

Unveiling Students' Perceptions of Project-Based Learning (PjBL): Insights from Sociolinguistics Class

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Abstract

Students' perceptions play a vital role in the success of the learning process, as they can significantly influence motivation and learning outcomes. Therefore, this research aimed to investigate and describe students' perceptions of project-based learning (PjBL) in a Sociolinguistics class. This research applied descriptive qualitative. Sources of data or research participants were the students of English Education Study Program of Tadulako University who enrolled in Sociolinguistics in Educational Context class, especially the ones in classes E and F. The researchers used questionnaire and interview to get relevant and accurate information or data. The researchers analysed data through three stages: data reduction, data display, and conclusion. Based on the questionnaire and interview, it can be seen that most students gave positive responses to implementation of PjBL. They stated that PjBL widens their understanding of Sociolinguistics and develops their problem-solving, communication, critical thinking, and decision-making skills. The research findings can contribute to a deeper understanding of the PjBL learning model, including the mechanisms for assigning projects and the stages involved in its implementation. Moreover, students' perceptions of PjBL provide valuable insights into how the model is applied in practice, which can serve as a reference for lecturers or teachers in managing classes, selecting appropriate projects, and choosing effective learning models.

Keywords: project-based, learning model, perception



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Introduction

Sociolinguistics is a compulsory subject in the English Education Study Program at Tadulako University. It explores the relationship between language and society within an educational context. In Sociolinguistics class, students examine various topics related to language use and its social dimensions. Given the complexity of the subject matter, structured reviews and appropriate learning models are essential to support students' understanding and engagement.

To address this need, project-based learning (PjBL) is considered a suitable learning model. Furthermore, university lecturers are encouraged to implement PjBL or case methods in accordance with the Main Performance Indicators (IKU) mandated by the Indonesian Ministry of Education, Culture, Research, and Technology. The seventh IKU emphasizes the creation of collaborative and participative learning environments. This requires lecturers not only to deliver content but also to actively engage students in applying knowledge through group work and tangible project outcomes.

PjBL is a student-centered instructional model that uses projects as the core medium for learning. It aims to foster independence, collaboration, and creativity. As noted by Hamidah et al. (2020), PjBL structures

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tasks to guide students through an inquiry process, encouraging them to gather and evaluate information critically before drawing conclusions.

Previous studies have examined the application of PjBL in various educational settings. Mali (2016) explored its use in Creative Writing and Second Language Acquisition classes, while Rahayu & Fauzi (2020) investigated its implementation among fourth-semester students in a teacher training program. Similarly, Maryuni et al. (2017) studied History Education students enrolled in a Learning Media and Resources class. These studies consistently found that PjBL enhances student participation, collaboration, and overall engagement.

In addition to implementation studies, research on students' perceptions of PjBL also indicates generally positive responses. Perception, defined as the process of receiving and interpreting sensory information (Galotti 2014; Alizamar & Couto, 2016), plays a significant role in shaping learning outcomes. Positive student perceptions can enhance motivation and facilitate deeper learning.

However, despite the documented benefits of PjBL, there remains limited research specifically exploring students' perceptions of this learning model within the context of a Sociolinguistics course. This gap is important, as students' experiences and attitudes toward PjBL can offer critical insights into its practical effectiveness. Therefore, this study aimed to investigate and describe students' perceptions of PjBL in a Sociolinguistics class, not only to confirm positive aspects but also to uncover potential challenges. The findings are expected to enrich the current understanding of PjBL and inform educators in designing more effective and student-centered learning environments.

Method

This research applied descriptive qualitative. Descriptive qualitative describes a condition as it is, without treatment or manipulation. Therefore, this research describes the students' perception of PjBL based on the real condition and situation.

Sources of data or research participants were the students of the English Education Study Program of Tadulako University who enrolled in Sociolinguistics in Educational Context class, especially the ones in classes E and F. The participants were selected using purposive sampling, as they were considered to have relevant experience with the implementation of PjBL in the targeted subject or class.

The researchers used questionnaire and interview to get relevant and accurate information or data. The questionnaire consists of 14 statements (items), six statements (items) about students' perceptions of the implementation of PjBL and eight statements (items) about students' perceptions of the influence of PjBL. Then, interview was conducted to find out more about students' perception and their responses to the questionnaire.

The researchers analysed data through three stages based on Miles et al. (2018): data reduction, display, and conclusion. Data reduction aims to simplify and group data to result in meaningful information and ease us in withdrawing conclusions. Displaying data aims to present information narratively or through figures, graphs, charts, etc. After reducing and displaying data, the last stage is to withdraw the conclusion or verification.

Results and Discussion

Results

Following are data from questionnaire and interview that had been grouped into two: students' perceptions of the implementation of PjBL and students' perception of the influence of PjBL.

Students' Perceptions of the Implementation of PjBL

Table 1 presents six statements (items) about students' perceptions of the implementation of PjBL. Students' responses on each item can be seen in the following table.

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Table 1. Students' perception of the implementation of PjBL

No.	Item	SA	A	D	SD
1	PjBL is a suitable learning model to be implemented in Sociolinguistics class.	6 (20%)	23 (76.67%)	1 (3.33%)	0 (0%)
2	PjBL is a useful learning model to be used in Sociolinguistics class.	4 (13.33%)	25 (83.33%)	1 (3.33%)	0 (0%)
3	Because of PjBL, you feel motivated to join the Sociolinguistics class.	3 (10%)	24 (80%)	3 (10%)	0 (0%)
4	You enjoy the process of making a project in Sociolinguistics class.	3 (10%)	25 (83.33%)	2 (6.67%)	0 (0%)
5	Project assignments are less burdening than individual assignments.	2 (6.67%)	21 (70%)	6 (20%)	1 (3.33%)
6	You like to deal with project assignments more than individual assignments.	2 (6.67%)	20 (66.67%)	7 (23.33%)	1 (3.33%)

For the first statement, "*PjBL is a suitable learning model to be implemented in Sociolinguistics class*", 23 students (76.67%) opted for "*agree*", then six students (20%) opted for "*strongly agree*", one student (3.33%) opted for "*disagree*", and no one opted for "*strongly disagree*". Based on these results, most students agreed that PjBL is a proper learning model to be implemented in Sociolinguistics class. A statement from a student in the interview section supports it, she said:

"The project-based learning is something new in the Sociolinguistics class, and it is proper to be implemented because it challenges us to finish a project on time and according to the instruction." (St1)

For the second statement, "*PjBL is a useful learning model to be used in Sociolinguistics class*", 83.33% (25 students) opted for "*agree*", 13.33% (4 students) opted for "*strongly agree*", and 3.33% (1 student) opted for "*disagree*". These responses show that most students agreed that PjBL is beneficial in Sociolinguistics class. It also aligns with the student's statement in the interview section:

"I think project-based learning has some benefits when it is implemented in the Sociolinguistics class; one of them is that it pushes students to collaborate in the group to finish a project." (St2)

Furthermore, for the third statement, "*Because of PjBL, you feel motivated to join Sociolinguistics class*", 24 students (80%) opted for "*agree*", 3 students (10%) opted for "*strongly agree*", and 3 students (10%) opted for "*disagree*". Most students agreed that learning with PjBL motivated them to join the Sociolinguistics class. It was confirmed by the student's statement in the interview. He said:

"I feel I am motivated to follow the Sociolinguistics class because the project-based learning allows us to discuss with friends in our group." (St3)

Related to the fourth statement, "*You enjoy the process of making project in Sociolinguistics class*", it can be seen 83.33% (25 students) opted for "*agree*", 10% (3 students) opted for "*strongly agree*", and 6.67% (2 students) opted for "*disagree*". Most students agreed that they could enjoy completing the project in Sociolinguistics class. It is in line with the data from the interview section:

"I enjoy each process in doing the project because by working on a project, I feel like I play an important role and contribute a lot." (St4)

For the fifth statement, "*Project assignment is less burdening than the individual assignment*", 70% (21 students) opted for "*agree*", 20% (6 students) opted for "*disagree*", 6.67% (2 students) opted for "*strongly agree*", and 33.33% (1 student) opted for "*strongly disagree*". Most students agreed that through project assignment, they had less burden compared with working individually. It is in line with the statement in the interview:

"The project assignment can be done together with our friend so that it ultimately reduces our workload." (St5)

Furthermore, for the sixth statement, "*You like to deal with project assignments more than individual assignments*", 20 students (66.67%) opted for "*agree*", seven students (23.33%) opted for "*disagree*", two students (6.67%) opted for "*strongly agree*", and one student (3.33%) opted for "*strongly disagree*". The majority

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of students prefer the project based to the individual task. It was also confirmed by a response obtained from the interview section:

"If I have to choose a project task or individual task, I will prefer the project task. The project tasks more ease students than the individual tasks." (St6)

Besides some interview fragments above, the researcher also collected interview data from students who opted for "*disagree*" or "*strongly disagree*" related to the questionnaire statements. The following are the interview transcripts expressing their reasons for disagreeing with a statement about PjBL.

"I did the project by myself without other group members' assistance. I tried calling them, but they said they had another business when I invited them to do the project." (St7)

"I prefer to do a task independently without interruption from my friends. It is more fun for me." (St8)

"I am happier when the lecturer directly explains the material without project tasks. It makes me easier to understand the material." (St9)

Students' Perceptions of the Influence of PjBL

The following table contains eight statements (items) about students' perceptions of the influence of PjBL. Students' responses on each item can be seen in the following table.

Table 2. Students' perception of the influence of PjBL

No.	Items	SA	A	D	SD
1	PjBL gains your understanding of Sociolinguistics.	6 (20%)	21 (70%)	3 (10%)	0 (0%)
2	PjBL develops your problem-solving skills.	5 (16.67%)	24 (80%)	1 (3.33%)	0 (0%)
3	PjBL develops your communication skills.	6 (20%)	21 (70%)	3 (10%)	0 (0%)
4	PjBL develops your critical thinking skills.	4 (13.33%)	24 (80%)	2 (6.67%)	0 (0%)
5	PjBL develops your decision-making skills.	4 (13.33%)	25 (83.33%)	1 (3.33%)	0 (0%)
6	PjBL makes you able to do self-learning.	6 (20%)	21 (70%)	3 (10%)	0 (0%)
7	PjBL makes you accustomed to managing a project.	4 (13.33%)	24 (80%)	1 (3.33%)	1 (3.33%)
8	PjBL develops your ideas and creativity in finding and discussing linguistics topics as the project.	7 (23.33%)	22 (73.33%)	1 (3.33%)	0 (0%)

Related to the first statement, "*PjBL gains your understanding about Sociolinguistics*", 21 students (70%) opted for "*agree*", six students (20%) opted for "*strongly agree*", and three students (10%) opted for "*disagree*". Most students agreed that PjBL widens their understanding of Sociolinguistics.

For the second statement, "*PjBL develops your problem-solving skill*", 80% (24 students) opted for "*agree*", 16.67% (5 students) opted for "*strongly agree*", and 3.33% (1 student) opted for "*disagree*". It indicates that most students agreed that PjBL improves their problem-solving skills.

Furthermore, for the third statement, "*PjBL develops your communication skill*", 21 students (70%) opted for "*agree*", 6 students (20%) opted for "*strongly agree*", and three students (10%) opted for "*disagree*". It can be seen that most of them agreed that PjBL can improve their communication skill.

For the fourth statement, "*PjBL develops your critical thinking skill*", 80% (24 students) opted for "*agree*", 13.33% (4 students) opted for "*strongly agree*", and 6.67% (2 students) opted for "*disagree*". It shows that most students agreed that PjBL develops their critical thinking skills.

Related to the fifth statement, "*PjBL develops your decision-making skill*", 25 students (83.33%) opted for "*agree*", 4 students (13.33%) opted for "*strongly agree*", and one student (3.33%) opted for "*disagree*". It can be seen that most students agreed that PjBL develops their decision-making skills.

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For the sixth statement, "*PjBL makes you able to do self-learning*", 70% (21 students) opted for "*agree*", 20% (6 students) opted for "*strongly agree*", and 10% (3 students) opted for "*disagree*". It shows that most students agreed if the PjBL trains them independent learning.

Then, for the seventh statement, "*PjBL makes you accustomed to managing a project*", 24 students (80%) opted for "*agree*", four students (13.33%) opted for "*strongly agree*", one student (3.33%) opted for "*disagree*", and one student (3.33%) opted for "*strongly disagree*". It can be seen that most students agreed that PjBL familiarizes them with project management.

For the eighth statement, "*PjBL develops your ideas and creativity in finding and discussing linguistics topics as the project*", 73.33% (22 students) opted for "*agree*", 23.33% (7 students) opted for "*strongly agree*", and 3.33% (1 student) opted for "*disagree*". It shows that the majority of students agreed that PJBL develops their ideas and creativity in determining and discussing the topic of the project.

In the interview section, students also mentioned the influence of PjBL that they felt. Following are the interview fragments of some students.

"The project-based learning improves my problem-solving skills and makes me more active in completing complex projects with a real result." (St1)

"The project task not only allows me to collaborate but also trains me in some skills like problem-solving, critical thinking, and time management." (St2)

"The project task offers me a new learning experience which allows me to apply critical and creative thinking skills in real-life situations." (St3)

"The project task developed my ability to collaborate with my friends and to build teamwork." (St4)

"By doing project tasks, I could better understand the Sociolinguistics because the materials I got could be directly applied in the project." (St5)

Discussion

Students' Perceptions of the Implementation of PjBL

Based on the questionnaire and interview, it can be seen that most students gave positive responses to implementation of PjBL. Most students agreed that PjBL is an appropriate and useful learning model to be implemented in the classroom. The finding is in line with Susanti et al. (2020) reported that students showed positive responses to the implementation of PjBL in the classroom, and they felt that PjBL is an effective learning model and they enjoyed learning through PjBL.

Furthermore, the finding also supports Haniah et al. (2021), who found that students gave positive responses to online PjBL, and they believed that it supported them in developing their creativity, innovation, communication skills, critical thinking skills, and collaboration skills. In addition, the current research is in line with Puangpunsi (2021), Kartika (2020), and Wongdaeng & Hajihama (2018). Puangpunsi (2021) obtained data indicating that students gave positive feedback on implementing PjBL in the class. Kartika (2020) found that students' acceptance and perception of PjBL were positive, and they believed that it was significantly beneficial. Wongdaeng & Hajihama (2018) reported that most students had a positive attitude toward PjBL because they felt that they had a more active role in the classroom when doing a project assigned by the teacher.

Besides that, the questionnaire and interview also show that PjBL motivates students to follow and join the class. They enjoyed working on the project and believe that through the project, they had less burden compared to learning with the individual tasks. Most students agreed to study with project tasks rather than individual tasks. It is in line with the study of Alyani & Ratmanida (2021), investigating students' perception of PjBL, who found that most students had a positive perception of the implementation of PjBL because it motivated them to study.

Besides the positive response to the implementation of PjBL, few students disagreed with the implementation of PjBL. They argued that when doing the project in PjBL, they did not get help from their friends. Then, a few students prefer to work on the project on their own. Besides that, some students were also happier when the teachers directly explained the material without being preceded by project tasks.

It is ultimately contradicted by Halim & Rohmah's (2020) and Frame et al. (2015) findings that reported PjBL improves the active participation of students and builds their teamwork skills. However, it could be influenced by students' learning style preferences. A class with many types of individuals should also have

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various preferences for learning styles. Some students prefer learning independently, while others enjoy learning in groups. Some students prefer teachers' talk or discussion, while others prefer projects or more challenging tasks.

Students' Perception of the Influence of PjBL

Based on data obtained from the questionnaire and interview, most students agreed that the PjBL widened their understanding of Sociolinguistics and developed their problem-solving and communication skills. It confirms Mardin & Zainil (2019), who found the significant influence of the PjBL model on students' problem-solving skills. Another research also found that PjBL could improve students' problem-solving skills (Makrufi et al., 2018). Furthermore, the PjBL significantly influences students' communication skills (Hidayat & Puspitasari, 2022).

Besides that, data from the questionnaire and interview indicate that students also agreed that PjBL developed their critical thinking and decision-making skills. It is in line with Issa & Khataibeh (2021) that PjBL could stimulate students to think more critically and sharpen their thinking ability. PjBL significantly influences students' critical thinking skills (Nawang Sari et al., 2022). Desiana et al. (2022) also found that PjBL improves students' critical thinking skills.

Furthermore, PjBL allows students to study independently and habituates them to manage a project. It also helps them to develop their ideas and creativity in deciding and discussing linguistics topics as the project. It is similar to Asmi et al. (2022) who found that PjBL improves students' learning motivation and creative thinking skills. PjBL can boost creative thinking ability (Yamin et al., 2020). Implementing PjBL allows students to develop their creativity in resolution, elaboration, and novelty dimensions, and the creativity product could be categorized as excellent (Hanif et al., 2019).

Conclusion

Based on the analysis, it can be concluded that most students responded positively to the implementation of project-based learning (PjBL) in the Sociolinguistics class. They reported that PjBL enhanced their understanding of sociolinguistic concepts and helped develop essential skills such as problem-solving, communication, critical thinking, and decision-making. Moreover, PjBL encouraged independent learning and fostered habits of managing projects, generating ideas, and expressing creativity, particularly in selecting and discussing linguistic topics for their projects.

The findings of this research offer both theoretical and pedagogical implications. Theoretically, they contribute to the body of knowledge regarding the PjBL model, including the process of designing and implementing projects and the necessary stages to ensure effective learning. Pedagogically, students' perceptions highlight how PjBL can be used as a strategic tool by lecturers or teachers to manage classroom activities, select relevant projects, and adopt appropriate learning models. However, this research also has limitations. Future research is recommended to further explore students' perceptions in more depth, particularly focusing on their experiences at each stage of the PjBL process.

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