

Problem Based Learning for English Subjects in Students' Perspectives

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Abstract: This study focused on the students' perspectives toward the implementation of Project-Based Learning (PBL) for English Subjects in State Polytechnic Batam. The research used qualitative descriptive to analyze the student's perspective related to the learning of the PBL method applied in English courses. The instrument was a questionnaire to examine the student's perspectives. The participants were about 250 students of Batam State Polytechnic majoring in Business Management, which consists of 10 classes of English courses that output oral and written skills, study programs in Accounting, Managerial Accounting, and Applied Business Administration. The result showed that students faced many difficulties in their PBL English. However, they were still able to complete their PBL assignments on time. The role of lecturers in English PBL subjects has been carried out properly as facilitators and student companions and most students feel satisfied with this. The data that is mostly used by students in making their English PBL written reports is about procedures/processes, data in tabular form, line graph, bar chart, and pie chart. The topics that are widely used by students in their English PBL oral reports are product promotion and internship reports.

1 INTRODUCTION

Problem Based Learning (PBL) is a combination of learning theory, model, and practice in real terms according to conditions in the field (De Graaf and Kolmos, 2003). This learning method has been implemented more than 45 years ago.

The PBL emphasizes the learning process through students' field experiences which are carried out collaboratively to get a solution to a problem (collaborative problem solving). This learning method makes the students experience real projects and work at working place. In this process, students will be directly involved in a case or work project, where they need to synergize with students from other disciplines, forming study groups to complete the projects/cases they face. Their teamwork skills are built in this system.

Research results from previous studies show that students have a less positive attitude towards the implementation of PBL (Hasan and Esmat, 1990). However, in 2013, Maulany found that PBL can significantly improve students' speaking skills (It was indicated by the improvements of students' speaking aspects covering comprehension, vocabulary, grammar, fluency, and pronunciation. Of all the five

aspects, comprehension and vocabulary were improved most significantly).

Furthermore, Pangander and Read (2014) found contradictory results related to the effectiveness of the application of this PBL method in the field of educational medicine. Still, in the same year, Trisdiono (2014), found that teachers in schools had difficulty in determining suitable teaching materials for the PBL curriculum.

Moreover, Ceker and Ozdamli (2016) also found several limitations in the application of PBL in the teaching and learning process. In the same year, Maysara (2016) found that the application of PBL in Colloid system subjects was effective in achieving learning objectives. In the following year, Eduardo, Thayla, and Paulo (2017) found that PBL is an effective learning method because students directly gain experience in creating and developing a product, but they also stated that this method could be ineffective in developing countries.

At Batam State Polytechnic, PBL has only been tried to be implemented starting in early 2021. To expedite the course of PBL from the four existing Departments, Batam State Polytechnic provides a unit that specifically functions to manage projects that will be run in each department. These projects are then

distributed to the courses offered each semester to students.

In practice, each person in charge of the course will prepare material designs that will later be needed to build and increase students' knowledge to solve the problems they face while working on their projects. One of the courses involved in the project is English. In this case of the English course, students are expected to be able to make project progress reports and project final reports in English, as well as be able to present these reports in English. However, the implementation of this PBL method will not be easy for students because in the even semester of 2020/2021 this is the first time it is applied to English courses.

Students' learning culture and their readiness for technology and critical thinking will greatly affect their success in solving problems encountered in the projects they are working on. In addition, lecturers do not yet have appropriate teaching materials for PBL, this can be another obstacle for their students. The fact that the PBL method is something new for these students.

They are required to be more active, spirit full, and critical in working on their projects and also analyze important things in the project. This challenge is further complicated by the implementation of a 100% online learning system for English courses in the even semester of 2020/2021 due to the increasingly severe Pandemic situation.

The condition of the students who are familiar and fit with the traditional learning method is then drastically changed into student center method in PBL. The policy to have fully online learning can be a big problem for them as some of the students still have limitations in mastering and accessing the technology.

2 FORMULATION OF THE PROBLEM

The following are some of the problems that researchers can identify related to the implementation of PBL for English subjects:

1. There are several obstacles faced by English students in communicating with other students in collecting data for their reports.
2. The role of lecturers as facilitators for PBL determines the success of the PBL learning system.
3. The topics contained in the lesson plan of English subjects are hardly obtained evenly in the working places.

4. The material for the PBL final oral and written report is strongly influenced by the condition of the project being carried out by students

3 RESEARCH PURPOSES

Based on the background and identification of the problems described above, the purpose of this study is to find out general problems and students' perspectives related to the implementation of PBL for English courses.

4 LITERATURE REVIEW

4.1 Characteristics of Problem based Learning (PBL) Methods

The basic characteristic of PBL is student-based learning or commonly called student-center (Hasan and Ezzat (1990). One of the previous studies on PBL conducted by De Graaf and Kolmos (2003) found that the problem (problem) is the starting point of the PBL process. learning using the PBL method. They formulated there are three other characteristics of PBL:

- a. PBL is activity-based learning
- b. PBL is an interdisciplinary learning
- c. PBL is group-based learning.

Ceker and Ozdamli (2016) stated that teachers and students are thoroughly involved in PBL. Furthermore, Habok and Nagy (2016) stated that in PBL the teacher is the facilitator and students must be involved in the assessment.

From the basic characteristics of learning the PBL method, it is clear that most of the teaching and learning process is in the students/students themselves, and teachers/lecturers only facilitate and assist so that students/students are on the right track.

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4.3 Teaching English as a Foreign Language (EFL): Oral and Written Skills

Karyawati and Ashadi (2018) found that students dominate the class especially to improve their speaking skills and lecturers provide a new learning atmosphere in teaching English by providing several activities that contain communication, critical thinking, collaboration, and creativity.

In addition, Fandino (2013) adds that the 21st century demands an explicit integration between learning strategies, digital competencies, and career skills. He believes that Schools in general and EFL classrooms, in particular, should provide students with practices and processes focused on acquiring and developing, among other things, creativity, critical thinking, collaboration, self-direction, and cross-cultural skills.

4.4 Student's Perspective on Problem based Learning (PBL) Lectures

From the research conducted by Hammel, et al (1999), it is known that students feel that the PBL approach adopted consistently throughout the curriculum contributes to the development of information management, critical reasoning, communication, and team-building skills; however, the challenges identified were time and role management, access to information, instructor versus PBL expectations and practices, and overcoming knowledge and reasoning ambiguity.

According to Nanda and Manjunatha (2013), students have a willingness to adapt to the PBL system even though they feel some advantages in the traditional system. In this case, the relationship between students and lecturers is one of the keywords for the success of PBL,

Carlos (2015) states that the success of PBL learning depends on the reactions and attitudes of students. From a student's perspective, PBL is not an easy way to learn, especially for those who are exposed to this system for the first time. Another problem that was presented was the lack of knowledge and teamwork skills. Furthermore, Shitarukmi, Projosasmito, and Roebertsen (2017) claim that students are expected to be able to discuss problems according to the principles of collaborative learning.

5 RESEARCH METHODS

5.1 Research Object

This research was conducted at Batam State Polytechnic majoring in Business Management, which consists of 10 classes of English courses that output oral and written skills, study programs in Accounting, Managerial Accounting, Applied Business Administration, with a total of 214 students.

5.2 Data Collection

The data for this research will be collected using a questionnaire that will be filled out by students regarding their experiences and opinions related to learning the PBL method applied in English courses in the Even Semester 2020/2021.

5.3 Data Analysis Method

In principle, this research is qualitative and descriptive. The qualitative descriptive method was used to analyze the student's perspective related to the learning of the PBL method applied in English courses.

Broadly speaking, the stages of data analysis will be carried out as follows:

The researcher will analyze the student's perspective related to the learning of the PBL method applied in English courses. The data analyzed here are data obtained from students who are involved in projects at the Batam State Polytechnic and are taking English courses.

6 DISCUSSION

The targeted respondents, respectively 250 students, do not fully participate in filling the questionnaires of this research. There are only 214 respondents who

participate in giving the data regarded to their perspective.

The following is a description of data analysis results obtained from respondents who are students taking English courses in the Even Semester 2020/2021 at the Department of Business Management, Batam State Polytechnic:

6.1 Difficulties Faced by Students in the PBL System Lectures for English Courses

The most common difficulties experienced by students in this English PBL course are as follows:

a. Difficulty in face-to-face communication, and in searching data and information to be processed for English PBL weekly.

This causes the time to discuss working on the project to be very limited. This is due to the Covid-19 Pandemic situation, where English lectures are carried out 100% online. They try to negotiate with the English lecturer to accommodate the certain possibility of getting similar data from the internet which can be personally done by the student. So, that they do not need to rely on their friends for getting the data. However, the solution is violence to the principal of PBL, which is team working and collaborative learning (De Graaf and Kolmos, 2003; Ceker and Ozdamli, 2016).

b. Time Management.

Most students convey that it was difficult to divide their time because in this semester many courses are run with the PBL system. The workload of each course that must be completed at the same time leads them to bad time management.

This is a common issue in the PBL system. This problem will lead the students to explore their creativity to be able to think critically in a limited time for a lot of workloads (Caesar, et.al, 2016; Doroty, and Timothy, 2018).

c. Difficulty in obtaining data from PBL groups of other majors for analysis in English.

This is caused by two things. First, the projects in other majors have not yet been integrated with the English lesson plan, so that when students have to analyze data in the form of tables or graphs, the project group that is the target of their respondents has

not yet started working on the project, it is still in the project preparation stage.

6.2 Students Commitment to Complete Their PBL Tasks on Time

Of the 214 respondents, 193 of them states that they could still submit weekly reports on time, while only 21 students stated that they could not submit reports on time. This shows that PBL affirmatively can develop the students' good attitudes toward responsibility they have from their PBL subjects. The students can succeed to find a solution and give their hard work to complete their target, make hard efforts to show their performance (Ceker and Ozdamli, 2016).

Graphically, the data can be shown by the following chart:

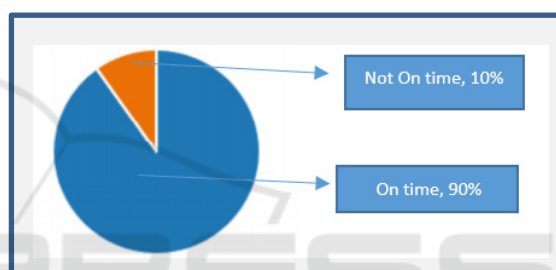


Figure 1: Students' commitment to complete the task on time.

This shows that having many assignments from many courses with the PBL system, English course students still show their enthusiasm and commitment to carry out their obligations in this course. There are greatly 90% of the respondents admit that they can finish all the weekly progress reports and final reports on schedule.

6.3 Common Data Obtained for the English PBL Report

In this question, the respondents can give more than one answer. The eight choices given to the students in this question are taken from the topics available in the English lesson plan: Line graph, Bar Chart, Pie Chart, Table, Map, Process/procedures, Multiple Charts, and Budgeting. The students have initially got the theoretical explanation on how to present these data in a spoken and written report.

The following graph shows the information of common data that the students get from the project handled by students of other courses and majors.

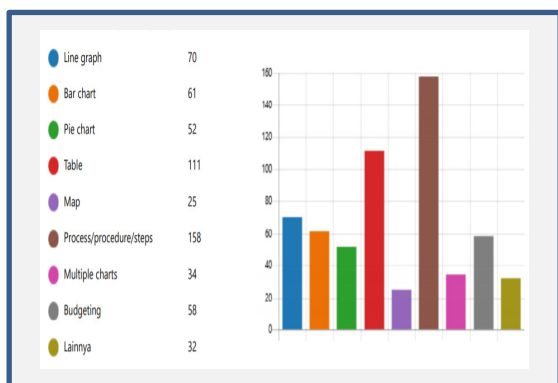


Figure 2: Common Data Gathered for PBL Tasks.

From the data and graphs above, it can be seen that the most common information gathered is process/procedure (26%) and tables (19%). The second common layer is dominated by data in form of line graphs (12%), bar charts (10%), and pie charts (9%). Those are the five most common categories taken up to 76% accumulation.

6.4 The Role of Lecturers in the PBL Learning System of English Courses

The data obtained from 214 respondents shows that only 1 respondent stated that the lecturer did not give time to discuss, ask, and discuss the progress reports made by students while 213 other respondents admit that the lecturers had given time and opportunity very well for the students.

Graphically, it will be seen in the following chart:

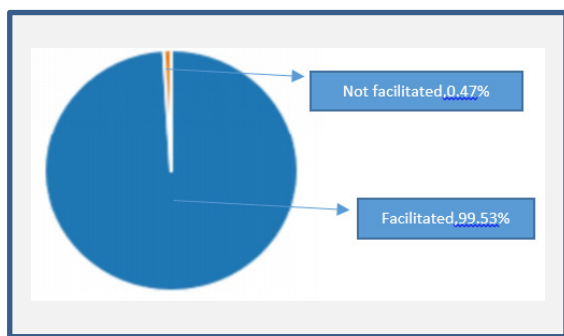


Figure 3: The roles of English teachers in the PBL.

It is clearly shown that the lecturers have carried out their role as facilitators and provided assistance to students in implementing projects for English PBL (Habok and Nagy, 2016).

6.5 Common Topics for Oral Presentations in Students English PBL

In this question, the respondents can also give more than one answer. The following is a graph showing the topics that were mostly gathered by the students for their oral report in English PBL:

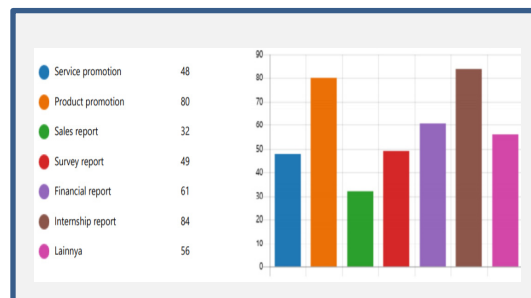


Figure 4: Common topics for Oral Presentation in English PBL.

From the graphs and data above, it can be seen that PBL materials such as “product promotion and internship report are two topics that are widely used by students for their oral reports. There are around 80-84 respondents. However, other topics such as financial reports are also common to use in their presentation task.

This is due to the condition of the respondents who are in the period of their internship program while taking the English subjects. In addition, the students of this program are also expected to present their internship reports in English.

7 CONCLUSION

From the description above, it can be concluded that:

1. Students faced many difficulties in their PBL
2. English lectures this semester, but they were still able to complete their PBL assignments on time.
3. The role of lecturers in English PBL subjects has been carried out properly as facilitators and student companions and most students feel satisfied with this.
4. The data that is mostly used by students in making their English PBL written reports is about procedures/processes, data in tabular form, line graph, bar chart, and pie chart.
5. The topics that are widely used by students in their English PBL oral reports are product promotion and internship reports.

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