



An Analysis of The Implementation Project Based Learning In The English Reading Class of Eleventh Grade Students At SMA 3 Kota Bengkulu

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ABSTRACT

This study aims to analyze the implementation of Project-Based Learning (PjBL) in English reading instruction for eleventh-grade students at SMA Negeri 3 Kota Bengkulu, focusing on instructional practices, student engagement, assessment, and contextual challenges. The study addresses the ongoing issue of teacher-centered reading instruction in EFL classrooms, which often limits students' engagement and higher-order comprehension skills. A qualitative descriptive case study design was employed to obtain an in-depth understanding of the phenomenon. Data were collected through classroom observations, semi-structured interviews with two English teachers and selected eleventh-grade students, and document analysis of lesson plans, reading materials, student projects, and assessment instruments. The data were analyzed using thematic analysis following the interactive model of data reduction, data display, and conclusion drawing. The findings reveal that PjBL was implemented through structured stages, including contextual problem introduction, guided reading, collaborative discussion, project construction, and assessment. The approach enhanced students' reading engagement, comprehension, and ability to synthesize textual information into meaningful products. Reading activities became more purposeful and contextualized, fostering collaboration, creativity, and critical thinking. However, challenges related to limited instructional time, variation in students' reading proficiency, and the absence of comprehensive assessment rubrics were also identified. The study concludes that Project-Based Learning can effectively transform reading instruction into a student-centered and meaningful learning process when supported by careful instructional planning and appropriate assessment strategies. These findings contribute to EFL pedagogy by providing contextual insights into PjBL implementation and offer implications for teaching practice and future research in reading instruction.

Keywords: Project-Based Learning; EFL Reading Instruction; Student Engagement; Qualitative Case Study; Senior High School

INTRODUCTION

Reading is a fundamental skill in English as a Foreign Language (EFL) learning, as it enables learners to access academic knowledge, develop critical thinking abilities, and participate in global communication. Through reading, learners are exposed to diverse linguistic structures, discourse patterns, and cultural perspectives that support language development beyond basic communication. However, reading instruction in EFL contexts continues to face persistent challenges, particularly those related to limited linguistic competence, insufficient exposure to authentic texts, and instructional practices that prioritize surface-level comprehension over deeper meaning construction (Nguyen, 2021; Khezrlou & Sadeghi, 2022). These challenges often hinder learners' ability to engage critically with texts and limit the development of higher-order reading skills.

In Indonesian senior high schools, reading instruction is frequently examination-oriented, focusing on answering comprehension questions rather than fostering interpretative and analytical reading practices. As a result, students tend to approach texts as test materials rather than sources of knowledge and reflection, which reduces opportunities for collaborative meaning-making and critical engagement (Fitria et al., 2024). This instructional orientation often reinforces passive learning habits, where students rely heavily on teacher explanations instead of actively interacting with texts and peers.

Previous studies have consistently reported that teacher-centered instructional approaches dominate EFL reading classrooms, leading to low student motivation and limited development of learner autonomy (Putra & Hudori, 2024; Qalyubi & Hapsari, 2025). Although various reading strategies and learner-centered methods have been proposed, there remains a gap in instructional practices that can simultaneously enhance reading comprehension, promote active engagement, and support students' independence as readers. Scholars emphasize that effective reading instruction should situate texts within meaningful contexts that allow learners to connect textual information with real-life experiences and authentic tasks (Lee, 2023; Jaya et al., 2025).

Project-Based Learning (PjBL) has gained increasing attention as an instructional approach that aligns with these pedagogical demands. By engaging students in collaborative projects grounded in real-world issues, PjBL promotes active learning, authentic language use, and learner autonomy. In EFL contexts, previous research indicates that PjBL contributes to improvements in reading comprehension, critical thinking, and student motivation by positioning reading as a purposeful activity embedded in problem-solving processes (Rizkilla et al., 2021; Khoudri et al., 2023; Laksanasut, 2024). Nevertheless, empirical evidence regarding how PjBL is implemented in secondary-level EFL reading classrooms, particularly within Indonesian educational settings, remains limited and context-specific.

Therefore, this study aims to analyze the implementation of Project-Based Learning in English reading instruction for eleventh-grade students at SMA Negeri 3 Kota Bengkulu. Specifically, it seeks to identify challenges and supporting factors in the implementation process, as well as explore teachers' and students' perceptions of PjBL in reading classes through an in-depth qualitative descriptive case study. By examining classroom practices and stakeholder experiences, this study provides contextualized insights into how PjBL operates in real instructional settings.

The contribution of this study lies in its empirical examination of how Project-Based Learning can transform reading instruction from a teacher-centered activity into a student-centered and meaningful learning process. The findings are expected to enrich the existing literature on PjBL in EFL reading contexts and offer practical implications for teachers, school leaders, and curriculum developers in designing reading instruction that is more engaging, contextual, and pedagogically effective.

RESEARCH DESIGN

This study employed a qualitative approach using a descriptive case study design to explore the implementation of Project-Based Learning (PjBL) in English reading instruction. This design was selected to capture an in-depth and holistic understanding of instructional processes, classroom interactions, and participants' perceptions as they naturally occurred in the learning environment. A qualitative case study is particularly suitable for educational research that seeks to explain *how* and *why* pedagogical practices are enacted, especially when the focus is on participants' experiences, meanings, and interpretations rather than on measurable learning outcomes (Sugiyono, 2020; Yin, 2018).

The study was conducted at SMA Negeri 3 Kota Bengkulu, a public senior high school located in Bengkulu Province, Indonesia. Data collection took place during the second semester of the 2024/2025 academic year, a period in which Project-Based Learning was actively integrated into English reading instruction. The site was purposefully selected because the school had begun implementing student-centered learning approaches and provided a relevant context for examining PjBL practices within an authentic EFL classroom setting.

The participants consisted of two English teachers and eleventh-grade students who were directly involved in PjBL-based reading activities. A purposive sampling technique was employed to ensure that participants met specific criteria relevant to the research objectives, including experience in teaching or participating in PjBL, active involvement in reading instruction, and willingness to provide information (Sugiyono, 2020). The teachers functioned as key informants due to their instructional roles and decision-making responsibilities, while students served as supporting informants who contributed perspectives on learning engagement, collaboration, and reading experiences during project implementation.

Multiple data collection instruments were utilized to enhance data richness and credibility. Classroom observations were conducted using structured observation sheets to systematically document teaching strategies, student participation, collaborative interactions, and reading-related activities during PjBL sessions. Semi-structured interviews were carried out with teachers and selected students using open-ended interview guides, allowing participants to elaborate on their perceptions, challenges, and experiences with PjBL. In addition, document analysis was conducted on lesson plans, reading materials, student project outputs, and assessment rubrics to examine instructional alignment, learning objectives, and assessment practices related to reading instruction.

The data collection procedures were implemented in a cyclical and iterative manner. Classroom observations were conducted first to capture instructional practices in real time, followed by interviews that served to clarify, confirm, and deepen observational findings. Document analysis was then used to triangulate data obtained from observations and interviews, thereby strengthening the credibility and trustworthiness of the study (Creswell & Poth, 2018).

Data analysis followed the interactive model proposed by Miles and Huberman, which consists of data reduction, data display, and conclusion drawing. During data reduction, observation notes, interview transcripts, and documents were coded and categorized into emerging themes related to PjBL implementation, reading practices, instructional challenges, and participant perceptions. The reduced data were subsequently organized into thematic displays to facilitate systematic interpretation. Conclusions were drawn through continuous comparison, verification, and refinement of themes across data sources. To enhance analytical rigor, thematic analysis was applied to identify recurring patterns and meaningful relationships within the data. The entire analysis process was iterative and supported by triangulation and member checking to ensure credibility, consistency, and confirmability of the findings.

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

This study investigated the implementation of Project-Based Learning (PjBL) in English reading instruction for eleventh-grade students at SMA Negeri 3 Kota Bengkulu. Data were collected through classroom observations, semi-structured interviews with teachers and students, and document analysis. The findings reveal several interconnected aspects

related to instructional implementation, student engagement, reading skill development, assessment practices, and contextual constraints.

a. Implementation of Project-Based Learning in Reading Instruction

The findings indicate that PjBL was implemented through a series of structured instructional stages, including the introduction of real-world issues, guided reading activities, collaborative discussion, project construction, feedback, and evaluation. Teachers consistently initiated lessons by presenting contextual stimuli such as images or short videos related to environmental and social themes. These stimuli functioned as cognitive triggers to activate students' prior knowledge and to establish a clear purpose for reading activities. As a result, students approached the reading texts with greater focus and curiosity, perceiving them as meaningful sources of information rather than isolated linguistic exercises.

b. Student Engagement and Reading Comprehension

Observational and interview data show that student engagement increased significantly during collaborative reading activities. The combination of individual reading and group discussion enabled students to identify main ideas, interpret implicit meanings, clarify unfamiliar vocabulary, and negotiate understanding with peers. Teachers reported that post-reading discussions promoted deeper comprehension and reduced students' perception of reading as a monotonous task. Students also demonstrated greater willingness to participate actively, as the reading texts were directly linked to the completion of their projects, thereby increasing intrinsic motivation.

c. Project Construction and Application of Reading Skills

During the project construction phase, students were required to transform textual information into tangible products such as posters and booklets. This process demanded higher-order reading skills, including summarizing key points, organizing information coherently, and synthesizing ideas from multiple sources. The findings suggest that reading functioned as a central cognitive tool for knowledge construction rather than as an end in itself. Teachers observed that students became more confident and creative in expressing their understanding, indicating that project tasks facilitated meaningful application of reading comprehension skills.

d. Assessment Practices

Assessment within the PjBL framework emphasized both the learning process and the quality of the final product. Teachers evaluated students' reading comprehension based on criteria such as accuracy of information, clarity of main ideas, relevance of supporting details, and the ability to synthesize textual content into project outputs. However, the findings also reveal that assessment practices were not consistently supported by detailed and systematic rubrics. This limitation reduced the extent to which higher-order thinking skills, such as critical interpretation and analytical reasoning, could be evaluated comprehensively.

e. Challenges in Implementation

Despite the generally positive outcomes, several challenges were identified. Limited instructional time constrained the depth of project activities and assessment. In addition, variations in students' reading proficiency affected group dynamics, with more proficient students sometimes dominating tasks. Constraints in designing and applying comprehensive project-based assessments further limited the effectiveness of evaluation and classroom management during PjBL implementation.

Discussion

a. PjBL as a Student-Centered Reading Approach

The findings demonstrate that the implementation of PjBL aligns closely with constructivist learning principles, in which students actively construct knowledge through interaction, collaboration, and engagement with authentic tasks. The integration of real-world issues and contextualized texts supports the conceptualization of PjBL as an inquiry-driven and product-oriented approach, as proposed by Thomas (2000) and Hosnan (2014). In this study, reading activities were no longer confined to answering comprehension questions but became an integral component of problem-solving and project completion, thereby fostering deeper cognitive engagement.

b. Enhancement of Reading Comprehension through Collaboration

The increased engagement and improved comprehension observed in this study reinforce previous research emphasizing the effectiveness of collaborative reading in EFL contexts. Group discussions enabled students to negotiate meaning, clarify misunderstandings, and relate textual information to real-life contexts. This finding supports the view of reading as a social and cognitive process, where comprehension develops through interaction and shared meaning-making rather than through individual decoding alone.

c. Reading as a Meaningful and Purposeful Activity

Embedding reading within project tasks transformed students' perceptions of reading into a purposeful and relevant activity. This supports research suggesting that PjBL enhances learner motivation by providing clear goals and authentic outcomes. The requirement to convert textual information into creative products reflects the development of higher-order reading skills, such as synthesis, evaluation, and critical interpretation, which are essential for academic literacy in EFL settings.

d. Teacher's Role and Instructional Design

The teacher's role as a facilitator emerged as a key factor in the successful implementation of PjBL. By providing scaffolding, guiding inquiry, and offering constructive feedback, teachers supported students' autonomy and collaborative learning. These practices align with learner-centered pedagogy, which positions teachers as guides rather than sole knowledge transmitters. However, the findings also indicate that effective PjBL requires careful instructional planning, particularly in selecting contextual reading materials and designing clear assessment rubrics to support learning objectives.

e. Assessment Limitations and Practical Implications

Although assessment practices emphasized authenticity, the lack of detailed rubrics limited the systematic evaluation of students' critical thinking and interpretive skills. This finding echoes previous critiques of project-based assessment, which highlight the need for transparent and structured evaluation criteria. Addressing this limitation is crucial for enhancing the validity and reliability of assessment in PjBL and for ensuring alignment between instructional goals, learning activities, and evaluation practices.

f. Theoretical and Practical Contributions

Theoretically, this study contributes to EFL pedagogy by reinforcing the view of reading as an active, collaborative, and contextualized process. It extends PjBL theory by demonstrating its practical application in senior high school English reading instruction within an Indonesian EFL context. Practically, the findings offer concrete insights for teachers regarding the design of project tasks, integration of reading activities, and the importance of structured assessment in fostering students' reading comprehension and motivation.

g. Limitations and Future Research

This study is limited by its qualitative case study design and focus on a single school, which may restrict the generalizability of the findings. Future research is recommended to involve larger samples, diverse educational settings, or mixed-method approaches to measure the impact of PjBL on reading comprehension more quantitatively. Further studies may also explore effective assessment models, time management strategies, and the integration of digital tools in PjBL-based reading instruction.

CONCLUSION

This study examined the implementation of Project-Based Learning (PjBL) in English reading instruction for eleventh-grade students at SMA Negeri 3 Kota Bengkulu. The findings indicate that PjBL was implemented through structured and meaningful learning stages, including guided reading, collaborative discussion, and project construction, which positioned reading as a purposeful and contextualized activity. The approach facilitated students' ability to comprehend texts more deeply, synthesize information, and transform reading input into tangible products. In addition, PjBL fostered higher student engagement and supported the development of essential skills such as collaboration, critical thinking, creativity, and communication. Nevertheless, the effectiveness of PjBL implementation was influenced by contextual challenges, including limited instructional time, variation in students' reading proficiency, and less optimal project-based assessment practices.

From a theoretical perspective, these findings reinforce constructivist and learner-centered views of reading, emphasizing that comprehension is not merely an individual decoding process but a social and cognitive activity shaped through interaction and authentic tasks. The study extends Project-Based Learning theory by demonstrating its applicability in English reading instruction within an Indonesian EFL senior high school context, particularly in regions beyond major urban centers. It highlights how PjBL can function as an instructional bridge between curriculum demands and meaningful classroom practice.

Practically, this study offers empirical evidence that PjBL can serve as an effective pedagogical approach for enhancing reading comprehension and learner motivation when supported by careful instructional design and teacher facilitation. The findings suggest that English teachers can integrate reading activities more effectively by embedding them within project tasks that require analysis, synthesis, and real-world application. At the institutional level, the study underscores the importance of providing adequate time allocation, instructional support, and clear assessment frameworks to optimize the implementation of PjBL.

In terms of scientific contribution, this research adds qualitative insights to the growing body of EFL literature on Project-Based Learning by foregrounding teachers' practices and students' experiences in reading instruction. It contributes to the understanding of how PjBL operates in authentic classroom settings and how reading skills are developed through project-oriented learning processes, thereby enriching discussions on innovative pedagogy in EFL education.

Future research is recommended to explore the impact of PjBL on reading comprehension through mixed-method or experimental designs to provide more measurable evidence of learning outcomes. Further studies may also investigate effective project-based assessment models, strategies for managing instructional time, and the integration of digital tools within PjBL to support diverse learner needs. Expanding research contexts across different schools or regions would also enhance the generalizability and comparative value of findings related to PjBL in EFL reading instruction.

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