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Teacher's Experiences In Implementing PJBL at Islamic Senior High School

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ABSTRAK

This study explores teachers' experiences in implementing Project-Based Learning (PjBL) and its challenges in English instruction at an Islamic Senior High School. Using a qualitative phenomenological approach, data were collected through observations, documentation, and semi-structured interviews with one English teacher and students. Data analysis involved transcription, repeated reading, reduction, display, and conclusion drawing. Findings identified five stages: group formation, local topic selection, guidance, presentation, and reflection. Presentation-based projects integrated four English skills. PjBL improved students' understanding, but limited time remained a challenge, addressed through simplified procedures and effective time management. This study offers theoretical and practical contributions to PjBL implementation.

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INTRODUCTION

Project-Based Learning (PjBL) is a student-centered learning approach that emphasizes learning through authentic projects related to real-world situations. Through this approach, students are encouraged to identify problems, conduct research, develop solutions, and present their findings. PjBL promotes active participation and collaboration between students while developing important skills such as creativity, critical thinking, problem-solving, and communication. In English language teaching, PjBL provides opportunities for students to practice language skills through meaningful activities and authentic tasks. Unlike traditional learning approaches that emphasize memorization, PjBL focuses on the learning process and the practical application of knowledge. Therefore, this approach can create more engaging and meaningful learning experiences for students (de la Torre-Neches et al., 2020). In Indonesia, Project-Based Learning is relevant to the implementation of the Merdeka Curriculum, which emphasizes student-centered, contextual, and collaborative learning. Its implementation in Islamic Senior High Schools also involves the integration of academic learning with Islamic educational values. These values include unity, cooperation, mutual support, and structured teamwork, which are essential for achieving common learning objectives. This principle is reflected in Surah Ash-Shaff (61:4), which describes the importance of unity and solidarity. In educational activities, these values can be implemented through group projects in which students cooperate, share responsibilities, and support one another in completing assigned tasks.

Despite its potential benefits, implementing PjBL presents several challenges for teachers, particularly in managing classroom activities, allocating instructional time, and providing appropriate learning resources. Du and Chaaban (2020) found that teachers' limited understanding and readiness could affect the successful implementation of PjBL. Similarly, Bin Adnan and Abdul Rahman (2024) identified classroom management and resource availability as important challenges in project-based instruction. These findings indicate that teachers require appropriate strategies and institutional support to implement PjBL effectively. Therefore, exploring teachers' experiences is important to understand

how they organize learning activities, guide students, manage classroom situations, and overcome challenges during implementation. Islamic Senior High School was selected as the research setting because it has implemented PjBL since 2010. Its long-term experience provides a relevant context for investigating teachers' practices, strategies, and experiences in applying this learning approach, particularly in English language instruction. The implementation of PjBL in this setting also offers an opportunity to examine how collaborative learning activities are connected with Islamic educational values. Previous studies have discussed various aspects of PjBL. Nugroho et al. (2025) explored teachers' experiences in implementing PjBL and students' perceived motivation in English language learning. Khasanah et al. (2025) examined PjBL implementation and its contribution to students' collaborative skills in senior high schools. Fianty et al. (2024) focused on PjBL training for teachers in a Madrasah Aliyah context. Meanwhile, Du and Chaaban (2020) investigated teachers' readiness to implement PjBL, while Bin Adnan and Abdul Rahman (2024) examined challenges related to classroom management and learning resources in vocational education. Although these studies provide valuable insights into PjBL implementation, they differ in their research focus, educational settings, and methodological approaches. Some emphasize student motivation and collaboration, while others focus on teacher readiness, training, and implementation challenges.

Therefore, further investigation is needed to explore teachers' experiences in implementing PjBL specifically in English language instruction within an Islamic Senior High School context. The originality of this study lies in its phenomenological approach, which explores teachers' lived experiences, implementation practices, and challenges while considering the relevance of Islamic educational values, particularly unity, cooperation, and structured teamwork. Based on these considerations, this study aims to explore how PjBL is implemented in English language teaching at Islamic Senior High School and identify the main challenges teachers encounter during its implementation. Using a qualitative phenomenological approach, this research seeks to provide a deeper understanding of teachers' experiences in organizing, guiding, and evaluating project-based activities. Theoretically, this study is expected to enrich research on PjBL in English language education, particularly in Islamic educational settings. Practically, it may provide English teachers with insights into effective project planning and classroom management, help schools strengthen support for PjBL implementation, encourage students' language development and collaboration, and serve as a reference for future researchers investigating similar topics.

RESEARCH METHOD

This study employed a qualitative research method with a phenomenological design to explore teachers' experiences in implementing Project-Based Learning (PjBL) in English language teaching at an Islamic Senior High School. A phenomenological approach was selected because it aims to understand the meaning and essence of individuals' lived experiences regarding a particular phenomenon (Creswell & Poth, 2018). Furthermore, Neubauer et al. (2019) explain that phenomenology focuses on understanding experiences from the perspectives of individuals who directly experience them. Therefore, this design enabled the researcher to investigate the teacher's experiences, strategies, and challenges in implementing PjBL within an Islamic educational context.

The research was conducted at an Islamic Senior High School, focusing on English language instruction. The participant was one English teacher selected through purposive sampling based on her experience and involvement in implementing PjBL. The teacher had approximately eight years of teaching experience and had implemented PjBL in her classroom for three academic years. Her educational background in English Education and participation in professional development workshops provided relevant insights into the implementation of project-based instruction. The selection of one primary participant allowed the researcher to obtain an in-depth understanding of the phenomenon being investigated.

The research instruments consisted of semi-structured interview guidelines and an observation checklist. The interview guidelines contained 12 open-ended questions divided into two main focuses. The first six questions explored the implementation of PjBL, including project planning, project types, the teacher's role, language skills developed, and assessment practices. The remaining six questions investigated the challenges encountered during implementation, such as time management, curriculum demands, student participation, learning facilities, project procedures, and strategies for overcoming difficulties. Classroom observations were conducted as a complementary instrument to examine actual

teaching activities, student participation, group collaboration, and classroom interactions during PjBL implementation. Documentation and field notes were also used to support the collected data.Data were collected through several stages, beginning with the preparation of research instruments and the selection of the participant. The researcher then conducted semi-structured interviews and classroom observations to obtain detailed information about the implementation of PjBL and the challenges encountered. Interview sessions were recorded with the participant's permission to ensure accurate data collection. Afterward, member checking was conducted by reconfirming the interview information with the participant. The interview recordings were transcribed, while observation results, documentation, and field notes were organized to support the analysis.

The collected data were analyzed using Miles and Huberman's (2014) interactive model, which consists of three main activities: data reduction, data display, and conclusion drawing and verification. Data reduction involved transcribing, reading, selecting, and organizing relevant information based on the research questions. Data display was conducted by presenting the information in descriptive narratives and thematic categories supported by relevant interview quotations and observation results. Finally, conclusion drawing and verification involved interpreting the findings and checking their consistency with the collected data. Information from interviews, observations, and documentation was compared to strengthen the credibility of the research findings.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Results

The findings reveal that the implementation of *Project-Based Learning* (PjBL) in English language teaching at Madrasah Aliyah Syekh Yusuf involves several systematic stages, including project preparation, topic selection, project development, teacher guidance, presentation, and reflection. The data were obtained through classroom observations on May 18, 2026, and interviews on May 25 and June 4, 2026. The data were analyzed using Miles and Huberman's (2014) model, consisting of data condensation, data display, and conclusion drawing and verification.The findings indicate that the teacher begins the learning process by selecting topics related to students' daily lives and providing materials, explanations, and instructions before assigning projects. This preparation helps students understand the project and develop their ideas. As the teacher stated:"Before assigning a project, we provide materials or topics related to what students usually see in their surroundings, and then we give them guidance and instructions on how to carry out the project."Furthermore, presentations are the primary project activities because they integrate the four English language skills: reading, speaking, listening, and writing. During the project process, the teacher acts as a facilitator and motivator by guiding students, providing assistance, and correcting their vocabulary and sentence structures.

The assessment covers several aspects, including cooperation, understanding of materials, creativity, English language use, presentation skills, and punctuality. Every group member is also required to participate in the presentation to ensure individual contributions can be assessed. The findings further show that students generally respond positively to PjBL because it makes learning more enjoyable and helps them understand materials through direct practice.However, the implementation of PjBL faces challenges, particularly limited classroom time and unequal group participation. Some students actively contribute, while others tend to depend on their group members. To overcome these problems, the teacher adjusts project schedules, manages available time, and provides additional guidance outside regular classroom hours when necessary.

Overall, PjBL is implemented through structured activities, teacher guidance, collaboration, and comprehensive assessment. Although it provides opportunities to develop students' English skills, time management and unequal participation remain challenges.

Discussion

Implementation of Project-Based Learning in English Language Teaching

The findings indicate that PjBL implementation reflects a student-centered learning approach. The teacher introduces topics related to students' daily lives and provides initial guidance before students begin their projects. This approach helps students connect learning materials with real-life experiences and develop their own ideas. These findings are consistent with Nugroho et al. (2025), who found that teachers introduce project topics related to students' daily experiences and provide guidance before project activities begin.Presentation is the primary project activity because it integrates the four English language skills. Through presentations, students can communicate ideas, practice English, and

develop confidence. During this process, the teacher acts as a facilitator and motivator rather than the main source of knowledge.

The assessment system covers cooperation, understanding of materials, creativity, English language use, presentation skills, and punctuality. Requiring every group member to participate also encourages individual responsibility. These findings support Khasanah et al. (2025), who explained that PjBL develops 21st-century skills, including collaboration, communication, creativity, responsibility, and time management.Furthermore, students generally show positive responses because PjBL provides enjoyable learning experiences through direct practice. This demonstrates that project activities can encourage active participation and meaningful English learning.

Challenges Faced by Teachers in Implementing Project-Based Learning

The main challenge identified in this study is time management. Limited classroom time and students' assignments from other subjects sometimes prevent projects from being completed according to the planned schedule. This finding is consistent with Bin Adnan and Abdul Rahman (2024), who identified resource limitations, classroom management, and complex learning activities as challenges in implementing PjBL.Additionally, project activities do not always follow the initial schedule because students need sufficient time to complete their tasks. This finding supports Fianty et al. (2024), who emphasized the importance of project scheduling, monitoring, and timeline adjustments in PjBL implementation.

To overcome these challenges, the teacher adjusts project schedules, manages available time, and provides additional guidance when necessary. This finding is in line with Du and Chaaban (2020), who highlighted time constraints and additional workloads as challenges in implementing PjBL. Another challenge concerns unequal student participation in group activities. Some students contribute actively, while others tend to depend on their group members. Therefore, requiring every student to participate in presentations becomes a strategy to encourage individual responsibility and assess students' contributions.Overall, the findings demonstrate that PjBL provides opportunities to develop students' English language skills, creativity, collaboration, and active participation. However, effective implementation requires proper preparation, teacher guidance, time management, and classroom supervision.

CONCLUSION

The implementation of PjBL at Islamic Senior high School is carried out through the following stages: forming groups and determining project topics relevant to the students' local environment, providing guidance and instructions for project work, students completing the project together with their group under the guidance of the teacher as a facilitator and motivator, and presenting the project results in front of the class, followed by group reflection. The most commonly used type of project is the presentation-based project because it integrates all four English language skills (reading, speaking, listening, and writing) simultaneously. Assessment is comprehensive, covering cooperation, understanding of the material, creativity, use of English, presentation skills, and punctuality, with each student required to participate in the presentation so that individual participation is clearly evident.

The main challenge faced by teachers is time management specifically, the limited amount of class time, which requires teachers to adjust their schedules to meet curriculum goals. Another challenge is the imbalance in student participation within groups, where some students dominate the work while others tend to be passive. To address this, teachers adjust their lesson schedules and provide additional guidance outside of class hours.

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