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APPLICATION OF PROJECT-BASED LEARNING MODEL TO IMPROVE STORY WRITING SKILLS OF ELEMENTARY STUDENTS

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Abstract

This study aims to improve the storytelling skills of fifth-grade students at SD Negeri 2 Poka through the implementation of the Project-Based Learning model. The background of this study is the low writing ability of students, as indicated by an average initial test score of 54.93%, which is below the Minimum Passing Grade. This study used the Classroom Action Research method, which was carried out in two cycles, each consisting of the planning, implementation, observation, and reflection stages. Data were collected through writing tests, observations, interviews, and documentation, then analyzed descriptively and quantitatively to assess score improvements, as well as descriptively and qualitatively to identify changes in student behavior, motivation, and involvement. The results showed a significant improvement in writing skills, where in cycle I the average student score reached 63.73% with 10 students achieving the KKM, and in cycle II all 15 students (100%) scored above the KKM with an average of 79.66%. This improvement included aspects of determining story titles, vocabulary selection, and overall writing ability. The research findings show that the application of the PjBL model is effective not only in improving writing skills but also in encouraging active participation, developing critical thinking skills, and significantly increasing student motivation to learn.

Keywords: project-based learning, writing skills, experience stories, classroom action research

Abstract. Penelitian ini bertujuan untuk meningkatkan keterampilan menulis cerita pengalaman siswa kelas V SD Negeri 2 Poka melalui penerapan model pembelajaran Project Based Learning. Latar belakang penelitian ini adalah rendahnya kemampuan menulis siswa, yang ditunjukkan oleh rata-rata skor tes awal sebesar 54,93%, di bawah Kriteria Ketuntasan Minimal (KKM > 70). Penelitian ini menggunakan metode Penelitian Tindakan Kelas yang dilaksanakan dalam dua siklus, masing-masing terdiri atas tahap perencanaan, pelaksanaan, observasi, dan refleksi. Data dikumpulkan melalui tes menulis, observasi, wawancara, dan dokumentasi, kemudian dianalisis secara deskriptif kuantitatif untuk menilai peningkatan skor, serta deskriptif kualitatif untuk mengidentifikasi perubahan perilaku, motivasi, dan keterlibatan siswa. Hasil penelitian menunjukkan peningkatan keterampilan menulis yang signifikan, di mana pada siklus I rata-rata skor siswa mencapai 63,73% dengan 10 siswa mencapai KKM, dan pada siklus II seluruh 15 siswa (100%) memperoleh skor di atas KKM dengan rata-rata 79,66%. Peningkatan ini meliputi aspek penentuan judul cerita, pemilihan kosakata, dan kemampuan menulis secara keseluruhan. Temuan penelitian menunjukkan bahwa penerapan model PjBL efektif tidak hanya dalam meningkatkan keterampilan menulis, tetapi juga dalam mendorong partisipasi aktif, mengembangkan kemampuan berpikir kritis, serta meningkatkan motivasi belajar siswa secara signifikan.

Kata-kata Kunci : project based learning, keterampilan menulis, cerita pengalaman, penelitian tindakan kelas

Introduction

Language is an essential communication tool in human life. Through language, individuals can express their thoughts, feelings, and desires, as well as interact with others (Jannah & Depalina, 2025; Nur Tanfidiyah & Ferdian Utama, 2019; Setiadi, 2024). Language is a means of communication between members of society in the form of sound symbols produced by the human vocal apparatus (Nasution et al., 2024; Putri, 2020; Wardani & Subhan, 2024). This definition emphasizes that language functions as a means of social interaction that enables humans to communicate and convey information.

Indonesian language learning includes four skills, namely listening, speaking, reading, and writing. Teachers need to design these four aspects to make learning meaningful. Teachers must be able to deliver balanced learning to meet students' language skills because these four aspects are interrelated. In addition to language skills, students also need to be equipped with language competencies that include the ability to identify information, present information, and summarize content.

Meaningful learning will lead students to memorable learning experiences. The experiences gained by students will be more memorable and easier to understand if the learning process is the result of their own understanding and discovery. This can also be applied to Indonesian language learning in elementary schools.

The role of a teacher in the teaching and learning process must be able to develop behavioral changes in students. These behavioral changes are the goal of learning. According to Bloom and Krathwohl, there are three domains that can be used as a basis for formulating learning objectives, including the cognitive, affective, and psychomotor domains (Azizah, 2025; H. Putri et al., 2022). Therefore, when teaching any subject, teachers must

strive to develop their students' knowledge, skills, values, and attitudes, as these three aspects shape an individual's personality.

Writing is one of the most important language skills for students in education. Writing skills not only serve as a means of communication, but also as a way to express ideas, feelings, and experiences in a systematic and logical manner. In the Merdeka Curriculum for elementary schools, especially in fifth grade, the skill of writing stories is one of the basic competencies that students must master. However, in reality, many students find it difficult to write good and coherent stories. Some of the obstacles that often arise include a lack of ideas for writing, a lack of vocabulary, and a weak understanding of the structure and rules of language in writing stories. Students often face challenges in writing narratives, especially in organizing ideas and using the right structure. This shows that vocabulary mastery and understanding of language structure are crucial aspects that affect students' writing abilities.

Writing stories is a writing skill that already exists and begins in elementary school. Students can express their feelings, ideas, and thoughts to others through story writing activities. The ability to write stories cannot be automatically mastered by students but must be acquired through frequent and regular practice so that students will find it easier to express themselves in writing activities. Therefore, writing skills must be improved from an early age or starting from elementary school. If writing skills are not improved, students' ability to express their thoughts or ideas through writing will decrease or not develop.

Stories are a type of narrative writing, which is a form of writing that attempts to create, recount, and connect human actions in an event chronologically or within a specific time frame. Initial observations in the classroom show that students' writing skills are still relatively low, with most story writing scores below the minimum passing grade of 70. Based on interviews with homeroom teachers, several major obstacles have been identified, namely low student motivation to write, difficulty developing ideas, limited vocabulary and spelling skills, and a lack of attention in the learning process. This condition requires innovation in the application of learning models that are not only interesting but also capable of increasing student engagement. One relevant alternative is Project-Based Learning, as this model provides opportunities for students to learn through challenging and contextual projects that can foster motivation, train critical thinking, and develop their writing skills in a more meaningful way.

The application of Project Based Learning in story writing is believed to help students explore ideas, organize their thoughts, and express them in a more structured form. Through the projects assigned, students can work independently or in groups to develop stories based on their experiences, imagination, or observations of their surroundings. This model also enhances collaboration and communication skills, which are important competencies in

facing the challenges of the 21st century. Therefore, the researcher chose PjBL as a learning model that is expected to improve students' writing skills, because this model requires students to work together to solve problems while thinking critically to produce a product, one of which is writing.

Recent studies (2019–2024) have shown that Project-Based Learning is effective in improving higher-order thinking skills and student engagement in various subjects. However, limited studies specifically examine the implementation of PjBL in improving elementary students' narrative writing skills, particularly experience-based storytelling in Indonesian language learning at the primary school level. Most previous research focuses on science or social studies subjects, leaving a gap in its application in language skill development, especially writing. Furthermore, studies on writing instruction in elementary schools often emphasize conventional strategy-based approaches rather than project-oriented learning models. Therefore, empirical evidence regarding the effectiveness of PjBL in improving structured narrative writing skills in elementary contexts remains limited. This study addresses that gap by implementing PjBL in narrative writing instruction using a Classroom Action Research approach. The contribution of this study lies in (1) providing empirical evidence of PjBL effectiveness in elementary language learning, (2) demonstrating measurable improvement in writing performance across cycles, and (3) offering a practical instructional framework for teachers.

Method

This study employed a Classroom Action Research (CAR) approach using the Kemmis and McTaggart model, which consists of four stages: planning, action, observation, and reflection, implemented in two cycles (Alfaqih et al., 2023; Jacob et al., 2020).. The research was conducted in July 2025 at SD Negeri 2 Poka, Teluk Ambon District. The research participants were 15 fifth-grade students selected through total sampling, as the class size was relatively small and represented the entire population of the class. The intervention involved the implementation of the Project-Based Learning (PjBL) model in teaching students to write experience-based stories.

The stages of PjBL implemented in this study included determining essential questions, designing the project plan, creating a project schedule, monitoring project progress, assessing project outcomes, and evaluating learning experiences. The data collection instruments consisted of a writing performance test using an analytic rubric adapted from Nurgiyantoro (2018), observation sheets to measure students' engagement during the learning process, interview guidelines, and documentation of classroom activities.

The assessment of writing skills was based on three main components: title determination (30%), vocabulary selection (30%), and story organization and coherence (40%). Quantitative data were analyzed using descriptive statistics, including the calculation of mean scores and the percentage of mastery learning, while qualitative data were analyzed through data reduction, data display, and conclusion drawing. The Classroom Action Research approach was chosen because it allows for continuous improvement of teaching practices through reflective cycles and provides direct intervention to address classroom learning problems.

Results and Discussion

Diagnostic tests were conducted to map the initial writing abilities of fifth-grade students. Through this activity, researchers obtained an overview of students' basic skills in composing stories, including aspects such as title determination, vocabulary use, and plot development. The initial test results were analyzed comprehensively to identify weaknesses and learning needs that required attention. These findings were then used as the basis for designing actions in cycle I, so that the selected learning strategies were more appropriate to the students' conditions. In addition, the diagnostic test results played an important role as a benchmark for assessing improvements in students' writing skills after the implementation of the Project Based Learning model in the next cycle.

Table 1. Results of the Initial Writing Skills Test for Students

No	Initials Student	Aspects assessed			Total	Desc
		Ability to determine story titles	Word choice	Story writing ability		
		0 – 30	0 - 30	0 - 40		
1	M.G.L	23	23	30	76	Good
2	A.S.T	22	22	30	74	Good
3	K.S.L	20	20	28	68	Good
4	R.B	20	20	28	68	Fair
5	T.R	20	18	20	58	Fair
6	E.A.N	20	20	28	68	Fair
7	A.A.P	18	18	18	54	Poor
8	D.R.A	18	16	18	52	Poor
9	J.A.R	20	18	16	54	Poor
10	N.M.R	18	18	20	56	Fair
11	N.L.S	20	12	12	44	Poor
12	L.E.S	12	12	16	40	Poor
13	W.A.M	12	12	16	40	Poor
14	M.L.T	13	13	16	42	Poor
15	R.K.W	13	13	14	40	Poor
Average		17,93	17,00	20,66	54,93	Fair

The initial test results showed that the students' ability to write stories about their experiences only reached 54.55%, which is classified as very poor. In terms of assessment, the ability to determine the title of a story scored an average of 17.93%, vocabulary selection scored 17.00%, and the ability to write stories scored 20.66%. These findings indicate that the story writing skills of fifth-grade students at SD Negeri 2 Poka are still relatively low. Based on these results, the researcher selected 15 students as research subjects and implemented a learning intervention using the Project Based Learning model to improve their writing skills.

In cycle I, the planning stage was carried out by developing teaching modules together with Indonesian language teachers, which included time allocation, learning objectives, materials, activity steps, media, and assessment instruments. The learning activities were carried out in two meetings, on July 21 and 24, 2025, using the Project Based Learning model. In this activity, students were divided into groups to work on worksheets, discuss, compile a project writing their experiences, and present the results in front of the class. During the learning process, the researcher observed student activities, while individual final tests were given to measure writing skills. The test results and observations in cycle I were used as material for reflection and as a basis for improvement for the next cycle.

Table 2. Test Results in Cycle 1

No	Initials Student	Aspects assessed			Total	Desc
		Ability to determine story titles 0 – 30	Word choice 0 – 30	Story writing ability 0 – 40		
1	M.G.L	28	27	30	85	Sangat baik
2	A.S.T	26	25	30	81	Baik
3	D.R.A	25	25	28	78	Baik
4	J.A.R	25	20	25	70	Baik
5	A.A.P	22	20	28	70	Baik
6	E.A.N	20	20	28	68	Cukup
7	W.A.M	25	20	22	67	Cukup
8	K.S.L	20	20	23	63	Cukup
9	M.L.T	28	15	20	63	Cukup
10	N.M.R	20	18	18	56	Cukup
11	N.L.S	25	15	15	55	Kurang
12	L.E.S	20	15	20	55	Cukup
13	R.B	20	15	18	53	Kurang
14	T.R	20	15	15	50	Kurang
15	R.K.W	18	10	15	43	Kurang
Average		22,9	18,66	22,33	63,73	Fair

In cycle I, students' ability to write stories about their experiences reached 63.73% in the adequate category, with 10 students not yet reaching the minimum passing grade and

only 5 students completing the task. This shows that learning outcomes were not optimal, so action was needed in cycle II to further improve students' ability to write stories about their experiences through the Project Based Learning model. In cycle II, planning was redone with improvements to the learning strategy. The action was carried out in two meetings using the Project Based Learning model, in which students worked in groups, discussed, wrote stories about their experiences, and presented them in front of the class. During the learning process, the researcher observed the students' activities and provided guidance when necessary. At the end of the cycle, an individual test was conducted to assess the improvement in students' writing skills.

Table 3. Test results in cycle II

No	Initials Student	Aspects assessed			Total	Desc
		Ability to determine story titles 0 - 30	Word choice 0 - 30	Story writing ability 0 - 40		
1	M.G.L	30	30	32	92	Very Good
2	A.A.P	30	30	32	92	Very Good
3	A.S.T	30	30	30	90	Very Good
4	R.B	30	30	30	90	Very Good
5	K.S.L	30	28	30	88	Very Good
6	J.A.R	28	30	30	88	Very Good
7	E.A.N	30	22	28	80	Very Good
8	D.R.A	25	25	25	75	Good
9	W.A.M	28	22	25	75	Good
10	R.K.W	25	25	22	72	Good
11	N.L.S	23	23	28	72	Good
12	M.L.T	22	21	28	71	Good
13	T.R	21	21	28	70	Good
14	N.M.R	21	21	28	70	Good
15	L.E.S	21	21	28	70	Good
Average		26,26	25,26	28,26	79,66	Complete

The results in cycle II show that students' ability to write stories reached 79.66% in the good category, and all students exceeded the minimum passing grade. The average score for each aspect included determining the story title (26.26), selecting vocabulary (25.26), and writing skills (28.26). These findings prove that teaching fifth-grade students at SD Negeri 2 Poka to write stories about their experiences using the Project-Based Learning model has successfully improved learning outcomes.

Discussion

Cycle I and cycle II of the research results indicate the scores achieved by students when participating in the process of learning the skill of writing stories about their

experiences. The aspects studied in the skill of writing stories about experiences are: 1). The ability to determine the title of the story 2). Vocabulary selection, and 3). The ability to write stories. Before conducting classroom action research using the Project-Based Learning (PjBL) model on students, the researcher first conducted preliminary observations and interviews with fifth-grade teachers at SD Negeri 2 Poka. This was done to determine the initial condition of students' skills in writing stories about their experiences.

In cycle I, at the end of the learning process, the researcher conducted a final test to determine the level of success in the process of teaching students the skill of writing about their experiences. The results obtained were not optimal, with only 5 students achieving a score above 70 and 10 students scoring below 70, so it was necessary to continue to the next cycle. Cycle II of the learning process was not much different from Cycle I. The teacher had improved and evaluated the shortcomings found in Cycle I, thereby creating an effective learning process. At the end of Cycle II, the researcher administered a final test to determine the level of success in the students' experience writing skills in this cycle. The test results in Cycle II showed that 15 students scored above 70. Thus, the 15 students who were the subjects of the study achieved the minimum competency standard.

Table 4. Average Scores for Initial Tests, Final Tests for Cycle I, and Cycle II

Sample	Initial Test	End of Cycle I Test	End of Cycle II Test
15	54,93	63,73	79,66

This shows that the results in cycle I improved compared to the initial test, and the test in cycle II also showed a more significant improvement compared to cycle I. This improvement occurred due to the application of the learning model (PjBL) which encouraged active student participation in the learning process. Thus, it can be concluded that the use of the learning model (PjBL) is effective in improving the story writing skills of fifth grade students at SD Negeri 2 Poka.

Conclusion

The implementation of the Project Based Learning model has proven to be effective in improving the story writing skills of fifth grade students at SD Negeri 2 Poka. This can be seen from the evaluation results of each learning cycle. In cycle I, 10 students or 63.73% successfully achieved the Minimum Completion Criteria (KKM > 70), while the other 5 students did not achieve completion. This condition shows an improvement compared to the students' initial abilities before the intervention. Furthermore, in cycle II, all 15 students or 100% successfully obtained scores above 70, indicating a significant improvement in writing skills. This improvement can be attributed to the implementation of PjBL, which encourages

students to be active in the learning process, work collaboratively in groups, develop writing projects independently, and present their work. Thus, the use of the PjBL model not only improves students' quantitative skills in writing their experiences but also has a positive impact on their motivation, engagement, and critical thinking skills in composing their stories.

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