

## A Critical Review: Students' Outcomes of Project Based Learning (PjBL)

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**Abstract:** The purpose of study is to investigate the impact and effectiveness of implementing Project Based Learning (PjBL) towards learning outcomes in English Subject. The PjBL method has become a major focus in education due to its potential to increase student's involvement and practical in learning. The method of this research used a *Systematic Literature Review*. The selection of the inclusion and exclusion criteria has been determined. It were selected 28 included studies obtained from three databases, Connectedpapers.com, ERIC, Perplexity.ai. This study analyzes the characteristics studies, impact and effectiveness of Project Based Learning (PjBL) on learning outcomes in English language subjects. Based on the results of this study, it is emphasized that PjBL has positive and significant implications. It is shown that PjBL can have a beneficial impact on students' ability to learn and use English. Through contextualized and practical projects, students do not only practice but they are also actively involved in learning process. the impact of their involvement, it does not only improves specific language skills, but also strengthens their social skills, collaboration skills and motivation to learn. Therefore, it can be concluded that learning focused on the application of PjBL in the context of English can support learning outcomes optimally.

**Key words:** Project Based Learning, Learning Outcomes

### INTRODUCTION

In education, actively involving all the participants is important, especially the students and then ideal learning will be established (Halim, 2020). Ghufroon's (2017) study found that the ideal or quality learning process is one that focuses on developing students' potential by listening to their needs and learning styles. In an ideal environment, clear and measurable learning objectives are the cornerstone, helping students understand why they are learning and what is expected of them (Ramadani, 2022; Simbolon 2022). The ideal learning experience should end with a deep and lasting understanding of the subject matter. A variety of teaching methods, such as lectures, projects, or interactive technology, are used to accommodate different learning styles. To make the learning process ideal, it must implement student-centered learning. McLeod, et al (2003) defined student-centered strategy where the teacher in the classroom as facilitator then the students become interactive participants and it will be affective when the students are ready.

However, the current learning situation is still teacher-centered where the teacher acts as the main source of knowledge and the main controller in the learning process. In this environment, teachers often provide lectures or teaching centered on their knowledge and experience to students, while students act as passive recipients of information (Altun, 2023; Lak, 2017). This approach tends to be less interactive, with few opportunities for students to actively participate, ask questions or contribute to decision-making in the learning process. While this approach can still provide benefits, such as conveying basic information.

Moreover, teacher-centered learning approaches are often less effective in motivating students, developing critical skills and promoting deep understanding. So, an overly teacher-centered learning situation may also lack relevance to students' needs and interests, and not allow students to develop independent skills. Teacher-centered learning approach, where students are

more passive objects rather than active subjects in the learning process can cause students to have no space or opportunity to improve their abilities while learning (Audia, 2022; Emaliana, 2017; Serin, 2018; Murphy, 2021). It definitely affects learning outcomes. Besides, they will have difficulty in understanding the material taught. Teacher-centered learning often limits students' creativity and potential. Students may not have the opportunity to develop their interests and talents independently. To overcome this obstacle, education needs to move towards a more student-centered learning model. Students should be given more space to develop their own abilities, and teachers can act as facilitators who guide them in the learning process. Thus, students will have more opportunities to improve their abilities, pursue personal interests, and thus better understand the learning materials. Dealing with this problem, teachers need to find other methods or approaches (Argawati, 2020).

As an alternative approach to conventional learning, PjBL has become a major concern in education because it is considered capable of increasing student engagement, motivation to learn, and application of knowledge in a real-world context (Nushur, 2019; Kurniawati, 2019; Sari, 2019; Pratiwi, 2018). Furthermore, according to Guo (2020) to change this situation, the students are suggested to provide with the opportunity of participating in real problem-solving and knowledge construction in authentic professional contexts. One attractive way to achieve this goal is through project-based learning (PjBL) because in PjBL, the students are encouraged to be more active and creative in study (Sari, 2023; Widiyati, 2022). It focuses on developing critical skills such as problem solving, collaboration, communication, and in-depth understanding of concepts. The project-based learning is a teaching model that put emphasise on assigning tasks, by the principles of student-centered teaching, student autonomy, collaborative learning (Thomas, 2000; Hamidah, 2020; Mali, 2016, Praba', 2018; Wulandari, 2023). Futher, giving students opportunity to answer the questions, solving the problems and producing results product of learning (Agustina, 2021; Aldabbus, 2018; Diana, 2021; Pandesha 2023). Gold Standard Project Based Learning, although a motivating experience for students, emphasizes the purpose of this experience, which is learning with understanding. Enjoyment and motivation are influencing factors, but the goal is to learn deeply, mastering knowledge and concepts (Lamer, 2015)

Based on the results of previous research, the focus on student learning outcomes is a topic that needs to be discussed further regarding how the impact of using PjBL in the learning process. The urgency of this research is to understand how the implementation of PjBL can affect the achievement of student learning outcomes according to the learning objectives set at the previous step. By presenting a systematic and detailed literature review, this article is expected to provide valuable insights for educators, researchers, and educational practitioners in understanding the potential and benefits of PjBL in improving students' understanding of learning materials. This research explored project-based learning in English language learning through analyzing relevant research articles. Thus, this article aims to conduct a Systematic Literature Review (SLR) on Project Based Learning (PjBL) learning model in the context of education unit level on students' learning outcomes. To achieve this research objective, the following research questions are posed to guide the review report:

1. What are the characteristics of studies on students outcomes of Project Based Learning?
2. How is the impact of PjBL on learning outcomes?
3. How is the effectiveness of PjBL implement in English subject?

## RESEARCH METHOD

The systematic literature review (SLR) design was formulated in this research. The literature review carried out in writing this article used the PRISMA (*Preferred Reporting Items for Systematic Review and Meta-Analysis*) method. This review mainly focused on the empirical studies of project-based learning implemented in English learning process.

### *Literature search strategy*

To find the targeted literature, five key terms or keywords were used for the literature search: (1) Understanding material through implementation of PJBL, (2) Project Based Learning in ELT, (3) PJBL and English material, (4) English learning and PJBL, (5) Comprehension English material through Project Based Learning in English teaching. The search was conducted in Oktober 2023, using three databases. Those are Connectedpapers.com, ERIC, Perplexity.ai.

### *Inclusion and exclusion criteria*

After searching the literature, 1.148 publications were prepared for screening using the four inclusion criteria. The inclusion criteria are (1) Article published between 2018-2023, (2) Article should be written in English, (3) Article should be peer-review article (4) Article should be addressing Project Based Learning (PjBL) in English Language Teaching (ELT) that focus in student's learning outcomes. One step selection was used in determining the studies would be included in this research. The step was screening the title and abstract of the articles in accordance the inclusion criteria. The main screening was then conducted on all identified records. After reading the title and abstract, the researcher conducted in-depth analysis through read full-text. The articles focused on achieving the learning outcomes through Project Based Learning (PjBL) in English Language Teaching (ELT) were selected as the object in this research. The research articles which did not focus on Project Based Learning (PjBL) in English Language Teaching (ELT) on student learning outcomes were exclusion criteria in this study.. A total of 1,120 studies were excluded for failure to meet the inclusion criteria, resulting in 28 records that proceeded to the next step.

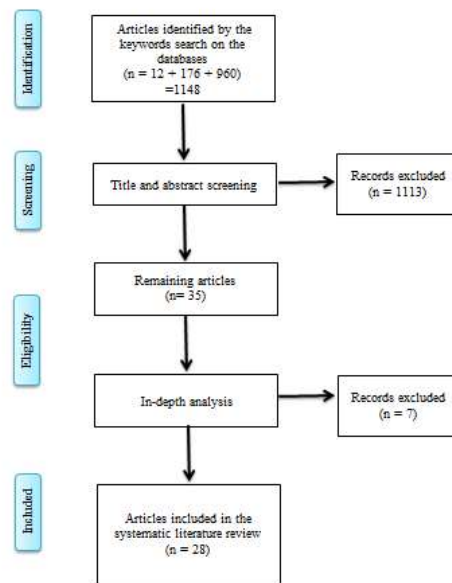


Figure 1. PRISMA flow diagram of systematic review

## RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

In the result section, it will be report against three research questions. The first is about the Characteristics of Studies on Students Outcomes of Project Based Learning. The second is The Impact of PjBL in Learning Outcomes. The third is the effectiveness of implementing PjBL in English subject

### *The characteristics of studies on student outcomes of project-based learning*

In table 1 below, it was providing the overview of the reviewed studies. In the table, it was summarized the research context, research design, sample size, and data collection method for students' outcomes of Project Based Learning (PjBL). The publication years of this included studies is 2018 up to 2023. The included studies were conducted in five different countries. Those countries are Indonesia (N = 23 studies), Cina (N = 2 studies), Malaysia (N = 2 studies), and the last is Saudia (N = 1 study). Most of included studies were conducted in higher education with 18 studies, while the other studies were conducted in secondary education (N = 18 studies) and one study for English course students. All the studies that included in this research addressed in English subject. Based on this result, Project Based Learning (PjBL) is mainly applied in higher education that in secondary education or English course.

All studies included in this research were empirical studies. It was employed in various designs (i.e., quantitative, qualitative, and mixed). The included studies in this study, the majority discussed the application or implementation (1, 2, 20, 23) of PjBL in learning and how the effect or impact on learning outcomes (3, 6, 10, 11, 12, 14, 18, 21, 24, 27). Besides, other studies have shown on students' perceptions of the (PjBL) method (8,9,17) and how the effectiveness of using this method at English subject in various levels of education (4, 5, 7, 13, 15, 19, 22, 25, 26, 28).

The most frequently methods used in collecting data on students' outcomes of PjBL were test (n = 16), observation (N = 14), interview (N = 10), and questionnaire (N = 9). The collection

data rarely used were library and web search (N = 1), survey (N = 1), focus group discussion (N = 1), document (N = 2) and teacher reflection (N = 1). In addition, test was commonly used for collection data. While in secondary education, the method commonly used in collecting data was observation

Included studies have been primarily conducted in higher education. Research often evaluates concept understanding, critical thinking, collaboration skills and overall academic progress (Novitasari, 2018; Nugroho, 2021). These factors allow researchers to theoretically understand the impact of PjBL on student learning. In addition, studies of student outcomes in PjBL often pay attention to contextual and practical aspects. Another characteristic of studies on student outcomes in PjBL is the focus on comprehensive measurement. Research tends to use a variety of evaluation instruments, including standardized exams, projects or presentations, performance assessments, and reflective reviews (Argawati, 2020; Sahtoni, 2017; Jalinus, 2017). In the context of education, the majority of research is conducted in higher education. The researchers used interviews, observations, library and web searches in collecting qualitative data which they used to find out how student's response to the implementation of PjBL. In quantitative, they use tests and questionnaires as well as surveys to determine the impact and effectiveness of using this method. Some of the data collection methods above are also used by some researchers in mixed methods. Mostly, the sample used is only about 80 samples less in one location or institution. So that the results presented are not able to generalize to the institution.

Table.1 Overview of Studies Included in This Systematic Review

No	Author(s)	Year	Context			Research Design	Sample Size	Data Collection Method
			Country/Region	Education Sector	Subject			
1	Sari, D. M. M., Prasetyo, Y., & Riza, M. D.	2023	Indonesia	Higher Education	English	Mix	23	Observation, questionnaire, test
2	Wijayanti, Fitri & Budi, Avilanofa Bagus	2023	Indonesia	Junior High School	English	Qualitative	-	Observations, interviews, library and web research
3	Lubis, N., Lubis, A., Purba, N. B.	2020	Indonesia	Higher Education	English	Quantitative	-	Questionnaire, test
4	Ardiansah, Dian.	2023	Indonesia	Higher Education	English	Quantitative	68	Test
5	Syakur, A., Musyarofah, L., Sulistyaningsih, & Wike.	2020	Indonesia	Higher Education	English	Quantitative	65	Questionnaire, test
6	Sirait, A. P., Siregar, A., Simanihuruk, L.	2022	Indonesia	Higher Education	ESP	Mix	30	Test
7	Shofyana, M. H., Aditama M. G., Nugroho, H. I., & Asmoro, H.T.	2021	Indonesia	Senior High School	English	Qualitative	20	Observation, questionnaires, and interviews
8	Arini, Harida, E. S., & Siregar, S. R.	2022	Indonesia	Higher Education	RELT	Qualitative		Interview
9	Puspitasari, Indah & Setiawan, Kristianto.	2022	Indonesia	Higher Education	ESP	Qualitative	39	Observation, survey, and interview
10	Widanta, I Made Rai Jaya.	2023	Indonesia	English Course	English	Qualitative		Observational technic and focused-group discussion.
11	Hudiananingsih, D., Ardika, D., Sitawati, R.,	2019	Indonesia	Higher Education	English	Qualitative	58	Test

No	Author(s)	Year	Context			Research Design	Sample Size	Data Collection Method
			Country/Region	Education Sector	Subject			
	Sentanu, G., Widanta, R. J., Sadiyah, W.							
12	Ferdinal, F., Seswita, S., Isramirawati, I.	2022	Indonesia	Higher Education	Writing Skill of English	Quantitative	22	Questionnaire, test
13	Anam, M. S., Muharlisiani, L. T., & Sulistyawati, E.	2023	Indonesia	Junior High School	Writing Skill of English	CAR	31	Interview, Observation and Test
14	Fitriawati	2023	Indonesia	Higher Education	English	Qualitative	42	Observation, interview, and documentation
15	Hidayati, D., Novianti, H., Khansa, M., Slamet, J., & Suryat, N.	2023	Indonesia	Higher Education	ESP	Quantitative	40	Test
16	Friska, Yuliana.	2018	Indonesia	Junior High School	Reading skill of English	CAR	36	Interview, Observation and Test
17	Fitinova, Inderawati, R., & Rosmalina, I.	2018	Indonesia	Higher Education	Reading skill of English	Quantitative	30	Questionnaire
18	We, Sintya Mutiara.	2020	Indonesia	Higher Education	Speaking skill of English	Mix	53	Tests, observations, and interviews
19	Sadiyah, Ikrima Halimatus & Cahyono, Bambang Yudi.	2019	Indonesia	Higher Education	Writing skill of English	Quantitative	19	Test and questionnaire
20	Yuliansyah, Aldi & Ayu, Mutiara.	2021	Indonesia	Senior High School	English	Qualitative	Grade 10th	Observation and document
21	Wulandari, Dwi.	2022	Indonesia	Higher Education	EAP	CAR	500	Test and questionnaire
22	Yusmalinda, Akidatul & Astuti, Puji.	2020	Indonesia	Senior High School	Reading Comprehension of English	Qualitative	2	Interview, observation and document
23	Wahyuningrum, Rida	2019	Indonesia	Higher Education	ESP	CAR	-	Observation, tests, and interview
24	Sun, Xiaohui and Zhu, Peiqi.	2023	Qingdao, China	Senior High School	EFL	Qualitative	77	Tests, semi-structured interviews, and teacher reflections.
25	Abdullah, H., Harun, H., Wahab, N. B., Juo, S. Y., & Ali, M. A. M.	2022	Malaysia	Higher Education	EAP	Qualitative	-	Observation
26	Bakar, N. I. A., Noordin, N., & Razali, A. B.	2019	Malaysia	Higher Education	Speaking skill of English	Quantitative	44	Test and questionnaire
27	Alotaibi, Majed Ghazai.	2020	Saudi Arabia	Secondary Students	Writing skill of English	Quantitative	59	Test
28	Wang, Xiaoning.	2022	China	Junior and Senior major	English	Qualitative	160	Observation and questionnaire

### *The impact of PjBL on learning outcomes*

A total of 16 studies have reported the impact of implementing project-based learning (PjBL) in learning outcomes (1, 2, 3, 5, 6, 9, 10, 11, 12, 14, 18, 20, 21, 23, 24, 27). When implementing the PjBL, generally the steps that involved in the studies were preparation, designing, conducting and evaluation (1, 2, 20, 23). The implementation of Project-Based Learning (PjBL) in learning

changes the learning paradigm of students to be more active and in-depth. They not only learn about the theory, but also apply it in a real context (2,23). It is not only applicable in classroom learning. Moreover, PjBL also able to be applied in online learning with good control from the teacher (20). So, the implementation of this method will make students actively involved through projects shared with students during learning (1). Through the correct steps in the application of PjBL has a significant impact on learning outcomes. This implementation is not only teaching students about specific content, but it strengthens their skills and understanding in a broader context also. Through well-planned projects, it strengthens their understanding of the concepts learned as well as develops interpersonal or collaborative skills in discussions between group members (11).

When students engage in the project, they should compile a report detailing the results of their research, analysis, and solutions found as a final product. This process strengthens students' writing skills (10, 12, 27). In addition, when presenting their projects, students have to explain in front of the public. It trains their communication skills that important in professional academic contexts (10, 18, 21). In Lubis's study (2020) shows that one of the positive impacts on the application of this method is able to increase self-confidence because one of the important things in conveying information is confidence and a good communication structure (3). Wahyuningrum's study (2019) stated PjBL can significantly improve the scores in test. It means that PjBL helps teacher in achieving learning outcomes (23). Additionally, the application of Project-Based Learning (PjBL) has proven to be an effective method in improving learning outcomes and achieving student learning objectives (5, 6, 9, 14). That is, Sun (2023) reported that by utilizing a more practical and contextual approach, it directly improves students' competencies in terms of critical thinking, collaboration, communication, leadership, and independence (24). This provides a strong foundation for students to succeed in understanding English subject.

The implementation of Project Based Learning (PjBL) has significant impact on learning outcomes, changing the way students understand and apply knowledge in a practical context. Milan (2023) and Chen's (2019) study stated project-based learning has large impact on student's learning outcomes positively. In this learning process, students will be given a project that they must work on. Through project that requires deep language understanding, students naturally engage and extend their competences. The project encourages the use of English in more authentic and relevant contexts, enriching their oral and written communication skills. Besides, through the given project, it is able to stimulate students' interest in learning and provide them with opportunities to participate actively (Asmi, 2022; Sari, 2018). When students actively and more thoroughly involved in the learning process, it strengthens their intrinsic motivation. This leads to a deeper understanding of the subject matter due to the students involved directly. One of the impacts on implementing PjBL is the impact on improving students' competence or ability by learning outcomes established previously (Dja'man, 2021; Rahman, 2022; Yunita, 2021). PjBL is learning that indirectly combines several skills on English such as writing, reading etc. So, it will facilitate students in conceptual and practical understanding (Hudha, 2023). When using this method, students are able to be more directly involved in the learning process. Overall, the implementation of Project-Based Learning (PjBL) significantly improved learning outcomes by strengthening concept understanding, developing critical thinking skills, and enriching students' learning experience through practical application in real-world situations.

### ***The effectiveness of implementing PjBL in English subject***

The effectiveness of implementing PjBL in English subject towards learning outcomes investigated in the included studies of this review. Studies on the effectiveness of implementing Project Based Learning (PjBL) in English subjects show positive results on learning outcomes (1, 2, 3, 4, 7, 8, 13, 15, 16, 17, 18, 19, 22, 23, 24, 25, 26, 28). The results revealed that students who engaged in learning through the PjBL approach showed significant improvement in their English language acquisition. This method was not only effective in showing meaningful improvements in speaking and writing skills (1, 3, 4, 13, 18, 19, 26) but also in listening and reading comprehension (16, 17, 22). Through carefully designed projects, it is also effective in promoting high student engagement and greater intrinsic motivation towards learning English. So, skills can be developed to their potential maximally (2, 7, 8). In addition, the research conducted by Shofyana (2021) also highlights the important role of teachers in providing guidance, providing relevant feedback, and guiding students in the development of appropriate projects (7). Besides, Wang's (2022) study confirmed that PjBL can be an effective tool in improving students' language skills and providing a relevant context for the application of English in their daily lives (28). Furthermore, students' perceptions of project-based learning at different levels of education indicate that PjBL is suitable for implementation in English subjects because it is student-centered, with the teacher as a facilitator (1, 17, 18, 25). Thus, these findings show that the application of PjBL in English subjects is effective in achieving learning outcomes so this method is recommended as a suitable English language teaching strategy for technical students (15, 23, 24, 26).

The results showed that PjBL is an effective method to be applied in English language learning by achieving learning outcomes. It shows that PjBL brings significant improvement in students' competence in English. The study on the effectiveness of implementing Project Based Learning (PjBL) on English subjects showed significant improvement in students' competence. In Sumarni's (2016) study stated the effectiveness of PjBL in the learning process as indicated by achieving the mastery learning on concept understanding. It was effective in achieving English learning objectives and recommended as an appropriate English teaching strategy for technical students. Students are asked to carry out projects, which help them develop important skills such as team communication and enable them to collaborate. Basically, according to some research found that one of the key characteristics in projects is collaboration on team work (Markula, 2022; Dewi, 2022). This method is considered to be one of the more effective methods to be applied to English language learning that encouraged and empowered students' creativity. Overall, it will make teachers easier to achieve learning outcomes (Prajoko, 2023; Jamilah, 2020). In addition, one of the effectiveness of this method is teacher's role. In this method, the teacher acts as a facilitator so that learning will be more student-centered than student-centered (Halimatusyadiyah, 2022).

### **CONCLUSION**

The implementation of Project-Based Learning (PjBL) method in English language learning shows a significant positive impact on learning outcomes. Effectively, PjBL has opened a space for students to develop English language competence in theory and practice of the learning materials taught, including skills in English (e.g. reading, speaking, etc.). Through relevant projects, students do not only learn English theoretically but also apply their knowledge in a real context. It directly increases students' learning motivation and engagement, as they feel actively



involved in the learning process. Thus, PjBL is not only an innovative learning method, but also effective in achieving English learning goals with positive and sustainable results.

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