

THE INFLUENCE OF PJBL MODEL ON DESCRIPTIVE TEXT WRITING SKILLS IN ELEMENTARY SCHOOLS

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Abstract

This research is motivated by the low skill of writing descriptive texts in grade V students of SDN 2 Kasugengan Lor. The problems found are that students have difficulty in expressing ideas in writing, especially in writing descriptive texts, as well as the lack of optimal use of innovative learning models in the learning process. This study aims to determine the influence of the Project Based Learning (PjBL) model on students' descriptive text writing skills. The study uses a quantitative approach with a quasi-experimental design of the non-equivalent control group design. The research sample consisted of an experimental class and a control class. The data collection technique was carried out through a questionnaire to determine the initial ability of students as well as a descriptive text writing test in the form of pre-test and post-test. The results of the data analysis showed that there was a significant difference in students' writing skills between classes that used the Project Based Learning (PjBL) model and classes that used conventional learning. This is evidenced by the average post-test score of the experimental class of 85.17 which is higher than the control class of 81.14, and the significance value of 0.000 (< 0.05). Thus, the Project Based Learning (PjBL) model has proven to be effective in improving descriptive text writing skills in Indonesian language learning in elementary schools.

Keywords: Project Based Learning; Writing; Descriptive text; Elementary Schools

Abstrak

Penelitian ini dilatarbelakangi oleh rendahnya keterampilan menulis teks deskripsi pada peserta didik kelas V SDN 2 Kasugengan Lor. Permasalahan yang ditemukan yaitu peserta didik mengalami kesulitan dalam menuangkan ide secara tertulis, khususnya dalam menulis teks deskripsi, serta kurang optimalnya penggunaan model pembelajaran yang inovatif dalam proses pembelajaran. Penelitian ini bertujuan untuk mengetahui pengaruh model Project Based Learning (PjBL) terhadap keterampilan menulis teks deskripsi peserta didik. Penelitian menggunakan pendekatan kuantitatif dengan desain quasi experimental tipe non-equivalent control group design. Sampel penelitian terdiri atas kelas eksperimen dan kelas kontrol. Teknik pengumpulan data dilakukan melalui angket untuk mengetahui kemampuan awal peserta didik serta tes menulis teks deskripsi berupa pre-test dan post-test. Hasil analisis data menunjukkan adanya perbedaan yang signifikan pada keterampilan menulis peserta didik antara kelas yang menggunakan model Project Based Learning (PjBL) dan kelas yang menggunakan pembelajaran konvensional. Hal tersebut dibuktikan dengan nilai rata-rata post-test kelas eksperimen sebesar 85,17 yang lebih tinggi dibandingkan dengan kelas kontrol sebesar 81,14, serta nilai signifikansi sebesar 0,000 ($< 0,05$). Dengan demikian, model Project Based Learning (PjBL) terbukti efektif dalam meningkatkan keterampilan menulis teks deskripsi pada pembelajaran Bahasa Indonesia di Sekolah Dasar.

Kata Kunci: Project Based Learning; Menulis; Teks Deskripsi; Sekolah Dasar

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Introduction

Writing skills are of the fundamental literacy competencies that need to be developed from the elementary school level. Writing functions not only as a means of communication but also as a medium for expressing ideas, feelings, and experience in written form (Nurhabibah et al., 2023). According to (Jannah, W.N. & Dianasari, 2018) writing skills need to be developed so that individuals are able to convey ideas clearly and systematically.

In practice, the writing process consists of three stages pre-writing, writing, and post-writing (Jannah, W.N., 2021). Therefore, writing ability is considered one of the essential language skills that must be continuously trained through the learning process in elementary education. In the context of basic education, this skill is the foundation for the development of students' literacy to be able to express ideas clearly and meaningfully (Jannah, W.N., 2021) writing as one of the components of language skills that students need to master at school.

These skills can be acquired and mastered through practice and a lot of practice. According to (Dalman, 2014) writing is the process of conveying thoughts, wishful thinking, feelings in the form of symbols or signs or writings that have meaning. One type of text in elementary school learning is a description text, which is a text that describes an object, place, or atmosphere in detail so that the reader appears to see the object directly (Mahsun, 2014)

Through descriptive writing activities, students are trained to observe the surrounding, enrich their vocabulary, and organize ideas into complete paragraphs. Thus, learning descriptive text writing plays an important role in supporting the development of students' literacy skills.

However, the literacy of elementary school students in Indonesian remains relatively of the Minimum Competency Assessment (AKM), approximately 46,83% of elementary school students are still below the minimum literacy competency standard (Kemendikbud, 2024). In addition (Y. Sari et al., 2020) stated that many students experience difficulties in expressing ideas effective sentences due to the lack of learning activities that encourages exploration and real-life experience.

Previous studies also revealed that students' descriptive writing skills remain low, particularly in terms of text structure, vocabulary usage, and sentence coherence (Siregar, 2021). This condition indicates that writing skills still require serious attention in an effort to improve the quality of Indonesian language learning at the elementary school level.

These problems were also identified at SDN 2 Kasugengan Lor, Cirebon Regency. Based on preliminary observations conducted in July 2025 and follow-up observations in October 2025 in fifth-grade classrooms, it was found that most students still experienced difficulties in writing descriptive texts. Students had difficulties organizing ideas systematically, selecting appropriate vocabulary, and describing objects in detail.

In addition, the learning process was still dominated by concept delivery and written assignments, limiting students' opportunities to actively engage in exploration and direct observation activities. As a result, students' active participation in learning to write had not been optimally facilitated. This condition indicates that the implementation of writing instruction has not fully aligned with the characteristics of the Merdeka Curriculum, which emphasizes contextual, student-centered, and meaningful learning.

The Merdeka Curriculum requires learning processes that encourage students to actively observe, explore, and connect learning materials with real-life situations (Siregar, 2021). Therefore, an appropriate learning model is needed to facilitate students in learning actively, creatively, and contextually.

One learning model considered suitable for this purpose is Project Based Learning (PjBL). The PjBL model emphasizes project-based learning activities that connect academic concepts with real life experiences, thereby encouraging students to think critically and creatively (Retno Winarni, 2023). In the context of writing instruction PjBL is considered effective because students are actively involved in producing meaningful written work.

Previous studies shown that the implementation of PjBL can improve elementary school students' writing abilities, particularly in aspects of content, structure, and vocabulary usage in descriptive and creative text writing (Winarni, 2019). The observation reaffirmed by (Kusmiati, 2022) shows a significant improvement in the ability to write descriptive texts after the application of the PjBL model.

However, studies examining the effect of the PjBL model on descriptive writing skills at the elementary school level are still limited. Most previous studies focused on junior and senior high school students or examined other text types such as narrative and exposition texts. In addition, previous studies predominantly employed qualitative approaches or classroom action research (CAR), so quantitative experimental studies examining the statistical effect of PjBL on descriptive writing skill are still limited (Nugraha, 2021).

Furthermore, differences in student characteristics, learning culture, and school environments may influence the effectiveness of the PjBL model, including in the context of SDN 2 Kasugengan Lor (Rahmah, 2020). Another important concern lies in the assessment of writing skills. Several previous studies used writing assessment instruments that were still general and less specific in assessing descriptive writing skills at the elementary school level.

Therefore, the development of assessment instruments covering aspects of content, structure, vocabulary, and mechanics is necessary to produce more accurate finding that can be implemented in classroom learning practice (Handayani & Yusuf, 2022). Based on explanation above, this study aims to examine quantitatively the effect of the Project Based Learning (PjBL) model on the descriptive writing skills of fifth-grade students at SDN 2 Kasugengan Lor.

This study is expected to contribute to the development of contextual and student-centered Indonesian language learning models in accordance with the characteristics the Merdeka Curriculum at the elementary school level.

Research Methods

The type of research used in this quantitative research employing a quasi-experimental method. The specific research layout applied is the non-equivalent control group design. Through this design, the researcher involved two intact groups of classes that had already been formed without utilizing random assignment.

These groups consisted of an experimental group, which received the pedagogical intervention in the form of the Project Based Learning (PjBL) model, and a control group, which was instructed using a conventional learning model. Both groups were simultaneously administered an initial evaluation (pre-test) prior to the treatment cycles and a final evaluation (post-test) after the entire of instructional interventions was completed.

This research was carried out at SDN 2 Kasugengan Lor, Cirebon Regency, Indonesia. The research population encompassed all fifth-grade students enrolled at school. The sample selection was conducted using a purposive sampling technique based on available intact classes, thereby yielding a total sample of 57 students divided into two distinct groups: Class V B as the experimental group ($N= 29$ Students) and class V A as the control group ($N= 28$ Students).

This study secured ethical committee of the University of Muhammadiyah Cirebon. Furthermore, official administrative permissions from the school authority and written informed consent from the students' parents or legal guardians were strictly obtained before the data collection process commenced in the field.

Systematically and chronologically, the operational flowchart of this research execution was structured into 3 (three) sequential main stages, describe as follows;

1. Planning Stage

During this initial phase, the researcher completed several essential preparation steps, which included; (1) Conducting preliminary field studies and initial classroom observations at the school site to identify concrete, real-world problems regarding the low descriptive text writing skills among fifth-grade students; (2) securing official administrative research permission from the school administration; (3) formulating instructional materials and lesson plans for the descriptive text material within the Indonesian language subject. The lesson plans were designed in two different version: the Project Based Learning (PjBL) structural model version for the experimental group and the conventional model version for the control group; (4) constructing and developing data collection instruments, which comprised a baseline comprehension questionnaire (consisting 10 for closed-ended statements) and a performance-based test instrument for descriptive text writing skills; (5) conducting instrument validation procedures through expert judgment to ensure a high level of content validity and reliability before deploying the instruments in the field.

2. Implementation Stage

The stage represents the core of the experimental field deployment, which was carried out chronologically according to the following procedures; (1) Administration of the initial test (baseline assessment); in the first meeting the researcher simultaneously administered the initial comprehension questionnaire and conducted the writing pre-test in both the experimental class (V B) and the control class (V A). This step aimed to empirically measure the students baseline abilities before any model treatments were introduced; (2) Delivery of pedagogical intervention (treatment): The learning process was carried out across several meetings focusing on identical descriptive text topics. In the experimental class (V B), the teacher systematically applied the structural steps of the PjBL model, which included identifying fundamental questions, designing project plans, creating schedules, monitoring project progress and active student involvement, assessing the final product, and evaluating the overall learning experiences in synthesizing creative and organized descriptive compositions. Conversely, the control class (V A) was taught utilizing a conventional teacher-centered model characterized by one-way lecturing, limited question-and answer routines, and individual written exercises from the standard textbook; (3) administration of the final test (final evaluation): upon the completion of all instructional material cycles, the researcher organized a writing post-test for both groups using a testing instrument identical to the pre-test. The post-test score were collected to analyze the final impact exerted each learning model.

3. Data Analysis Stage

All quantitative datasets gathered from the field were statistically processed using SPSS version 26 software. The data from the baseline questionnaire were converted into descriptive percentages to systematically map the students' initial readiness. For the writing test scores, the data analysis pipeline was aligned with parametric statistical assumptions, which consisted of; (1) calculating descriptive statistics determine the minimum values, maximum values, mean score, and standard deviations for each class; (2) performing

prerequisite analysis test, which included data normality testing using the Kolmogorov-Smirnov and Shapiro-Wilk formulations, as well as homogeneity of variances testing using Levene's Test; (3) Executing hypothesis testing (differential analysis), specifically applying a Paired Sample t-test to verify the statistical significance of intra-group improvements, and an Independent Sample t-test to measure the inter-group difference in overall pedagogical effectiveness between the experimental and control classes.

Result And Discussion

This research was conducted on grade V students of SDN 2 Kasugengan Lor which consisted of two groups, namely class V B as an experimental class with a total of 29 students and class V A as a control class with a total of 28 students. This study used a quasi-experimental design with a non-equivalent control group design.

The data collected was initially in the form of questionnaire results to determine students' initial skills in Indonesian language learning materials, especially descriptive text writing skills, then the data collected was in the form of pre-test scores before treatment and post-test scores after treatment. The data was used to determine descriptive text writing skills before and after the implementation of the Project Based Learning (PjBL).

Students' descriptive text writing skills were measured before and after the treatment of the Project Based Learning (PjBL) model to determine students' initial skills, a questionnaire was given to students to find out the initial picture of students' understanding, interests, and readiness before and after the learning treatment. The distribution of student responses from both groups is summarized in Table 1.

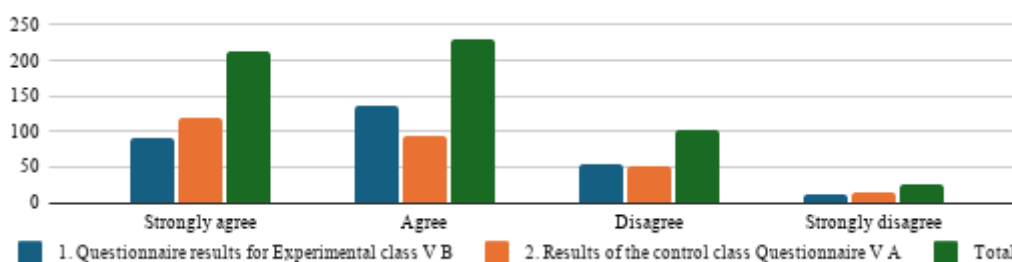


Figure 1. Results of the Student Initial Comprehension Questionnaire

Based on the results of the questionnaire given to both groups, in the experimental class, 92 responses strongly agreed, 135 agreed, 53 disagreed, and 10 strongly disagreed. Meanwhile, in the control class, there were 120 responses strongly agreed, 95 agreed, 50 disagreed, and 15 strongly disagreed. Overall, the majority of students' responses fell into the agree and strongly agree categories, totaling 230 and 212 responses, respectively.

This indicates that most students perceived themselves as having basic prior knowledge of descriptive text writing, although a small portion (123 disagreed and 25 strongly disagreed) still faced challenges. These descriptive findings clarify the baseline profile of students' initial writing readiness before any learning interventions were applied.

Students' descriptive text writing skills were measured before and after the implementation of the Project Based Learning (PJBL) learning model. To obtain the ability to write students' initial description texts, a pre-test is carried out first, then after the application of the Project Based Learning (PJBL) learning model, students are given a post-test to measure the improvement of students' writing skills.

Based on the results of statistical analysis obtained in the research in class V, the amount of data, maximum score, and average score obtained from the results of research that has been carried out in grade V of elementary school. The results of the calculation consisted of two classes, namely V A as the control class and V B as the experimental class. To empirically evaluate the efficacy of the PjBL model, writing tests were administered before pre-test and after post-test the instructional treatments.

Table 1. Descriptive Statistics

	N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Dev
<i>Pre-Test Control Class</i>	28	68	80	74.57	3.316
<i>Control Class Post-Test</i>	28	75	87	81.14	3.171
<i>Pre-Test Class Experiment</i>	29	68	81	75.45	3.572
<i>Post-Test Experiment Class</i>	29	78	92	85.17	4.080
<i>Valid N (listwise)</i>	28				

As presented in Table 2, both groups exhibited an increase in their writing scores. However, the experimental classes achieved a more prominent post-test mean score 85.17 compared to the control group 81.14.

Parametric assumptions were tested prior to hypothesis evaluation. The normality assessment using Kolmogorov-Smirnov and Shapiro-Wilk formulations yielded significance values greater than 0.05 (Sig. > 0.05) for all datasets, confirming a normal distribution.

Furthermore, the homogeneity variance test based on the mean showed a significance value of $0.120 > 0.05$, validating that the post-test variances between the two classes were homogeneous and safely met the criteria for inferential t-test parametric t-tests. To track intra-group improvement, a Paired Sample t-test was executed.

Table 2. Paired Sample t-test

				95% Confidence				Sig. (2- tailed)	
		Std.	Std.	Interval of the					
	Mean	Deviation	Error	Lower	Upper	t	df		
Pair 1	Pre-Test	-9.724	1.066	.198	-10.129	-9.319	-49.143	28	.000
	Experiment - Post-Test Experiment								
Pair 2	Pre-Test control - Post-Test control	-6.571	.573	.108	-6.794	-6.349	-60.712	27	.000

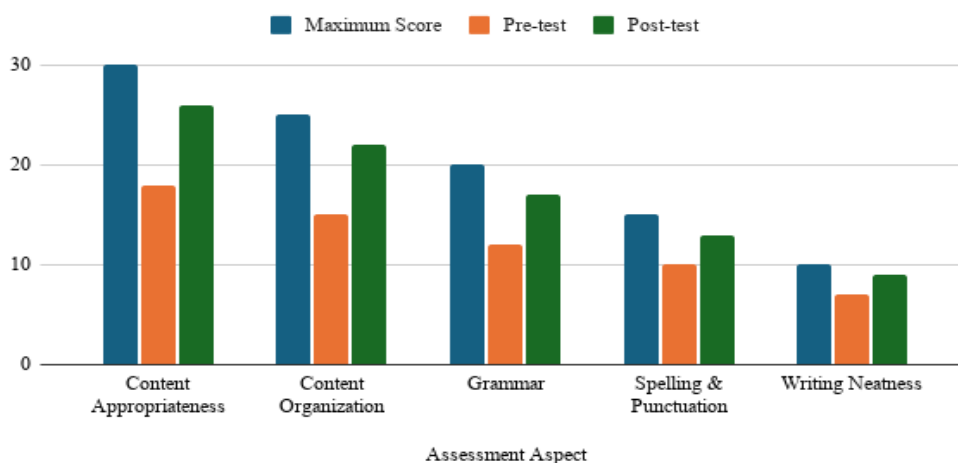
The Paired sample t-test generated a 2-tailed significance value of 0.000 (< 0.05) for both groups, leading to the rejection of H0 and acceptance of H1. This statistical output validates that both instructional approaches induced a significant shift in writing performance. Subsequently, an Independent Sample t-test was conducted to verify whether the inter-group difference was statistically meaningful.

Table 3. Independent Sample t-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
<i>Equal variances assumed</i>	2.490	.120	4.15	55	.000	4.02956	.97024	2.08515	5.97396
<i>Equal variances not assumed</i>			4.17	52.6	.000	4.02956	.96597	2.09175	5.96736
			2	28					

The Independent Sample t-test under equal variance assumptions resulted in a p-value of 0.000 (Sig. 2-tailed < 0.05) with a mean difference of 4.029. This confirms that the experimental group taught via the PjBL model significantly outperformed the conventionally taught control group, verifying that PjBL exerts a stronger positive influence on enhancing elementary students' descriptive text writing skills.

The holistic impact of the PjBL model is further evidenced across specific writing rubrics, including content appropriateness, grammar, mechanics, and neatness.

Results of students descriptive text writing skills**Figure 2.** Results of students' descriptive text writing skill

The experimental class marked distinct improvements across all criteria. These improvements include content appropriateness (18 to 26), more systematic content organization (15 to 22), grammar (12 to 17), spelling and punctuation (10 to 13), and neatness of writing (7 to 9). These figures indicate that the model did not merely amplify generic output but systematically refined the structural and mechanical dimensions of text creation.

The quantitative findings confirm that integrating the PjBL model yields a significantly better learning outcome than one-way conventional strategies. Methodologically, this success aligns with the baseline questionnaire, where the diverse student entry behaviors demanded an adaptive, engaging pedagogy. Theoretically, building new capabilities upon prior student knowledge reinforces retention, as argued by (Hendrowati, 2015). In addition, interest in learning also plays a role in increasing s-based involvement.

Therefore, the application of the Project Based Learning (PJBL) model is relevant because it is able to encourage activeness and meaningful learning experiences. This research is also in line with previous research by (Retno Winarni, 2023) showing that PJBL can improve students' writing skills, while previous research by (Lesnowati & Hafifi, 2021) stated that PJBL improves motivation and performance outcomes through project-based activities. In line with that (Thomas, 2000) emphasized that PJBL provides opportunities for students to learn actively and contextually. Thus, the results of the questionnaire show that although students' initial understanding varies, the application of the Project Based Learning (PJBL) model is appropriate to optimally improve descriptive text writing skills.

The results of the analysis in the statistical test showed an increase in descriptive text writing skills in both classes or both groups, the experimental class showed a more significant increase. The average post-test score of the experimental class reached 85.17, while the control class was 81.14, with an average difference of 4.029. The results of the paired sample t-test and the independent sample t-test showed a significance value of $0.000 < 0.05$, so there was a significant difference between the experimental and control classes.

Theoretically, this increase is supported by the characteristics of Project Based Learning (PJBL) which emphasizes active and project-based learning. According to (Thomas, 2000) PJBL encourages students to be directly involved in the learning process through exploration and product manufacturing activities. This is in line with (Hendrowati, 2015) which states that active learning can significantly improve learning outcomes. Furthermore, this significant increase strongly supported by research (Markus Harefa et al., 2023) which explicitly demonstrated that the structured integration of project-based learning techniques inherently aids in optimizing text skills specifically among fifth-grade elementary school students.

These findings are also in line with previous research by (Retno Winarni, 2023) which found that PJBL affects writing skills, and confirmed in previous research by (D. M. M. Sari & Prasetyo, 2021) concluding that PJBL is effective in improving writing skills because it provides a meaningful and structured learning experience. Comparison of writing skills results on each aspect of descriptive text writing skills, all indicators show significant improvements. Thus, the Project Based Learning (PJBL) model is able to improve writing skills comprehensively, not only in terms of content but also in terms of language and the suitability of indicators of achievement of writing skills.

Theoretically, these findings are in line with the constructivist perspective (Piaget, 1970) that learners build knowledge through processes of assimilation and accommodation based on their experiences. In this context, project activities at PJBL provide real experiences that can develop ideas and organize writing gradually for students. Meanwhile, according to (Vygotsky & Cole, 1978) the importance of social interaction and proximal developmental zones that students can achieve higher abilities through mentorship and collaboration. This is reflected in the PJBL implementation process which involves discussion, group work, and feedback, thereby helping students improve the quality of writing skills. Improving the content and organizational aspects is in line with the opinion (Tarigan, 2013) that writing is the process of building and structuring ideas systematically.

The improvement of grammar and spelling aspects shows the development of mastery of linguistic rules as stated by (Iliza & Hanif, 2025). This finding is in line with previous research by (Retno Winarni, 2023) that PJBL improves writing skills in aspects of ideas, organization, and creativity. Thus, the results of the study show that the application of Project Based Learning (PJBL) can improve writing skills in all aspects of the assessment of descriptive text writing skills for grade V elementary school students.

Conclusion

This study demonstrates that the Project Based Learning (PjBL) model significantly influences the descriptive text writing skills of fifth-grade elementary school students within the studied context. Statistically, the experimental group achieved a higher mean post-test score 85.17 compared to the control group 81.14, with the hypothesis test confirming a significant difference (Sig. 2-tailed = 0.000 < 0.05), thus rejecting H_0 . These findings directly answer the research objective, proving that PjBL is more effective than conventional one-way models in enhancing students structured and creative writing abilities.

The clear contribution of this research lies in providing empirical evidence of how structured project stages can actively engage fifth-graders emotionally and cognitively, thereby transforming a conventional classroom into a collaborative learning environment. While these results are specific to the sampled grade and school context, they offer a practical alternative for educators seeking to improve primary-level literacy. To avoid over-generalization, future research is encouraged to expand the scope by integrating PjBL with other literacy skills (listening, speaking, or reading) and testing its efficacy across diverse grade levels and broader demographics areas.

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