TEACHERS' PERCEPTIONS OF PROJECT-BASED LEARNING APPROACH IN ENGLISH LANGUAGE CLASSROOM OF WRITING SKILLS IN RECOUNT TEXT FOR THE EIGHTH-GRADE STUDENTS' OF SMP ISLAM AL-AZHAR 18 SALATIGA

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ABSTRAK
Penelitian ini menyelidiki persepsi guru Bahasa Inggris mengenai penerapan pendekatan Project-Based Learning (PJBL) untuk mengajarkan keterampilan menulis, khususnya teks recount, kepada siswa kelas delapan di SMP Islam Al-Azhar 18 Salatiga. Dengan menggunakan desain penelitian kualitatif deskriptif, penelitian ini bertujuan untuk mengeksplorasi pandangan guru tentang manfaat, tantangan, dan efektivitas PJBL secara keseluruhan dalam konteks kelas Bahasa Inggris. Data dikumpulkan melalui observasi, dokumentasi, dan wawancara mendalam dengan dua guru Bahasa Inggris. Hasil penelitian menunjukkan bahwa kedua guru memiliki persepsi yang sangat positif terhadap pendekatan PJBL, mengakui efektivitasnya dalam meningkatkan kreativitas, berpikir kritis, dan keterlibatan siswa, terutama dalam mengembangkan keterampilan menulis. Namun, implementasi ini bukannya tanpa tantangan signifikan, terutama terkait manajemen waktu dan sulitnya mempertahankan motivasi siswa di kelas reguler. Penelitian ini menyarankan bahwa meskipun PJBL adalah metode yang berharga, potensi penuhnya mungkin paling baik dicapai dengan dukungan yang memadai dan di lingkungan belajar dengan karakteristik siswa yang kondusif. Secara keseluruhan, para guru mengakui potensi besar PJBL untuk meningkatkan keterampilan menulis siswa yang dilaporkan menurun akibat ketergantungan pada teknologi.
Kata Kunci: *Project-Based Learning; persepsi guru; teks recount; keterampilan menulis; kelas Bahasa Inggris.*

ABSTRACT
This study investigates the perceptions of English teachers regarding the implementation of the Project-Based Learning (PJBL) approach for teaching writing skills, specifically recount text, to eighth-grade students at SMP Islam Al-Azhar 18 Salatiga. Employing a descriptive qualitative research design, the study aimed to explore teachers' views on the benefits, challenges, and overall effectiveness of PJBL in the context of the English language classroom. Data were collected through observation, documentation, and in-depth interviews with two English teachers. The findings indicate that both teachers hold highly positive perceptions of the PJBL approach, acknowledging its effectiveness in enhancing students' creativity, critical thinking, and engagement, especially in developing writing skills. However, the implementation is not without significant challenges, primarily related to time management and the difficulty of sustaining student motivation in regular classes. The research suggests that while PJBL is a valuable method, its full potential may be best realized with adequate support and in learning environments with conducive student characteristics. Overall, teachers recognize PJBL's strong potential to improve students' declining writing skills due to technology dependence.
Keywords: *Project-Based Learning; teachers' perceptions; recount text; writing skills; English language classroom.*

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INTRODUCTION

English serves as a fundamental pillar in the realm of global communication and exerts a significant influence on various sectors of life, particularly within the educational landscape of Indonesia. To achieve a comprehensive mastery of this language, students are required to demonstrate competence in four primary language skills: listening, speaking, reading, and writing. Among these essential skills, writing is frequently regarded as a critical capability because it empowers students to articulate their ideas in a clear, structured, and coherent manner, which directly contributes to their academic success and future professional achievements. Susanti et al. (2020) state that writing is one of the important English skills that students should master, highlighting its central role in language acquisition. Furthermore, Agustina (2021) emphasizes that good writing skills enable students to convey and communicate their thoughts effectively to a wider audience. Consequently, the continuous development of writing abilities is vital not only for personal expression but also for strengthening students' overall competence in academic settings and enhancing their readiness for global communication.

Despite its acknowledged importance in the curriculum, writing is widely recognized by educators and researchers as one of the most challenging skills for students to acquire and master, particularly at the junior high school level. The process of writing is cognitively demanding because it requires the simultaneous ability to generate creative ideas, organize them in a logical sequence, and accurately apply complex rules of grammar, vocabulary, and language mechanics. Famularsih & Rosyidha (2021) highlight that writing is considered one of the most complicated skills because it requires productive ability and involves multiple linguistic components working in tandem. In a similar vein, La Ramba et al. (2023) note that writing becomes the most challenging skill for students due to the significant amount of time required to develop proficiency and the frequent difficulties encountered during the process. These challenges are particularly evident among eighth-grade students when they are tasked with writing recount texts, where they often struggle to express past events chronologically, maintain textual coherence, and apply appropriate past–tense structures correctly.

To effectively address these persistent difficulties and enhance learning outcomes, teachers are required to implement instructional strategies that can significantly increase student motivation and active engagement in the writing process. One such approach that has emerged as a practical pedagogical solution for improving English writing skills is *Project-Based Learning* (PJBL). Mirah & Dewi (2020) explains that PJBL is a learning method that integrates a scientific approach, enabling students to explore learning processes actively rather than passively receiving information. Within this framework, the dynamic of the classroom shifts significantly. Widiyati & Pangesti (2022) describe PJBL as a learner-centered method in which the teacher acts primarily as a facilitator and motivator, guiding students through their inquiries. This approach encourages students to take ownership of their learning journey, fostering a deeper understanding of the material. By positioning the student at the center of the educational experience, PJBL transforms the writing class into an active workshop where language skills are developed through practical application and investigation.

Beyond the structural shift in classroom dynamics, the psychological impact of instructional methods plays a crucial role in student success. Farich et al. (2023) asserts that PJBL helps overcome student boredom and low motivation, which are common barriers in traditional writing instruction. Through meaningful, authentic project activities, students are encouraged to actively participate, collaborate with their peers, and apply writing skills in real-life contexts that feel relevant to their interests. This relevance is key to sustaining engagement over time. Furthermore, the process-oriented nature of this method is highly beneficial for

developing writing proficiency. Susanti et al. (2020b*)* also emphasize that drafting and revising through PJBL can help students successfully produce written work ready for publication. By engaging in these iterative stages of writing within a project framework, students learn that writing is a recursive process. This not only improves the final quality of their text but also builds resilience and a growth mindset towards the challenges of writing, as they see their work evolve from a rough draft to a polished final product.

The effectiveness of this pedagogical approach has been the subject of numerous academic investigations, with results generally pointing towards beneficial outcomes for learners. Several previous studies have investigated the use of PJBL in English language teaching, and most report positive results regarding student development. Additionally, Rampes et al. (2025) reported that PJBL enhances creativity, collaboration, and critical thinking, despite challenges in its implementation. From the student perspective, research by Khulel (2022) also reveal positive attitudes toward PJBL, indicating improved motivation, writing confidence, and engagement. Furthermore, in the context of modern education, the integration of technology is becoming increasingly relevant. Research integrating technological media, such as Hasanah (2023), confirms that PJBL combined with *Canva* improved students' writing performance. These studies collectively suggest that when students are engaged in projects that allow for creativity and collaboration, their writing performance and overall attitude towards English improve.

While student outcomes are well-documented, the perspective of the educator is equally critical for the successful adoption of any teaching method. Research by Rahman (2025) demonstrated positive teacher perceptions of PJBL, although issues such as limited resources, time constraints, and inadequate teacher understanding may hinder optimal application. This indicates that while teachers see the value, the execution is fraught with logistical hurdles. Furthermore, recent studies such as Adiyani et al. (2025) and Sartika et al. (2022) underline the importance of teachers' beliefs and perceptions in determining PJBL's implementation success. However, a significant gap remains in the literature. Most of these studies explored PJBL in writing generally or across various text types rather than specifically in recount text writing. Therefore, although many scholars have examined PJBL in relation to writing instruction broadly, few studies specifically focus on teachers' perceptions of implementing PJBL to teach recount text writing at the junior high school level. This research gap highlights the need for further study, particularly considering that teachers' perceptions influence classroom practices.

Based on these theoretical and practical considerations, there is a clear necessity to investigate this specific intersection of pedagogical method, text type, and teacher perspective. Consequently, this study explores teachers' perceptions of *Project-Based Learning* in the context of teaching recount text writing for eighth-grade students at SMP Islam Al-Azhar 18 Salatiga. By focusing on this specific demographic and text genre, the research aims to provide granular insights that general studies may miss. Understanding how teachers view the applicability of PJBL for recount texts can reveal specific challenges and opportunities in teaching past-tense narratives and chronological organization. The findings are expected to contribute to the development of more effective writing instruction and support the application of PJBL in English language classrooms. Ultimately, this research seeks to bridge the gap between the theoretical benefits of project-based approaches and the practical realities faced by teachers, offering recommendations that can enhance the quality of English writing education in Indonesia.

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RESEARCH METHOD

This study utilized a descriptive qualitative research design to thoroughly investigate English teachers' perspectives regarding the implementation of *Project-Based Learning* (PJBL) specifically for teaching recount text writing. The qualitative approach was selected to facilitate a profound understanding of authentic classroom practices, social meanings, and subjective experiences, rather than aiming for statistical generalizations (Yin, 2016). The research took place within the natural educational setting of SMP Islam Al-Azhar 18 Salatiga during the 2024/2025 academic year. This institution was chosen because it actively implements the *Kurikulum 2013* and promotes student-centered pedagogical strategies. Regarding the participants, the study employed a purposive sampling technique to select the subjects. Two eighth-grade English teachers were chosen specifically based on their practical experience in applying PJBL during writing instruction. This selection criterion ensured that the participants could provide relevant, rich, and meaningful data required to answer the research problems effectively.

In this qualitative inquiry, the researcher functioned as the primary instrument, bearing the main responsibility for collecting, analyzing, and interpreting the data. To support this role and ensure systematic data gathering, several auxiliary instruments were employed, including observation guidelines, interview protocols, and materials for documentation (Yin, 2016). The data collection process involved three distinct techniques to capture a holistic view of the phenomenon. First, classroom observations were conducted to examine the real-time execution of the *Project-Based Learning* model. Second, semi-structured interviews were administered to obtain deeper insights into the teachers' personal perceptions and professional experiences. Finally, documentation analysis was performed by scrutinizing instructional materials and classroom artifacts. This comprehensive approach was intended to strengthen data credibility and provide a robust dataset, allowing for a thorough examination of how the teaching strategy was perceived and enacted within the specific school context.

The analysis of the collected data followed the interactive model proposed by Miles, Huberman, and Saldaña, which consists of three concurrent flows of activity: data reduction, data display, and conclusion drawing.[1] The researcher systematically organized and reviewed the raw data to identify recurring themes pertinent to the implementation of *Project-Based Learning*. These themes were subsequently constructed into descriptive interpretations that aligned with relevant theoretical literature. To guarantee the trustworthiness and validity of the research findings, source triangulation was rigorously applied. This involved cross-referencing information obtained through the interviews with evidence found in classroom observations and document analysis. By comparing these different data sources, the researcher verified the consistency of the findings. The data were considered credible when there were no discrepancies between the researcher's interpretations and the actual conditions observed in the classroom, ensuring an accurate representation of the teachers' views.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Result

The results of the study, based on interviews, observations, and documentation involving two English teachers (coded N1 and N2) at SMP Islam Al-Azhar 18 Salatiga, reveal three major findings regarding the use of Project-Based Learning (PJBL) in teaching recount text writing.

1. Teachers' Perceptions of the Use of PJBL in Teaching Recount Text Writing

The findings show that both teachers expressed positive perceptions toward the implementation of PJBL in the English classroom. They viewed PJBL as an effective

instructional approach that encourages students to become more active participants in the learning process. Students were observed to engage more enthusiastically in real project activities, exploring ideas, seeking information, collaborating with peers, and producing their own written work. PJBL was also perceived to create a meaningful and enjoyable learning environment because project tasks were directly related to students' personal experiences, making learning contextual and authentic. The teachers noted that students felt challenged and motivated to improve their writing performance, and PJBL successfully enhanced key writing components such as idea development, vocabulary mastery, organization, and grammatical accuracy.

2. Internal and External Factors Influencing Teachers' Perceptions

The results indicate that teachers' perceptions of PJBL were shaped by both internal and external factors. Internal factors included teachers' previous learning experiences, teaching background, motivation, and confidence in using student-centered approaches. Teachers who previously benefited from project-based learning experiences felt encouraged to implement similar strategies in their own teaching practice. Meanwhile, external factors included school curriculum support, classroom conditions, student characteristics, time availability, and institutional policies. The teachers acknowledged that PJBL worked more effectively when supported by a flexible curriculum, collaborative school culture, and motivated students. However, challenges such as limited time, scheduling demands, and varying levels of student readiness influenced how PJBL was perceived and implemented in practice.

3. Benefits and Challenges of Implementing PJBL

The findings also highlight several benefits and challenges experienced by teachers during PJBL implementation. PJBL was perceived to significantly improve students' writing skills, particularly in idea exploration, vocabulary retention, and grammatical understanding. It also increased students' motivation, independence, participation, and responsibility in the writing process. Students demonstrated greater enthusiasm and involvement, and the learning atmosphere became more enjoyable and interactive. However, the teachers also reported challenges, including time constraints, difficulties in maintaining student motivation, and differences in students' learning abilities. PJBL required more time for planning, project execution, and assessment compared to conventional methods. In addition, some students struggled to participate independently and needed additional guidance from the teacher. These challenges required teachers to adjust instructional strategies, such as incorporating structured guidance and motivational techniques, to ensure successful implementation.

Discussion

The findings of this study reveal that the eighth-grade English teachers at SMP Islam Al-Azhar 18 Salatiga hold predominantly positive perceptions toward the use of Project-Based Learning (PJBL) in teaching recount text writing. The teachers reported that PJBL provides meaningful learning experiences that enable students to actively engage in authentic project tasks, improving their ability to explore ideas, structure written texts, and develop vocabulary and grammar mastery. These results align with Irwanto's classification of perception (2002, as cited in Shandi, 2020), which states that positive perceptions occur when an individual accepts, supports, and applies the knowledge they believe to be useful. The teachers' willingness to consistently apply PJBL demonstrates their positive perception of its pedagogical value.

The findings further support previous research by Rivera et al. (2024), who emphasized that project-based learning positions students as active constructors of knowledge, fostering creativity, collaboration, and critical thinking. Similar conclusions were echoed in studies by Pertiwi et al. (2024) and Hasanah Safei (2022), demonstrating that PJBL enhances student engagement and motivation by allowing them to explore personally relevant learning contexts.

The teachers in this study reported comparable benefits, illustrating that students demonstrate greater enthusiasm and confidence during writing activities when given autonomy and responsibility in project work.

The discussion also highlights that teachers' perceptions of PJBL are shaped by both internal and external influences. Internal factors include prior teaching experience, personal motivation, and pedagogical beliefs related to student-centered learning, consistent with the perceiver dimension in Gibson et al.'s and Robbins' models of perception (Gibson et al., 2012; Robbins, 2003). Teachers' positive past experiences and confidence in PJBL contributed to their decision to adopt and sustain its implementation, which aligns with Thoha's theory (in Karang et al., 2023). Conversely, external influences include curriculum alignment, school support, student characteristics, classroom environment, and time availability. These factors reflect the target and situational dimensions in the perception model, which assert that the context of perception strongly affects individuals' responses and attitudes. This aligns with research by Zhang et al. (2022), which found that PJBL effectiveness depends heavily on environmental readiness and students' learning independence.

The results also identify several perceived benefits and challenges associated with implementing PJBL. Teachers noted substantial improvements in students' writing performance, including idea organization, vocabulary retention, and grammatical accuracy. These findings are consistent with Aziz et al. (2023), Nurkhamidah (2023), and Kamil et al. (2023), who observed similar outcomes in the areas of idea development, collaboration, and problem-solving skills. Additionally, PJBL was found to significantly increase student engagement and motivation, supporting assertions by Batysheva & Kitibayeva (2022) and Bender (2012) regarding PJBL's capacity to foster high participation and academic enthusiasm.

Despite these benefits, teachers also identified several challenges, particularly time constraints, varied student readiness, and issues related to maintaining student motivation. These challenges are consistent with findings from Nurkhamidah (2023) and Batysheva & Kitibayeva (2022), who observed that PJBL requires extensive preparation and classroom management. Teachers also noted struggles with students' tendency to rely on shortcuts and external tools, reflecting Mouni (2022) findings on passive participation and low autonomy in certain learner groups. To address such challenges, teachers adapted PJBL by incorporating strategies such as gamification and structured collaboration, reinforcing Kamil et al. (2023) conclusion that PJBL success depends on creative classroom design and alignment with student interests.

Overall, the discussion indicates that the teachers perceive PJBL as a meaningful and effective instructional model for teaching recount text writing, supported by strong pedagogical beliefs and contextual understanding of classroom dynamics. These findings reinforce earlier studies such as Rampes et al. (2025) and Khulel (2022), which conclude that PJBL encourages creativity, collaboration, and writing skill improvement. The present study extends previous literature by providing a deeper analysis of internal and external factors influencing teachers' perceptions and by contextualizing challenges and adaptive strategies in real classroom settings. Therefore, this study contributes valuable insights to the implementation of PJBL in junior high school writing instruction and highlights its relevance for developing practical teaching frameworks and teacher training models.

CONCLUSION

This research is conducted to review the teachers' perceptions towards the use of Project-Based Learning (PJBL) model in English classroom of writing skills in recount texts. Using qualitative analysis involving interviews eighth-grade teachers and class observations at

eighth-grade SMP Islam Al-Azhar 18 Salatiga. Based on the findings from interviews, observation, and supported by relevant theories and previous studies, it can be concluded that the use of Project-Based Learning (PJBL) in teaching writing skills, particularly recount texts in English classrooms is perceived positively by the eighth-grade teachers at SMP Islam Al-Azhar 18 Salatiga. The teachers view PJBL as an effective and meaningful instructional approach that enhances student engagement, motivation, autonomy, and most importantly, their ability to write in a structured and contextual manner.

Internal and external factors significantly influence teachers' perceptions of using the Project-Based Learning (PJBL) approach in English writing classrooms. Internally, teachers' perceptions are shaped by personal experiences, teaching values, and intrinsic motivation. Teachers who have experienced the benefits of active learning approaches in their own educational journey tend to favor PJBL and integrate it into their classroom practices. Externally, factors such as school curriculum support, classroom type (bilingual or regular), student characteristics, and time availability strongly influence how PJBL is perceived and implemented. While PJBL thrives in supportive and resource-rich environments, it faces limitations when applied in time-constrained or mixed-ability classes without adequate support.

Moreover, teachers identified tangible benefits from implementing Project-Based Learning (PJBL), such as improved vocabulary acquisition, better grammar usage, critical thinking, and collaborative skills. However, they also faced several significant challenges in its implementation. These include time constraints, inconsistent student motivation, and differences in learning readiness between students. Therefore, the success of implementing PJBL depends on careful planning, learning strategies that are tailored to the needs of students, and effective classroom management.

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