IMPROVING THE ELEVENTH GRADE STUDENTS' WRITING ABILITY THROUGH PROBLEM BASED LEARNING AT SMKN 1 PENUKAL

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ABSTRACT

The purpose of this study was to improve the writing abilities of eleventh grade students at SMKN 1 Penukal by using Problem-Based Learning in the academic year 2023–2024. 34 students participated in the study, which used a Collaborative Classroom Action Research (CAR) design. The writer and the English instructor worked together as partners on the project. The research employed the Kemmis and McTaggart paradigm, which included three cycles of three meetings each for the purposes of planning, acting, observing, and reflecting. Tests and observation were used in the gathering of data. The findings demonstrated that students' writing skills had improved; their mean scores increased from 63.82 in the first research to 89.71 in the third cycle, above the Minimum Mastery Criterion (KKM) of 75. The English teacher's affirmative reaction demonstrated the effectiveness of the activity that was put into place. Finally, it can be said that problem-based learning improved the writing skills of students.

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Keywords: Problem-Based Learning, Students' Writing Skills, CAR

1. INTRODUCTION

Writing well is a fundamental English language ability, and individuals who are good at it will benefit much in both their personal and professional lives (Sidauruk et al., 2020). Writing is an essential skill that people use in both official and informal contexts to convey their ideas, thoughts, and feelings when speaking out loud is difficult. According to Oktavira (2024), Proficiency in writing is the capacity to express one's ideas, feelings, and thoughts in written language. Ideas are created, arranged, documented, and edited during the writing process. (Putu et al., 2021), serving as an effective means of self-expression. The numerous benefits of writing emphasize how important it is to develop writing as a habit. Consistent practice is necessary to improve the strength, persuasiveness, and clarity of written communications.

Excellent writing and communication abilities are essential for success in many areas of life and in a wide range of occupations. (Indah & Utari, 2021). Writing offers a

medium for expressing ideas and emotions in the context of modern society, in addition to facilitating efficient communication. Writing is the most important of the four language skills, and it should be practiced often for a variety of reasons. (Mairani, 2022).

Writing is important for teaching communicative language because it helps students learn language as a system of communication and supports the use of grammar, vocabulary, and oral language in the classroom. (Mulyadi et al., 2020).Writing is considered a difficult art, requiring knowledge of grammar, vocabulary, spelling, and the ability to reason logically and generate coherent phrases (Hidjrah et al., 2018). The difficulty is in coming up with a text that is logically structured, begins with an introduction, and ends with a significant conclusion. Writing assignments should advance from basic to complex, matching students' abilities and capabilities.

At SMKN 1 Penukal, a state-owned vocational high school, the researcher led lessons for eleventh-grade students who were focusing in Automation and Office Administration (XI OTKP1). According to the first semester's daily test results (2022/2023), more than 50% of the students in this class had writing challenges, with over 50% of them scoring below the Minimum Completeness Criteria (KKM) of 75 in English. Of the 34 pupils, 10 had a score of 60, 17 had a score of 50, and 7 had a score of 40. Having identified these issues, the researcher set out to improve

students' writing abilities by applying a problem-based learning strategy.

There were difficulties in the classroom, and some students found it difficult to participate in the learning process. Distractions like talking with classmates interfered with concentration, especially for those who found writing in English difficult. Furthermore, students were unmotivated and blamed their difficulties on the complexities of writing in English and their parents' jobs as rubber farmers, which diverted their focus from their studies.

Students' lack of interest in writing training was noted by the researcher, who concluded that this was due to a lack of motivation brought on by their perception of problems and a need for more participatory teaching strategies. On the other hand, a considerable portion of students detest writing since they view it as a time-consuming task. Writing is perceived by many students as tedious and difficult; nonetheless, it is important for them to understand that writing may really improve their memory and motor abilities. (Wati et al., 2023). The study suggested problem-based learning as an effective technique, seeking to increase students' thinking, communication, and problem-solving abilities. Jaya (2022) The learning outcome, however, was that the lack of interactive tools and media during teaching inhibited understanding, as per the model proposed by (Arihasta & Basthomi, 2019; Iskandar et al., 2021; Nasution, 2022), highlights how students may participate in

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problem-based learning (PBL) by using real-world applications. According to this concept, PBL emphasizes a student-centered learning approach by having students actively participate in problem-solving tasks. Thus, more practical tasks and an emphasis on creating student-centered learning experiences are characteristics of teaching PBL.

In another study, Aghayan & Hajmohammadi, (2019), concluded that via interactive conversations, Project-based Learning (PjBL) helps English as a Foreign Language (EFL) learners overcome writing challenges. Additionally, Anderson, (2007) carried out a research on 78 EFL students to see how PjBL affected their achievement in writing. Their results showed that project-based learning had a discernible positive impact on the students' writing achievements.

According to Susanti et al., (2020), Through problem-based learning, students work together to find solutions to real-world issues, which increases motivation and engagement. The researcher expected that by highlighting the advantages of writing paragraphs for problem-solving, communication, collaboration, and interpersonal skills, this method would increase students' enthusiasm to write.

2. METHODS AND PROCEDURES

Classroom action research (CAR) was the research method used in this study. The methodical analysis and enhancement of the teaching and learning process within the researcher's own classroom is classroom action research (CAR) (Hikmawati, 2020). It is a proactive strategy that teachers may use to improve their performance and carry out their duties in successfully managing learning.

This approach is helpful in determining the best practices to implement in the classroom to improve student learning (Fraenkel et al., 2012; Hasan, 2009; Sugiyono, 2015). Using a four-stage process of planning, acting, observing, and reflecting, teachers conduct classroom action research to improve teaching and learning. By utilizing Problem-Based Learning (PBL), particular interventions were implemented to improve students' ability to compose descriptive writings. Action research is a methodical procedure whereby educators carefully assess their own work using research methods. As briefly mentioned by (Mairani, 2022), Classroom action research is carried out to enhance the processes of teaching and learning by tackling problems with novel approaches or strategies. This entails deliberate, well-thought-out actions meant to improve the observable elements of instruction and learning. Monitoring procedures were put in place during the research's action phase in order to evaluate the treatments' effects and pinpoint their causes. The monitoring data was essential in helping to decide which changes to make to the action plans for each cycle. Formative assessment led decisions to improve the teaching and learning processes by drawing on monitoring data (Sunata, 2019).

The research procedure employed in this study aimed at enhancing the writing skills of

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eleventh-grade students at SMKN 1 Penukal through the application of problem-based learning, categorizing it as classroom action research. The central focus of this approach was the improvement of current English instructional and learning methodologies, with an emphasis on guiding students towards enhancing their writing abilities.

There were four distinct phases to the action research, as described by (Fraenkel et al., 2012). To begin with, the research topic was identified by a thorough examination aimed at identifying the particular problem. This is consistent with the idea that action research is especially useful for educators who are trying to improve methods, deal with problems, or correct current inadequacies. After then, the focus shifted from only depending on anecdotal evidence to acquiring substantial evidence, such as audio and video recordings, observations, and written questionnaire replies, in order to gather the necessary data. During the analysis and interpretation phase, participants were asked to interpret the results in the perspective of solving the research topic. This required a simplified but critical assessment of the collected data.The last step is to create an action plan that will help achieve the goals of the research. This plan will need to provide a precise plan of action for carrying out the findings and influencing future decisions about the problem that has been discovered.

The major objective of the classroom action research approach was to improve teaching practices. It was implemented in three cycles, each consisting of two meetings. The researcher engaged in an iterative process of planning, acting, observing, and reflecting, actively engaging in the design, execution, observation, and reflection stages. This technique ensured a comprehensive and progressive approach to improving writing abilities. The sequential tasks completed in the three action research cycles are depicted visually in the image below, which forms a thorough framework for iterative improvement.

Both the accomplishment of test scores during the research procedure and the increase in corresponding skills were used to determine the effectiveness of this study. A three-cycle methodology was used in the study, with 85% of XI OTKP 1 students at SMKN 1 Penukal meeting the success criteria by earning scores higher than the Minimum Completeness Criteria (KKM). The research's success criteria were predicated on the steady rise in scores that was seen from cycle 1 to cycle 3.

3. FINDINGS AND DISCUSSIONS

Preliminary Research

The first study, which was carried out on July 25, 2023, concentrated on an English lesson for students in the eleventh grade, namely class XI OTKP 1. With the theme of "How to Make Fried Rice," all 34 kids in attendance actively participated in the session. The teacher provided clear directions and an excellent explanation, but the minimal use of teaching aids—mainly a textbook and a whiteboard—seemed to impair the students' overall participation.

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Students had to conceptualize and translate words linked to the procedural texts of creating fried rice during the class. Some students' low knowledge may have been caused by the teacher's dependence on traditional teaching techniques and lack of response to student queries, even though the teacher constantly tested for comprehension and admonished inattentive pupils.

The students' following individual tasks caused difficulties for some of them in understanding English ideas, resulting in an average exam score of 63.82%, which was below adequate. The fact that not a single student achieved the required minimum score suggests that the teaching and learning process has to be improved.

The researcher suggests using Problem Based Learning (PBL) as a solution to these issues in order to improve students' writing skills. PBL is recommended as a substitute strategy that would be able to solve the noted flaws and provide a more interesting and productive learning environment for the students in class XI OTKP 1.

Cycle 1

The researcher and collaborator meticulously planned the teaching technique throughout the planning phase, stressing the value of a methodical approach to improve students' writing abilities. In order to record the teaching and learning process, this required preparing thorough lesson plans, assembling instructional materials, establishing an observation tool, and setting up media equipment.

Three cycles, each with distinct goals in mind, made up the action phase. The first meeting's main goal was to introduce the idea of procedural text, with a special emphasis on the recipe theme. The principles of Problem-Based Learning (PBL) were integrated, motivating students to examine and comprehend visuals and videos associated with the subject matter. Group work and collaborative tasks were completed by the class, culminating in presentations.

The researcher reiterated the importance of PBL concepts at the second meeting, including examples and films that were connected to the cooking subject. The assignment assigned to the students was to respond to questions concerning the linguistic qualities, generic structure, and social purpose of the cooking video. Individual presentations followed collaborative group assignments, much like in the first cycle.

In order to evaluate the students' proficiency in creating procedural text writing based on the executed action plan, writing tests were given to them at the third meeting. During these cycles, observations revealed areas that required attention, including students' misunderstandings about PBL, their hesitancy to share ideas in groups, their difficulties developing their vocabulary, and their uneasiness while presenting their work.

Cycle 1 observation papers for instruction and student activities were

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examined. With a score of 66.7%, the instructional activities were classified as "fair," with several areas requiring improvement. A 60% grade for student activities put them in the "sufficient" category, meaning they still need to be improved.

After reflecting on Cycle 1, it became clear that most students were still not familiar with PBL, that they had trouble developing their language, that they had trouble communicating their ideas, and that they were uncomfortable presenting their work. A mean score of 74.5% was found in the detailed findings of the students' writing ability, with 60% of the pupils receiving scores of 75 or higher.

In conclusion, the teaching technique had several beneficial characteristics, but for the next teaching cycles, specific adjustments are needed in areas like vocabulary growth, PBL familiarity, and student participation in presentations. The reflective process offers insightful information that may be used to improve the teaching and learning strategy and successfully improve students' writing abilities.

Cycle 2

To improve teaching and learning, the second cycle of the action research method was carefully designed, carried out, and evaluated. Comprehensive preparations were made during the planning phase, which included rewriting lesson plans and identifying problems from the previous cycle. Various methods were suggested to tackle these issues, including the integration of Problem-Based

Learning (PBL) concepts and motivating students to utilize resources like dictionaries and Google Translate for complex language.

The first meeting of the action phase started off on a good note with introductions, attendance reports, and a patriotic singing exercise. The primary task was the manual topic of procedural texts, and the instructor used PBL concepts to get the class involved in case analysis. Emphasis was placed on group work; students worked together to complete tasks pertaining to using different devices, which were then followed by presentations and assessments. Similar to the first meeting, the second one focused on fostering a pleasant learning atmosphere and involved the students in writing a procedural paper about manual preparation. Students were given a writing assignment on how to use an electronic rice cooker, and they had to show their work.

A writing exam was used in the third meeting to evaluate the students' ability to create procedural texts that adhered to the action plan. Positive effects, including enhanced comprehension of PBL techniques, heightened confidence, and active engagement, were seen over the three meetings. On the other hand, issues included ineffective time management and loudness during group talks.

Positive outcomes, such as enhanced vocabulary knowledge, improved organization, and advances in writing abilities, were highlighted throughout the reflection phase. Notwithstanding these successes, problems remained, including disruptive students and poor time management.

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A "fair" score of 70% was obtained for student activities and a "good" score of 76.67% for instructor activities based on observation sheet evaluation. The writing accomplishment exam showed a noteworthy increase, with 70% of the class receiving a score of 75 or higher.

To sum up, the second cycle showed encouraging advancements in the instruction and comprehension of process materials. It will be necessary to continuously improve, especially in resolving difficulties that have been discovered, in order to refine the strategy in later cycles. Future rounds of the action research will benefit greatly from the guidance provided by this introspective and analytical approach.

Cycle 3

The purpose of the third cycle of the action research method was to further enhance students' procedural text writing skills and tackle the issues noted in the second cycle. A redesigned planning strategy, concise explanations, active student participation, enhanced motivation and focus, ice-breaking activities, and upholding classroom order to reduce disturbances are just a few of the critical tactics that the researcher put into practice.

The cycle consisted of three sessions: an explanation and activity-focused first two meetings, followed by a writing exam at the end to evaluate the students' progress. The researcher set a goal for at least 85% of students to receive a score of 75 or better on the writing accomplishment exam, building on the success criteria that were set in the second cycle.

Upon welcoming students, playing the national anthem, and outlining the day's agenda, which involved creating a procedural document on advice, the researcher established a constructive learning atmosphere at the first meeting. Using the concepts of problem-based learning (PBL), students were split up into groups and instructed to investigate and assess a particular subject. In order to control noise, an icebreaker exercise was included. Students then presented their work, getting comments and rewards for the best group.

During the second meeting, the prior session was reviewed, difficult vocabulary was introduced, and students were told to consult a dictionary to obtain definitions. After that, the students created a procedural text on a brand-new online transportation subject. The program promoted cooperative learning through group discussions, presentations, and feedback.

During the third and last meeting, there was a written exam covering the topic of manual processes, including taking out cash from an ATM. Positive student involvement, comprehension of the PBL approach, self-assurance in voicing viewpoints, effective time management, and active participation were all noted during the cycle of observations.

Cycle 3's evaluation of the teaching and student activities yielded a "good" score of 83.33% for the student activities and 86.67%

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for the teaching activities. The 34 kids who took the writing accomplishment exam all scored 75 or better, which is an extraordinary result that shows a considerable improvement over the pre-cycle.

The action study resulted in a significant improvement in the students' procedure text writing skills, as indicated by the grand analysis of the data. The average scores demonstrated a very high caliber of work, confirming the beneficial effect of problem-based learning on students' composition abilities. The results highlighted how well the tactics that were put into practice worked and how effective problem-based learning is when it comes to teaching procedure text writing.

Discussion

This study's main goal is to investigate how applying problem-based learning (PBL) as an efficient English teaching method might improve students' writing abilities, with an emphasis on the writing context. The study looks into how well PBL works while teaching writing, particularly procedural texts. Notably, after using classroom action research, students' scores showed a considerable improvement throughout three writing test cycles. The study of quantitative data regularly shown improved writing skills, with average scores in each cycle above the passing mark of 75 (KKM). Additionally, observation reports yielded qualitative data that attested to the class's successful operation and demonstrated the students' eagerness and active participation in understanding the complexities of procedural texts. This demonstrates how well PBL

motivates students to tackle their writing projects inside the procedural text framework in a more proactive manner. In conclusion, the idea that putting PBL into practice successfully improves students' writing abilities in procedural texts and creates a more dynamic and engaging learning environment is supported by both quantitative and qualitative research.

Studies show that teaching writing via Problem-Based Learning is beneficial, particularly when teaching procedural texts. The increase in students writing exam results over the course of three cycles provides evidence of this. After cycle 1, cycle 2, and cycle 3's application of classroom action research, the students' English ability showed notable improvements. See the following table for a better understanding of the increase in student scores.

Categories	Pre Cycle	Cycle I	Cycle II	Cycle III
Highest	70	78	79	82
Lowest	44	71	73	79
Mean	**63.82**	**74.5**	**76.79**	**89.71**

The study of quantitative data shows that students' writing skills are continuously improving, with average scores constantly above the passing grade (KKM) of 75 in each cycle. Furthermore, qualitative information gathered from observation reports attests to the efficient operation of the class, with students

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actively participating and demonstrating a passion for comprehending the specifics of procedural materials. This suggests that, when applied to procedural texts, Problem-Based Learning effectively encourages students to take a more proactive approach to their writing. In light of (Surya, 2018), A comprehensive educational approach called problem-based learning (PBL) encourages students to learn by actively engaging in real-world scenarios. PBL's core components include individual inquiry, creativity, critical thinking and analysis, problem-solving via teamwork, and effective communication. Additionally, problem-based learning can maximize learning outcomes, according to the researchers' experience using it in their research. This is seen by the increasing outcomes with each cycle, which reaches peak performance.

The study's conclusions indisputably state that incorporating Problem-Based Learning (PBL) significantly improves students' competency with procedural texts. This claim is well supported by a thorough examination of both qualitative and quantitative data, which shows that students' test results have been steadily rising. The data emphasizes the creation of a more vibrant and passionate learning environment in addition to pointing out notable changes. The beneficial effect is seen in the students' engaged engagement and increased motivation to grasp the complexities of procedural texts. The combination of these qualitative and quantitative markers strengthens the claim that PBL is a major driver of students' writing ability development.

Overall, the study emphasizes how PBL may help students become more engaged and enthusiastic in procedural text writing in addition to helping them progress academically.

4. CONCLUSION

The eleventh-grade students at SMK N 1 Penukal have shown a notable improvement in their writing competence with the introduction of Problem-Based Learning (PBL). This statement is supported by a large body of evidence. At first, there was a noticeable increase in the pupils' average writing scores. The class met the Minimum Mastery Criterion (KKM) with an average score of 63.82 in the preliminary assessment. This score progressively rose to 74.5 in the first cycle, then to 76.79 in the second, and finally to 89.71 in the third, when it surpassed the KKM. Furthermore, field observations revealed that the classroom culture promoted a constructive learning environment and encouraged students' originality in coming up with ideas. As a result, Problem-Based Learning (PBL) has become recognized as a successful educational approach for developing writing abilities.

5. ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

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