

# THE USE OF PROJECT BASED LEARNING (PJBL) TO ENHANCE DESCRIPTIVE WRITING ABILITY OF EIGHTH GRADE STUDENTS AT MTS AL- HUDA GONDANG

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**Abstract-** This study examines the application of Project-Based Learning (PjBL) to improve the descriptive writing ability of eighth-grade students at MTs Al-Huda Gondang, addressing identified difficulties in this skill. The research aimed to determine the significant difference in students' descriptive writing skills before and after being taught using the PjBL model. This study employed a pre-experimental design with a quantitative approach, using a one-group pretest-posttest design. The population was all eighth-grade students, with a sample of 20 students from class VIII-A selected through convenience sampling. Data analysis used a paired sample *t*-test. Results showed the average pretest score was 36 (Poor category) and the posttest score was 78 (Good category). The *t*-count (19.09) was greater than the *t*-table (1.725) at a 5% significance level with 19 degrees of freedom. Therefore,  $H_a$  was accepted, indicating a significant improvement in descriptive writing ability after implementing PjBL. It is concluded that the PjBL model effectively enhances the descriptive writing skills of eighth-grade students at MTs Al-Huda Gondang.

**Keywords-**Project Based Learning (PjBL), students' descriptive writing skills

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## INTRODUCTION

Globalization is characterized by extensive cross-border data exchange, where foreign language proficiency is essential. For Indonesia's younger generation, English is not merely a subject but a vital tool for competition and engagement in the global arena. As one of the primary international languages, English permeates various aspects of Indonesian daily life, from media and commerce to education. English itself is one of the foreign languages used across countries. In Indonesia itself, English has become a language that is found in everyday life, ranging from food products, place names, travel, songs, political designations, economic designations, let alone designations in the field of learning.

Like Indonesian, English has 4 skills that must be understood. According to Tarigan (in Siman, 2023:2) there are four components of language skills, namely 1) listening skills; 2) speaking skills; 3) reading skills; and 4) writing skills. These 4 skills are indeed separate from each other, but they are related, moreover they can be combined with each other. During learning, students discuss (speaking skills), then listen to the teacher's instructions (listening skills), followed by reading (reading skills) and writing back meaningful information (writing skills). Writing is the process of student learning activities in education to express ideas and others. Writing is related to the person who writes, the material written by the community as the target reader.

According to Morsey (in Kusnaeniyah, 2021:3), writing is used by educated people to record or record, convince, report, or inform and influence. Such purposes and objectives can only be achieved well by people who can organize their thoughts and express them clearly. This makes writing skills one of the markers that can be used to measure students' English language skills. Meanwhile, Henry Guntur Tarigan (Hartati, 2021:75), writing skills are productive & expressive language skills that are used to communicate indirectly and not face to face with other parties. According to Tugiyono (2023:116), writing is a language skill that is used to communicate indirectly and has many benefits that can be learned in this life, including increasing intelligence, developing creativity, fostering courage, and encouraging the ability to gather information.

Brown (Kartikasari et al., 2013:2) states that there are five aspects of writing that students must pay attention to. The five aspects are Organization; this refers to how well your ideas are structured and flow logically. It includes elements such as a clear introduction, well-developed main sections with supporting evidence, and a strong conclusion. Second is Content, this is the substance of your writing. It includes the main ideas you want to convey, the evidence you use to support those ideas, and the depth of your analysis. The third is Grammar, this includes the correct use of language rules, such as sentence structure, verb tense appropriateness, and subject-verb agreement. Strong grammar ensures clarity and professionalism in your writing. The fourth is Vocabulary, this refers to the range of words

you use. A strong vocabulary allows you to express yourself appropriately and engage your readers. And the fifth is mechanics.

Harmer (Kalbarinda et al., 2018:1) classifies four elements in the writing process. The four elements are Planning, this involves brainstorming ideas, determining purpose and audience, and organizing content. Drafting, this is where you put your ideas into words, forming the first version of your writing. Editing, this stage involves critically evaluating your draft. You identify areas that need improvement, revise content for clarity, organization, and flow, and correct grammatical errors. And the last is Publishing, this is the final stage where you share your writing with your intended readers. This can be done by submitting your work for publication, presenting it in class, or posting it online.

Writing skills in schools are learned by students in writing various texts. One of these texts is descriptive text. Descriptive text is a text that contains a description of the properties of the object being described. With descriptive sentences, the reader seems to see, hear, and feel the things conveyed in a text. In other words, a description sentence is a sentence that describes something, states what is sensed, describes feelings, and mental behavior in the form of sentences, Hermaditoyo (in Lusita & Emidar 2019: 114). Khotifah & Wardarita (2022:824) quoted in Kosasih who stated that descriptive text is an essay that describes an object that is intended to convey the feeling to the reader that he has seen the object described. Based on their physical characteristics. Descriptive text is also a text that describes or explains what the author is trying to explain, so that the reader or listener seems to see the object being discussed himself, while the reader or listener is seeing the object himself.

Descriptive text is one type of text that contains a description of a thing or phenomenon (Lusita & Emidar, 2019). Descriptive text clearly describes the object, place or event that is the topic to the reader, so that the reader can feel directly what is being expressed in the text (Fitrianita & Syahrul, 2017:104). In English language learning at the Junior High School level, descriptive text is one of the materials taught to students

Descriptive text is one form of text that students must master in school, including at the Junior High School level. Unfortunately, students' current writing skills including descriptive text writing skills can be said to be far from satisfactory. Researcher's found that in the eighth grade of MTs Al-Huda where students pursue English as a foreign language, there are many difficulties that are felt and can be identified in the process of learning and teaching descriptive text writing. Such as the lack of motivation of student participants and the lack of vocabulary skills, students tend to find it difficult to compose good and correct sentences and in the use of grammar, students also often feel bored when learning to write, this is due to the educational methods presented are not interesting and seem monotonous.

The learning carried out by the teacher is still fixated on conventional learning, where the teacher functions as a centered learning with a lecture model and only works on questions on the Student Worksheet (LKS). This learning can definitely have an impact on the educational process, such as boring learning, which results in low student learning activities. Moreover, the competency targets that students must have tend not to be achieved.

Based on these problems, teachers need to implement learning innovations by applying the Project Based learning model. In line with Utami's opinion (2021:114) that Project Based Learning (PjBL) is a suitable strategy to use in improving writing skills because this strategy requires students to work together to solve a problem and think to produce a real product in the form of a writing from the problem. Mulyasa (Karangduren, 2019:95) states that the purpose of the Project Based Learning learning model is for students to focus on complex problems then students conduct investigations and understand lessons through these investigations. Mulyasa (Karangduren, 2019:95) states that the purpose of the Project Based Learning model is for students to focus on complex problems then students conduct investigations and understand lessons through these investigations.

The Project Based Learning (PjBL) model is a learning model that starts or departs from a project to gain knowledge (Arsyad & Oleo, 2024:8). According to Daryanto and Raharjo (Sari 2022: 3) Project Based Learning (PJBL) is a learning model that uses problems as the first step to collect and integrate new knowledge based on experience and real activities. PJBL is designed to solve complex problems by students in conducting investigations in order to understand them. Sugihartono, et al (Sari 2022: 3) states that the project model is a learning model by presenting subject matter to students starting from a problem. Furthermore, students discuss from various relevant sides so that a comprehensive and meaningful problem solving is obtained.

This model also provides opportunities for students to analyze a problem from their point of view according to their interests and talents. Fathurrohman (Sari 2022: 3) also states that project-based learning is a learning model that uses project facilities as a means to achieve attitude, knowledge and skill competencies. This learning is a substitute for the teacher-centered learning process. This project model learning emphasizes student activity. And the end result of learning is a product that can be meaningful and useful.

According to Siman (2023:3), the Project Based Learning model is one of the learning models that can generate student learning activities. This can happen because the application of the right learning model allows the learning process to be more active because it does not only go one way. The teacher no longer dominates the learning process, as is the case with the lecture model and doing questions on the Student Worksheet (LKS) alone. Project-based learning emphasizes contextual problems that students may experience directly, so that project-based lessons make students think critically and can

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develop their creativity through the development of real products in the form of goods or services. Meanwhile, Isriani (Jumiyanto, 2022:38) revealed that the project-based learning model is a learning model in which teachers are given the opportunity to manage learning in the classroom with project work.

Based on several definitions of the experts above, it can be concluded that the Project Based Learning model is a student-centered learning model by implementing several syntaxes or actions. Starting from a problem background, followed by investigative activities. Thus students will get new experiences from real activities during the learning process. And in the end it is expected to produce a project to achieve affective, cognitive, and psychomotor competencies.

Based on this assumption, Project Based Learning is relevant to be applied as a learning model to improve descriptive text writing skills. This is because Project Based Learning provides opportunities for students to deepen and improve their descriptive text writing skills. Not only that, the application of Project Based Learning emphasizes the process of how to uncover problems which in conclusion can create a writing product.

The application of the Project Based Learning model is expected to make the learning process more interesting for students. And student learning outcomes in English subjects will improve. Because of the application of this model, students will find their own knowledge. Not only that, students can be more active and creative to seek knowledge from various sources.

Several research have examined the use of Project Based Learning (PjBL) on students' writing ability. Eva Fitriani Syarifah & Reynesa Noor Emiliahasari found that Project Based Learning (PjBL) can help students to develop their ability and creativity in writing narrative texts in several ways including their understanding of the topic, their knowledge of narrative genre namely social function, text structure, and language features (Syarifah & Emiliahasari, 2019). Tri Cahyaningrum & Agus Widiantoro research at SMPN 2 Kalasan showed that there is a significant difference in writing ability between VIII grade students of SMPN 2 Kalasan who are taught by using Project-Based Learning, with those taught by Problem-Based Learning and those who are not (Cahyaningrum & Widiantoro, 2020). Alisah Qothrunada & Aprilia Riyana Putri research at SMP Islam Al-Azhar Kedung found that a project-based learning approach in teaching writing can improve students' writing skills.

Based on these points of thought, researcher's is encouraged by the researcher's desire to choose a title about: "THE USE OF PROJECT BASED LEARNING (PjBL) TO ENHANCE DESCRIPTIVE WRITING ABILITY OF EIGHTH GRADE STUDENTS AT MTs AL-HUDA GONDANG"

## RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

This research is quantitative research. Quantitative research is defined as a systematic investigation of phenomena by collecting data that can be measured by performing statistical, mathematical or computational techniques (Ph.D. Ummul Aiman et al., 2022:1).

According to Creswell (Ph.D. Ummul Aiman et al., 2022:2), quantitative research is an investigation of social problems based on testing a theory consisting of variables, measured with numbers, and analyzed with statistical procedures to determine whether the predictive generalizations of the theory are true.

This approach is also used as a way to research various aspects of education. The term quantitative research is often used in the social sciences to distinguish it from qualitative research (Ph.D. Ummul Aiman et al., 2022:4).

This research design uses pre-experimental design type one group pre-test post-test. The experimental research method is one of the various quantitative research methods. This quantitative research was conducted to test the effectiveness or not of experimental variables (Ph.D. Ummul Aiman et al., 2022:9). Group pre-test post-test design is a research activity that provides an increase in the initial test (pre-test) and the final test (post-test), Arikunto (Khotifah & Wardarita, 2022:826). The pre-test is intended to determine students' initial ability in writing descriptive text before being given treatment. The post-test is intended to determine students' descriptive writing ability after treatment. Thus, the results of the treatment can be known more accurately, because it can compare with the situation before being given treatment and after treatment.

In this research there are two variables, (1) Independent Variables, are variables that cause or have a theoretical possibility of having an impact on other variables (Ulfa, 2021:346). The independent variable of this study is the Project Based Learning (PjBL) learning model. (2) Dependent Variable, is a variable that is influenced or that is the result of an independent variable (Ulfa, 2021:347). The dependent variable in this study is the descriptive writing ability of eighth grade students at MTs Al-Huda Gondang.

The population taken in this study were eighth grade students at MTs AL-Huda Gondang in the 2023/2024 academic year. In this research, of the three classes in class VIII at MTs Al-Huda Gondang, one class was taken as a sample, namely class VIII-A with a total of 20 students. This sampling uses convenience sampling. Choosing one class allows researchers to focus more on the use of Project Based Learning (PjBL) on groups of students who have similar backgrounds.

To conduct the research, there are procedure of the research. The first is Preparation. Researchers prepared several devices in the study such as learning modules and student test sheets. Then developed research instruments. The second is Implementation. Conducting a pre-test to the entire sample. After

completing the pre-test, conducting Project Based Learning (PjBL) learning in accordance with the prepared module. The third is Data Collection. After the implementation of Project Based Learning learning is complete, conduct a post-test to all sample students using the same instrument as the pre-test. the same instrument as the pre-test.

Some of the data collection techniques used in this study are: (1) Test. The data processed by researchers are pre-test and post-test data. The tests used in the pre-test and post-test in this study were written essay tests. Researchers gave written essay tests by asking students to create and write descriptive texts about animals that live on land. This test was conducted during the pre-test (before treatment), and during the post-test (after treatment), so that researchers could measure and assess students' descriptive writing skills before and after the learning treatment using the Project Based Learning (PjBL) learning model. The assessment was carried out based on the assessment aspects in writing, namely; content, organization, vocabulary, grammar, and mechanics. From the test results, researchers can find out students' abilities in writing descriptive text. And then the score will be taken based on the score categorized in essay writing. (2) Documentation. The documentation technique uses documents as data sources. Documentation carried out in this study by saving various activities in the research that contain the process and results of the research.

Table 2. Score Category

No	Score	Categories
1	86-100	Excellent
2	76-85	Good
3	71-75	Fair
4	<70	Poor

The fourth procedure is Data Analysis. Collecting pre-test and post-test results. Analyzing data to determine the difference in students' descriptive writing ability scores before and after being given Project Based Learning (PjBL) learning. This research used descriptive statistics (Determining Mean & Determining Standard of Deviation Score) and parametric inferential statistics using the t-test. Mean is the average or middle value calculated from a set of numbers and is used to measure the central tendency of the data. The paired sample t-test is used to test whether there is a significant difference between two groups of related data, such as the same group measured at two different points in time.

The following is considered as the determination of the hypothesis:  $H_a$  is accepted if  $t_{\text{count}} > t_{\text{table}}$  with a significant difference in students' descriptive writing skills before and after the application of Project Based Learning (PjBL) to improve the descriptive writing skills of eighth grade students at MTs Al-Huda Gondang in the 2023/2024 academic year.

## RESEARCH FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

This research activity was carried out for three days. Starting from June 6, 2024 to June 8, 2024. This research was conducted in class VIII-A MTs Al-Huda Gondang in the 2023/2024 school year. At the first meeting a pre-test will be held and material about descriptive text will be given. In this part of the pre-test will be done before treatment. This pre-test activity is to determine students' knowledge of writing skills before being given treatment. This pre-test activity is in the form of writing a descriptive text based on the object chosen by the student himself which he will describe on a sheet of paper 20 students of class VIII-A MTs Al-Huda Gondang. Then on the second day, treatment was carried out which included the implementation of learning with the Project Based Learning (PjBL) learning model. Students work on projects to create descriptive texts with Project Based Learning (PjBL) learning steps. After completing the provision of material or treatment, on the third day a post test will be conducted. Post test is the last activity of this research. In the post test, students write descriptive texts about animals that live on land.

The results of the research calculations show that the average student results before using the Project Based Learning (PjBL) learning model was 36 with a poor category. The highest score was 50 and the lowest score was 25. There were 0 students in the excellent category, 0 students in the good category, 0 students in the fair category, and 20 students in the poor category. There are 20 students from the total students who still score less than the KKM which is 75.

The results of the research calculations show that the average student learning outcomes after using the Project Based Learning (PjBL) learning model was 78 with a good category. The highest score was 90 and the lowest score was 75. There was 1 student in the excellent category, 6 students in the good category, 13 students in the fair category, and 0 students in the poor category. There are 0 students from the total students who still get less than the KKM which is 75.

Table 3. The Analysis of students' Improvement Result

Characteristic	N	SUM	Mean	Lowest Score	Highest Score
Before using the Project Based Learning (PjBL) learning	20	725	36	25	50
After using the Project Based Learning (PjBL) learning	20	1560	78	75	90

(Source: data was processed by the researcher)

Data based on the table shows that the amount of data on descriptive writing skills of class VIII-A MTs Al-Huda Gondang students before and after treatment on learning using the Project Based Learning (PjBL) learning model is 20 students. The lowest score on the pre-test was 25 and the highest

score was 50. And the lowest score on the post-test was 75 and the highest score was 90. The average student learning outcomes increased from 36 to 78. This means that there is a significant difference before treatment on the pre-test 36 and after treatment on the post-test 78 which is 42.

To find out the significant difference between student scores before and after treatment in learning by using the Project Based Learning (PjBL) learning model, the t-count results must be consulted with the t-table. From the results of data analysis that has been done, the t-count value is 19.19. Then after getting the t-count value we have to find the df (frequency distribution) and see the t-table.

Table 4. Hypothesis Test Results

t <sub>count</sub>	df	t <sub>table</sub>
19,19	19	1,725

From the t distribution it is found that t<sub>table</sub> for t<sub>0,05</sub> = 1,725.

So, t<sub>count</sub> > t<sub>table</sub> = 19,09 > 1,725

To decide the result of pre-test and post-test have significant difference or not must be returned to the hypothesis. The hypothesis is "Ha is accepted if t<sub>count</sub> > t<sub>table</sub> with a significant difference in students' descriptive writing skills before and after the application of Project Based Learning (PjBL) to improve the descriptive writing skills of eighth grade students at MTs Al-Huda Gondang in the 2023/2024 academic year. The use of Project Based Learning (PjBL) will significant if t<sub>count</sub> > t<sub>table</sub>. Data analysis above shows that t<sub>count</sub> > t<sub>table</sub> (19,09 > 1,725), so Ha is accepted."

The following is a description of students' overall skills before being given treatment in learning by using the Project Based Learning (PjBL) learning model. (1) Content. Students lack knowledge about writing, including substance, and relevance in presenting topics. (2) Organization. Students lack writing that demonstrates an overall arrangement of writing structures that is appropriate for the type of text being written. (3) Grammar. Students lack on the use of grammatical forms and forms of syntax in writing. (4) Vocabulary. Students lack on choosing the right words to express their ideas. (5) Mechanics. Students lack consideration in writing applications such as punctuation and spelling.

The following is a description of students' overall skills after treatment in learning by using the Project Based Learning (PjBL) learning model. (1) Content. Students increase on knowledge about writing, including substance, and relevance in presenting topics. (2) Organization. Students increase on writing that demonstrates an overall arrangement of writing structures that is appropriate for the type of text being written. (3) Grammar. Students increase on the use of grammatical forms and forms of syntax in writing. (4) Vocabulary. Students increase on choosing the right words to express their ideas. (5) Mechanics. Students increase consideration in writing applications such as punctuation and spelling.

## CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The results of the research calculations above show that the average student results before using the Project Based Learning (PjBL) learning model was 36 with a poor category. The highest score was 50 and the lowest score was 25. There were 0 students in the excellent category, 0 students in the good category, 0 students in the fair category, and 20 students in the poor category. There are 20 students from the total students who still score less than the KKM which is 75.

The results of the research calculations above show that the average student learning outcomes after using the Project Based Learning (PjBL) learning model was 78 with a good category. The highest score was 90 and the lowest score was 75. There was 1 student in the excellent category, 6 students in the good category, 13 students in the fair category, and 0 students in the poor category. There are 0 students from the total students who still get less than the KKM which is 75.

From the results of this research, it can be concluded that the application of learning by using the Project Based Learning (PjBL) learning model can improve student learning outcomes in learning to write descriptive text for class VIII-A MTs Al-Huda Gondang in the 2023/2024 school year. In terms of students' abilities, it can be concluded that there are several aspects that develop after the application of learning with the Project Based Learning (PjBL) learning model which includes students' understanding of content, organization, grammar, vocabulary, and mechanics in writing descriptive text. This can be seen in the increase in student learning outcomes recorded from the pre-test to the post-test which has increased. In the pre-test results there were no students who scored  $>70$ , in the post-test results increased with 20 students who scored  $>70$  according to the KKM.

Based on the results obtained after the implementation of the study, researchers has some suggestions for English teachers, students, and future researchers. For teachers, a collaborative learning environment can encourage students to learn from and help each other. Teachers can create a collaborative learning environment by giving group assignments and encouraging students to discuss and give feedback to each other. Teachers need to provide clear guidance and direction to students in each stage of the PjBL project. This is to ensure students understand the task and do it well. Constructive feedback from teachers is essential to help students improve their descriptive writing skills. Teachers need to give specific feedback and focus on the aspects that students need to improve. And teachers can utilize various learning resources to help students learn descriptive writing, such as textbooks, the internet, videos, and audio.

Students' active participation in learning is very important to improve their descriptive writing skills. Students should be active in joining discussions, doing assignments, and giving feedback to their classmates. Students need to make good use of study time to do assignments and practice descriptive writing. The more often students write, the better their writing skills will be. Students can write journals,

short stories, or descriptions about anything they are interested in. Reading various descriptive texts can help students to learn how to write descriptively well. Students can read books, magazines, articles, and other texts that contain interesting descriptions. If students have difficulty in descriptive writing, they can ask teachers or friends for help.

For future research, this research only focuses on the effectiveness of Project Based Learning (PjBL) in improving descriptive writing skills. Further research can be conducted to test the effectiveness of PjBL in improving the ability to write other text types, such as narrative text, expository text, or argumentative text. And this research only focuses on the effect of Project Based Learning (PjBL) on students' descriptive writing ability. Further research can be conducted to examine other factors that influence students' descriptive writing ability, such as learning motivation, interest in writing, and general English ability

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