

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

A. Background of Study

Reading involves understanding written material and is a complex activity that demands both perception and intellect. It encompasses two interconnected processes: recognizing words and comprehending them. Word recognition is the ability to see how written symbols match spoken language, while comprehension involves making sense of words, sentences, and the overall text. To grasp written content effectively, readers often rely on their background knowledge, vocabulary, grammatical understanding, experience with texts, and various strategies.¹

Reading is a skill that allows students to familiarize themselves with others' ideas, compare and contrast them, analyze and assess arguments, interpretations, opinions, or theories, make inferences, and explore potential consequences. Essentially, reading is a skill that promotes critical thinking in children.² To enhance students' reading abilities, teachers should select meaningful reading materials and evaluate their teaching methods effectively. When assessing reading skills, teachers need to choose materials that align with the students' reading level and the purpose of the text. Reading plays a crucial role in language learning; therefore, teachers

¹ Elizabeth, Angaluki Muaka, Elizabeth B. Bernbardi, and Micheal L. Kamil, *Teaching Reading*, (Brussel, International Academy of Education, 2003), 8.

² Behnam Behfrouz, Elham nahvi, “ The Effect of Task Characteristics on IELTS Reading Performance”, *Open Journal of Modern Linguistics*, Vol. III, No. 1, (March, 2013), 6.

should take into account factors such as available resources, students' background knowledge, and teaching methods. To comprehend a text, students must have a solid grasp of vocabulary in the target language, as language learning involves more than just memorizing words. Mastery of vocabulary will support students in developing listening, speaking, reading, and writing skills.

Project-based learning is an educational approach that employs projects or activities as the primary means of instruction. This method requires students to engage in exploration, evaluation, interpretation, synthesis, and information creation to generate diverse learning outcomes.. Some experts consider John Dewey to be the pioneer of project-based learning, owing to his emphasis on learning through doing. Dewey's learning theories called for a life-long learning strategy in which students learn by interaction with real-world tasks. Other experts, however, suggest that the genuine pioneer of project-based learning is the American philosopher Kilpatrick, who succeeded Dewey. Kilpatrick defines PjBL as a set of meaningful activities in a social setting that are centred on a given material or theme. ³

Project-based learning has proven effective across all STEM subjects—science, technology, engineering, and mathematics. STEM integrates these fields to foster students' creativity by engaging them in solving real-world problems. Resulting in improved learning content, critical thinking skills, and attitudes towards

³ Katarzyna Lobacz, Ewa Matuska, "Project-Based Learning in Entrepreneurship Education: A Case study-based analysis of Challenges and Benefits", *Entrepreneurship-Education*, Vol. IV, No. 5, (September, 2020), 3.

learning. However, research regarding the use of Project-based learning to teach reading and English Language Arts (ELA) concepts and skills is limited. Implementing Project-based learning reading projects can provide increased opportunities to analyze texts, build background knowledge, develop academic vocabulary, collaborate with peers, and create products that demonstrate reading comprehension. Increased engagement and practice with these key reading strategies can result in improved performance on standardized reading assessments. This research differs from prior studies, such as the one by Farnia Sari, Yuyun Hendrety, and Gaya Tridinanti from the International Black Sea University Faculty of Education and Humanities PhD Programme in Education Sciences, titled "Enhancement of English as a Foreign Language (EFL) University Students' Reading Skills through Project-Based Learning Implementation (Iraqi Case)." That study specifically examined the impact of project-based learning on the reading skills of Iraqi undergraduate students.⁴ Meanwhile, in this research, researcher will emphasize research on the effectiveness of EFL to improve students' reading skills. Therefore, this research has a strong background because it tries to answer important questions regarding the effectiveness of project-based learning to improve reading skills in English. The results of this research can provide valuable insight for educators and instructors in choosing the most effective teaching methods in the

⁴ Aziza Kavlu, "Enhancement of English as a Foreign Language (EFL) University Students' Reading Skills Through Project-Based Learning Implementation (Iraqi Case)", *International Black Sea University Faculty Of Education And Humanities Phd Program In Education Sciences*, (March, 2016), 21.

context of developing reading skills in English. The researcher concluded that reading is a process of constructing meaning, which involves decoding words, developing fluency, enhancing comprehension, solving problems, and making decisions. Strategic reading is defined as the ability to employ different reading strategies to meet specific objectives.

B. Identification of Problem

From the research background, there are several problems related to students reading skills. Research problems are limited to :

1. **Low Reading Skill Level:** There are challenges in increasing students' reading skill level in English language learning. Data shows that a number of students have difficulty understanding and analysing English texts well.
2. **Lack of Student Engagement:** Conventional teacher-centred teaching methods may be inadequate to motivate and actively engage students in the English language learning process. Students may be less motivated to develop their reading skills independently.
3. **The Importance of Implementing Project-Based Learning (PjBL):** There is a need to explore and evaluate the effectiveness of PjBL as an alternative for improving reading skills. PjBL offers a more interactive approach and emphasises the application of knowledge in real-life contexts, which can stimulate student interest and motivation.

C. Scope and Limitation of The Research

The research focuses on leveraging project-based learning to enhance students' reading skills, specifically targeting narrative texts with an emphasis on short stories. The study aims to boost students' comprehension of key concepts, attention to detail, and vocabulary development. By incorporating diverse narrative genres and engaging storytelling techniques, the research intends to create an interactive and immersive reading experience. Ultimately, the goal is to offer valuable insights and practical solutions for improving students' reading abilities and fostering their literacy skills.

D. Research Questions

Based on the problem limitations above, the research questions are:

1. Can project-based learning be effective in improving students' reading skills?

E. The Objective of The Study

This research aims to find out whether Project-Based Learning can improve the reading skills in eleventh grade students at MAN 2 Serang.

F. Significances of The Study

The significance of this research consists of the following:

1. Theoretical Significance

- a. This research has theoretical significance because it can provide confirmation or development of project-based learning theory. The

research results can strengthen our understanding of how this method can improve English reading skills.

- b. This research can contribute to the development of the concept of contextual learning, where students are involved in learning content that is related to the surrounding context, especially in improving reading skills.
- c. The research results can provide a basis for developing innovative English language learning models that can be applied in various educational contexts.

2. Practical Significance

a. For The Students

The findings of this research hold practical value for students by introducing project-based learning (PjBL) as an innovative method to significantly improve their English reading skills. By participating in real-world projects, students can gain a deeper understanding of texts, enhance their comprehension, and strengthen their analytical abilities.

b. For The Teachers

This research will increase teacher creativity.

PjBL encourages teachers to design projects that are interesting and relevant to the learning content. This allows teachers to explore creative ideas for designing interesting learning experiences for students.

c. For The next Teacher

The findings of this study on the effectiveness of project-based learning (PjBL) in enhancing reading skills offer valuable insights and inspiration for future educators. They suggest a move away from traditional teaching methods, encouraging the adoption of dynamic, project-based activities in the English language classroom.

G. Organization of The Study

The researcher will arrange three chapters and each chapter consists of some points to explain the chapter.

Chapter I is the Introduction. This chapter contains the background of the study, identification of the problem, scopes, and limitations of the research, research questions, the objectives of the study, the significance of the study, the previous research, and the organization of the study.

Chapter II is the Theoretical Framework. This chapter contains: Reading theory, purpose of reading, kind of reading, definition of Project-based learning, History of Project-Based Learning, Components of project-based learning.

Chapter III is Research Methodology. This chapter contains the research methodology which includes research methods, instruments, data collection methods, data verification methods, and data analysis methods.

Chapter IV is Findings and Discussion. This chapter presents the results of data analysis and discussion of the effectiveness of project-based learning in teaching English to improve students reading skills.

Chapter V is Conclusions and Suggestions. This chapter presents the conclusions of the overall content of the study and the suggestions given by the researcher to this readers.