namely, from all written discourse texts there were only 2 insignificant errors because, both errors were only related to the clause structure of compound sentences. This means that even though the structure was not syntactically correct, semantically the error did not reach the meaning information in a compound sentence. So, based on the results of improving the text product, the students were very good. Linguistic aspects such as diction, syntactic structure and semantics in all written discourse texts did not occur with fundamental problems or errors. In fact, there were four written discourse texts that experienced the addition of new texts and their use was appropriate both in terms of syntactic principles and aspects of continuity of meaning between the elements forming sentence structures in the construction of written discourse texts.

3.2.2. *Evaluating the Experiences*

Evaluation in the second cycle was carried out at the second meeting with the aim of evaluating the entire learning process, however, the main focus of evaluation was related to the implementation of the learning process with the PBL model. The evaluation technique used was

evaluating all the syntax stages of the PBL model sequentially. In general, students did not have problems with the implementation of the PBL model syntax stages. All students argued that the guiding questions presented at the beginning and in the material table were very helpful in making it easier for students to develop a flow of thinking in order to generate ideas. The *assessing the outcome* stage and *evaluating the experiences* were also appreciated by students. Identification of errors and continued discussion by the lecturer as well as the inference process carried out by students provided a more concrete and real understanding and experience for students.

4. CONCLUSION

The project-based learning model was able to form the character and spirit of independence of students. This was proven, since the beginning of the learning process using the PBL model, students had shown readiness from the preparation stage to implementation and there were no obstacles that interfered with the smooth learning process. All students understood the mechanisms and rules that had been mutually agreed upon and implemented with full responsibility and awareness.

Students' sensitivity was formed through learning with the PBL model, namely, through experience in learning students were invited to be responsive to events and conditions around daily life to be used as learning materials and tools. The events and conditions around which were concrete realities could help make it easier to shape experiences as a basic for understanding the concept of knowledge. Thus, gradually the PBL model was also able to build concrete, critical, logical, and systematic student thinking patterns.

Students' creativity was also formed through the PBL model, where students had to connect conceptual matters with facts and realities that surround everyday life. Students must be able to catch the symptoms and signs around them as input that can be processed through learning to become knowledge.

Discussion and group work were a process in order to form spirit of cooperation and respect for the opinions of others. Success and knowledge were the result of hard work together, those were a combination of many ideas, both from the thoughts of one group friends and the thoughts of friends between groups, and belong together even though at the stage of understanding it becomes personal.

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