

## LECTURER'S DESIGN IN ENACTING PROJECT-BASED LEARNING TO ENGLISH LANGUAGE TEACHING

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<b>Article History</b>	<b>Abstract</b>
Submitted date: 2021-11-27 Accepted date: 2021-12-04 Published date: 2021-12-28	Project-Based Learning, known globally as a learner-centered learning process, has been broadly used by teachers in classroom practices. This approach gives freedom to design the project works. This present research aimed to generate the design employed by the lecturers in implementing the Project-Based Learning (PBL) approach in their English classes. The researcher employed a classroom-based study in this present research to generate the design used by three English lecturers to enact Project-Based Learning (PBL) in their classes. The researcher administered in-depth interviews and classroom observations to obtain the data. Findings revealed four major themes from data collection and analysis: PBL integration into English syllabus, PBL design and implementation, PBL objective and assessment, and digital technology integration. At last, this research result adds pedagogical implications to the research related to PBL enactment in terms of its practical design in English teaching classroom implementation.
<b>Keywords:</b> project-based learning, classroom-based study, English language teaching	
	<b>Abstrak</b>
<b>Kata Kunci:</b> pembelajaran berbasis proyek, penelitian berbasis kelas, pengajaran Bahasa Inggris	<b>Desain Dosen Dalam Menerapkan Pembelajaran Berbasis Proyek Untuk Pengajaran Bahasa Inggris</b> Pembelajaran berbasis proyek, yang dikenal secara global sebagai proses pembelajaran yang berpusat pada peserta didik, telah digunakan secara luas oleh guru dalam praktik kelas. Pendekatan ini memberikan kebebasan untuk merancang karya proyek. Penelitian ini bertujuan untuk menarik rancangan yang dipakai oleh para dosen dalam menerapkan pendekatan Pembelajaran Berbasis Proyek (PBP) di dalam kelas Bahasa Inggris mereka. Peneliti menggunakan riset berbasis kelas dalam penelitian ini untuk menemukan desain yang digunakan oleh tiga orang dosen bahasa Inggris dalam menerapkan Pembelajaran Berbasis Proyek (PBP) di kelas mereka. Peneliti melakukan wawancara mendalam dan observasi kelas untuk mendapatkan data. Hasil penelitian mengungkapkan bahwa empat tema utama dari pengumpulan dan analisis data: integrasi PBL ke dalam silabus bahasa Inggris, desain dan implementasi PBL, tujuan dan penilaian PBL, dan integrasi teknologi digital. Akhirnya, hasil penelitian ini menambahkan implikasi pedagogis terhadap penelitian yang terkait dengan pemberlakuan PBL terutama dalam hal desain praktisnya dalam implementasi pengajaran bahasa Inggris di kelas.

### Introduction

PBL is defined differently from time to time. Iakovos, Iosif, and Areti (2011) highlighted that one teaching method provided the natural teaching process of the four language skills, namely listening, speaking, reading, and writing. Through this approach, the learners are assigned an individual or group project, frequently monitored by a supervisor (Inoue & Bell, 2011). PBL instruction has been demonstrated as a practical instructional model in many studies by many previous research results. Many validated results proved that PBL effectively improved the students' content knowledge (Ke, 2010) and increased low-achieving and less-confident students' performance (Ravitz, Hixson, English, & Mergendoller, 2012; O'Sullivan,

Krewer, & Frankl, 2017). Many positive perceptions were also indicated by the students who taught under PBL instruction (Kanigolla et al., 2014) and changing the teacher and students' culture in school reform programs (Ravitz, 2010). Related to the teaching of English, this PBL instruction has been proved to be effective in developing students' speaking skills (Khoiriyah & Setyaningrum, 2015), promoting EFL learners' writing skills (Aghayani & Hajmohammadi, 2019), and cultivating pre-service English teachers' 21st-century skill (Puspitasari, 2020).

There are many previous kinds of research under the implementation of the PBL framework in education. The topics are varied, starting from the pattern of organization, the teacher and students' interaction (Lestariyana & Widodo, 2018), the experimental online project work (Amissah, 2019), the assessment process in PBL (Usher & Barak, 2018), and also the development of instructional materials using PBL framework. Many research findings also reported the implementation of PBL in a classroom situation. One of them was conducted by Aldabbus (2018) in a primary school in Bahrain. His study aimed to explore the potential use of PBL in certain situations and investigate the problems that could emerge in the actual classroom situation during the implementation of PBL. To collect the data, the researcher used questionnaires and semi-structured interviews. A total of twenty-four teachers in pre-service at eight schools participated in this study. The analysis results showed that more than 3/4 of the participants with their students could not incorporate PBL. They faced problems including selecting factual content, time management, tracking and evaluation, and a lack of facilities. Next, dealing with these findings, some suggestions and recommendations were made to support teachers, schools, and decision-makers in implementing PBL.

In Malaysia, Abdul Khalek and Lee (2012) have studied the implementation of PBL in Taylor's College, which aimed to examine the impact of PBL on students' engagement and enhance the student's teaching and learning experience through PBL implementation. The project was given to the students as part of their ongoing evaluation at the beginning of the term. The students had to discuss, prepare, do information checking, and eventually arrange the information obtained to be submitted in a video and or portfolio format. The result showed that the experience gained in integrating PBL to promote students' involvement in Malaysian and English studies had reached its objective, respectively. Next, student engagement in these findings is categorized into four criteria: responsible learning, strategic learning, collaborative, and energized by knowledge.

Martínez and Fernández (2015) pointed out that in enacting PBL, teachers should carefully select the project materials to fulfill and attract students' needs. It also must be presented in an engaging way, such as triggering the previous awareness of students through a short conversation, questions, video, or tour show. The students should be free to design the project, use materials and information sources, and apply the final product. This situation will let them be more independent and imaginative students. Teachers should ensure that learners have enough time and possibilities to use effective communication techniques and critical thinking skills during the project management process. The teacher then works together with the students to create a positive environment and share feedback.

Nevertheless, although many research results have proved that PBL is quite effective in teaching English, the practical design dealing with its implementation into English language teaching in Indonesia still needs more practice. This design was necessary to be duplicated by the instructors who wished to employ the PBL approach in their classroom activities. Therefore, this research aimed to investigate the design in enacting the PBL approach performed by the English lecturers, which becomes the novelty of this present research. The research question is: How do the lecturers design PBL instruction in English language classrooms?

## **Method**

The researcher employed a classroom-based study with a participatory observation technique. Following this research design, Kral (2014) highlighted that both parties of the researcher and participants become co-investigators in a participatory qualitative method. The instruments used were field notes and in-depth interview protocol (Creswell & Creswell, 2018). The research participants were three English lecturers in a State Islamic University in Banjarmasin, South Kalimantan. These lecturers taught in three different majors and have gotten much experience teaching English using the PBL approach in years. It became the researcher's reason to ask for their consent as the research participants.

The thematic analysis (Braun & Clarke, 2012) was employed to analyze participants' responses during the online interview sessions. The interview was an in-depth interview session using an interview protocol and possible probes. The researcher also observed their attitude on classroom interaction. The document analysis was also undertaken to support the findings. After transcribing the interview and analyzing the field notes, the researcher wrote the notes verbatim based on the participants' responses. Member checking was also administered to gain the trustworthiness of the data. The researcher then modified the initial responses accordingly without changing their essential meanings as it would be helpful to jot down the themes or categories.

## Findings

The finding in this research covers the ways the lecturers construct the enactment of PBL into classroom situations. It was further used to draw the design these lecturers used to teach using PBL itself. The way the lecturers implemented PBL in their virtual classrooms starts with designing the PBL instruction itself. This theme was elaborated into four sub-themes: (a) PBL integration in EIS syllabus, (b) PBL design and implementation, (c) PBL objective and assessment, and (d) digital technology integration. The researcher portrayed the themes and sub-themes of PBL design found in this research through the following figure.

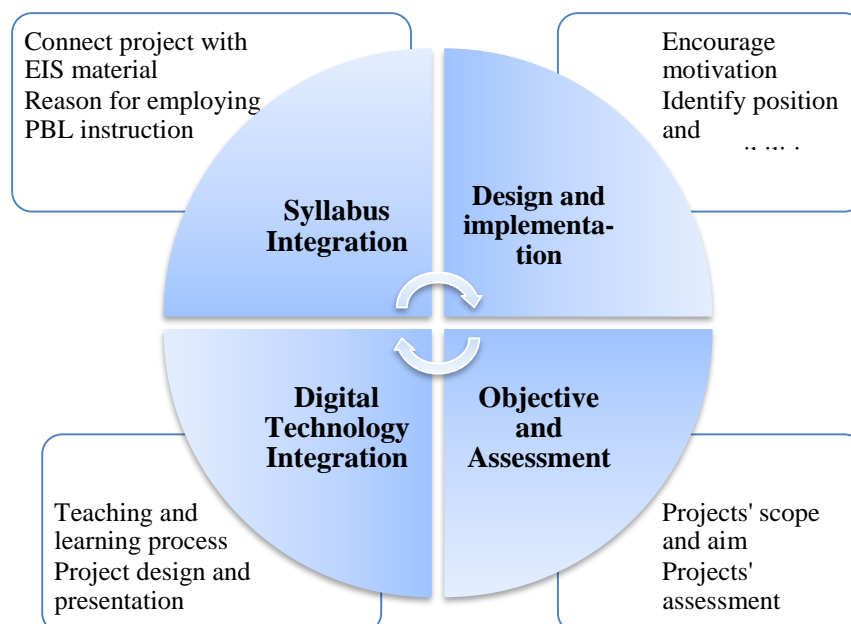


Figure 1. PBL Design

### 1. PBL Integration in EIS Syllabus

*Make a connection between project and EIS material*

The data from the in-depth interview with the lecturers indicated that they regularly scheduled the project assignments, and it was written on the course syllabus. The project works were usually assigned prior to the midterm test and one week before the final test of the course. Lecturer A, for example, asserted that:

“In a semester mostly two for the mid-test and final test but they are some also it is increased significantly in this pandemic hehe you know that right?” (A, script 1, line 41, interview data).

The project works were stated clearly in the syllabus of the course. The syllabus is enclosed in the appendix. The topic of the project works was based on the learning material of the syllabus. Lecturer B asked her students to create a video presentation dealing with Islam and its history since it was one topic in the course syllabus. She commented:

“The project is related to the learning material in Language Development Unit.” (B, script 2, line 11, interview data).

Dealing with the project work topic, Lecturer B confirmed that the students were given chances to change their issues prior to the submission deadline. Lecturer B confirmed:

“I give the freedom for my students to change the topic if they felt it difficult to complete. I do not extend the deadline. They must handle the responsibility themselves.” (B, script 2, line 16, interview data)

Next, from the in-depth interview, the researcher noted that Lecturer A assigned a video presentation under the topic “the Prophet.” The students were free to choose from twenty-five famous prophets in Islam literature. This topic was mentioned in this class’s syllabus. The lecturers have encouraged their students to select the topics of project work freely. The types of the project work were also different each year. It was aimed to boost the students’ creativity in exploring new issues. This finding has revealed that the project assignments were closely related to the learning materials of the course.

### ***State reason for employing PBL instruction***

The interview data highlighted that all lecturer-participants had reasons for giving the project work assigned to the students. Lecturers A and B asserted:

“The reason is that I want them to know more about what they are going to do (A, script 1, line 31, interview data)

“I have a specific purpose in giving the project assignment to my students; to make them understand the learning material clearly and able to develop the material themselves” (B, script 2, line 30, interview data)

Lecturer C has focused her purpose in implementing PBL in students’ speaking skill development. She mentioned:

“My specific reason for implementing PBL is to improve students’ English skills, especially speaking skills. By implementing this PBL, students can have more practice to speak English in their daily life. (C, script 3, line 9, interview data)

The above statements reflected that the lecturers were aware of their purpose in implementing PBL instruction in their classes.

## **2. PBL Design and Implementation**

### ***Encourage students’ motivation***

The three lecturers emphasized that they boosted the students’ motivation in various creative ways. In classroom observation, lecturer A showed an exciting sample of previous project work. In the interview session, lecturer B pointed out the benefit of accomplishing the project works to the students’ soft skill development.

“I notified the students that doing the project work will make them close to each other and build collaborative skills.” (B, script 2, line 22, interview data)

The students are highly motivated by the use of the newest digital technology. For this reason, lecturer A invited the students to employ any digital platforms based on the students’ preferences.

“They may use Instagram, YouTube, Facebook, or any other social media to upload their project work. I want to make them proud of their work and motivate them to do more.” (A, script 1, line 109, interview data)

### ***Identify the group member’s position and responsibility***

Lecturers A and B chose the group members while lecturer C let the students decide their own group members. Nevertheless, the three lecturers demonstrated the same characteristics that directly defined the role and responsibilities of each member of the group. It is administered to create harmony in each group and create good project work.

“I started with group formation and let each member understand their position in completing the task.” (C, script 3, line 20, interview data)

“I invite the students to choose the leader of the group soon after they form the group. It is advantageous to decide their roles.” (A, script 1, line 149, interview data)

Lecturer B highlighted that although she decided the formation of the group member, the team leader was chosen personally by the members. The members were also asked to define their own roles and responsibility.

“I encourage them to choose their own team leader and discuss their position and each member responsibility in doing the project.” (B, script 2, line 4, interview data)

## **3. PBL Objective and Assessment**

### ***Establish the projects’ scope and aim***

In implementing the PBL instruction, the lecturers declared the scope and aim of the projects being assigned. It was aimed to avoid misunderstanding among each member of the group. The objective of the project works was usually related to the lesson objectives. Lecturer C attested that:

“I design the project based on the teaching objectives in the syllabus. I explain it to my students” (C, script 3, line 51, interview data)

The students needed to know the scope and aim of their project assignment to develop their awareness of its benefits. In the online classroom observation, Lecturer B also clearly mentioned the scope of the projects and the students must cope with them. Knowing the projects’ aim was beneficial to maintain the students’ focus and keep their project completion on the right track.

### ***Establish the projects’ assessment system***

Based on the in-depth interview and online classroom observation result, the researcher noted that all lecturers clearly mentioned the assessment system in evaluating the project work. Lecturer A follows the speaking rubric given by the department, and he gives a score of the students’ project work based on their individual performance. He pointed out:

“For the students’ project work, I evaluate their performance individually on the final presentation stage.” (A, script 1, line 200, interview data)

He also added that although the project works were in groups or pairs, each group member would give the score individually. It was so since the students’ competencies were different from one student to another.

Lecturer B pinpointed that she has given a clear, detailed explanation dealing with the assessment system of the project work so that the students have a clear goal of the expected result. Lecturer C emphasized that it was necessary to inform her students of the evaluation system of the project-based implementation, and the students' high involvement in project completion would also be another attribute of her assessment system. She highlighted: "I assess the students started from the pre, while to the post-project activities. For those who are actively involved in the project completion, I will give a higher score." (C, script 3, line 60, interview data).

#### **4. Digital Technology Integration**

##### ***Integrate technology in the teaching and learning process***

The data from online classroom observation of the teaching and learning process of PBL instruction have shown that the lecturers integrated technology in the whole process of learning. This PBL instruction was conducted in the online setting; therefore, digital technology played a vital role. The digital technology integration was performed in synchronous and asynchronous settings through various digital platforms. The most common application was the WhatsApp group, as pinpointed by lecturer B:

"I create different WhatsApp groups for different classes. I choose WhatsApp because the students have already familiar with it." (B, script 2, line 47, interview data)

Lecturer C employed google classroom to communicate in asynchronous mode with her students while she preferred google meet to establish online meetings. She mentioned: "I prefer google meet rather than zoom since it is cheaper and accessible for the students. The network is also more stable when I use google meet." (C, script 3, line 68, interview data)

Lecturer A made use of Instagram social media a lot. He demanded the students to have an Instagram account to upload their work through this platform. He argued that most students have already had an Instagram account, so he chose to use this platform for the asynchronous mode. Instead of WhatsApp, he also employed Hangouts to maintain communication with his students. He also regularly conducted online meetings via google meet every week to check his students' understanding of the lesson.

##### ***Integrate technology in project design and presentation***

Regarding the projects, the students were mainly assigned to create digital video presentations, write Instagram stories, post the project on their YouTube channels, and draw online posters. As lecturer A and C underlined that:

"I asked the students to write a story in their Instagram and capture their work. Then they upload the captured photo in our google classroom." (A, script 1, line 91, interview data)  
 "Most of the students have a YouTube account. Some of them even being active YouTubers in their YouTube channels. So I use this platform to do online project work." (C, script 3, line 24, interview data)

The lecturers assigned the students to upload the project work on YouTube so that it would keep the artifacts for years. Many people would be able to access the project works, and the students would build their self-esteem based on the compliment given. Lecturers A and C pointed out that:

"I asked the students to upload their digital video about Prophet in YouTube, and they may choose whether it is open shared access or not." (A, script 1, line 114, interview data)  
 "By uploading their work in YouTube, they don't have to worry just in case it is deleted in their computers. They may download it again from their YouTube channel." (C, script 3, line 76, interview data)

In implementing PBL, the lecturers allowed the students to freely choose their favorable video editing applications, the platform to discuss their work, and other digital technology such as podcast voice recorder, online poster drawing, and many more. The students were encouraged to boost their creativity and push their limits. The students were asked to upload their final product presentation on YouTube and share the Google classroom platform link. In addition, the integration of digital technology here has created differences between online and offline PBL instruction implementation.

### **Discussion**

The findings revealed that the lecturers have already integrated the PBL instruction into the EIS syllabus. They did it on purpose since they believed that PBL might enhance students' self-directed learning. It was consistent with the features of PBL proposed by Larmer and Mergendoller (2010) and Simpson (2011) that PBL served the students to do self-direction in planning, carrying out, and presenting their project works. The online classroom observation showed that the lecturers had informed the students in the first meeting that they would have at least two project assignments in one semester, which has been specified in the course outline. By informing this in advance, the lecturers expected their students to get actively involved in completing their project. They mainly based the topics of the project on the Islamic topics related to EIS learning materials and followed the guidance textbook accordingly. In the findings, it was reflected when the observed students were free to select their favorable subtopics.

Compared with the offline PBL that usually has four projects in an active semester, the lecturers have limited the number of project works into one to two enormous projects in one single semester in this virtual PBL implementation. They usually assigned the project works prior to the midterm test and one week before the final test of the course. They assumed that too many projects would pressure the students and create anxiety in completing the projects. This situation aligned with Amisah's (2019) research findings that too many project assignments in the online PBL would exhaust the students. It was because the students could not meet their group members too often due to the limited geographic distances. The discussion of the projects was conducted online, either in synchronous or asynchronous modes, which sometimes burdened the students with unstable network connections. Therefore, two to three projects would be satisfied in this PBL implementation.

One lecturer highlighted that PBL could make the students understand the learning material easily, while other lecturers acknowledged that PBL might improve the students' speaking skills. This fact was in accordance with the research result by Khoiriyah and Setyaningrum (2015), who studied the effectiveness of implementing PBL to teach speaking skills in their class. The result showed that PBL had given lots of benefits to boost the students' speaking skills, significantly when the instructors could shift from the traditional teacher-centered to student-centered learning process.

Implementing PBL instruction has boosted not only the students' motivation but also the lecturers' curiosity accordingly. The lecturers were curious whether the PBL still has positive efficacy when implemented in the virtual learning environment. They would like to know whether the enactment of PBL may increase the students' achievement or not. In this research, the findings collected from participants' interviews and questionnaires indicated that the students showed positive marks after engaging with PBL. It further connected with the lecturers' effort to encourage the students' motivation to implement PBL in their class. They have designed a lesson that successfully attracted the students' active involvement. This was in line with Astawa, Artini, & Nitiasih (2017) that a good PBL design and implementation might promote the students' motivation and improve their communicative skills. In addition, findings revealed that the students-participants in this present research highlighted that they

have actively taken part in the online discussion and asserted that the discussion conducted in online form had reduced their anxiety to speak.

The result of online classroom observation showed that the students were attracted to the digital-based project works. The students were highly motivated by the use of the newest digital technology. For this reason, the lecturers invited the students to employ any digital platforms based on the students' preferences. Using technology in completing project works has been proved by Smeda, Dakich, & Sharda (2014) and Lestariyana and Widodo (2018) when they assigned digital storytelling project works to their students. The students were excited with the use of digital tools rather than the conventional project with paper works. The majority of the students already had Instagram, YouTube, Twitter, and Facebook accounts; therefore, they were interested in uploading their work on these platforms.

One essential characteristic revealed in the data collection and analysis was that the lecturers managed the PBL instruction by identifying students' positions and responsibilities in accomplishing the project works. It aimed to help the students construct their online project works and make comprehension easier for them. Chandrasekaran, Stojcevksi, Littlefair & Joordens (2012) pointed out that role identification may help students perform successful collaborative work in learning through projects. By dividing the responsibilities at the beginning of the PBL implementation process, each group member would understand that they need to work together and contribute significant effort in doing the project work. Moreover, the in-depth interview findings revealed that the lecturers' purpose in identifying each member's position was to create harmony in each group and produce good project work as well.

Having the students understand what they were going to do during the PBL instruction was essential in managing PBL in this setting. The students needed to know the purpose of completing the project and the benefits they would get. The three lecturer-participants noted that they had explained the aim clearly to their students at the beginning of the PBL stage to build their awareness of project advantages, which was also revealed in the online observation data collection. The students would engage well in the activities and gather the relevant information based on the PBL objectives previously explained (Starobin et al., 2014).

Establishing a comprehensive assessment system was also one attribute identified in this present research. They discussed the assessment rubric at the beginning of PBL implementation steps. The lecturers let the students understand their expectations and encourage the students to go beyond their limits. In assessing the students' project work, the lecturers focused on the individual performance in completing the task. One lecturer also addressed that the students' active involvement during the PBL enactment would be critical in grading their project work. This finding was congruent with Romeu Fontanillas, Romero Carbonell & Guitert Catusus (2016), which studied the e-assessment process's impact on the online learners in Spain. They implemented PBL and the e-assessment technique and found out that it was easier to grade the students using two dimensions of assessment; process monitoring and final outcome assessment. In their study, the students were assessed at the end of each stage of the project enactment and had shown a high level of satisfaction with the process and activities of e-assessment.

The technology integration in the teaching and learning process would be inevitable since the implementation of PBL in this present research was conducted in the online setting. They frequently used Google Meet and Zoom meetings to carry out the PBL instruction in synchronous modes. Meanwhile, they employed the most familiar WhatsApp application and Google Classroom as the asynchronous modes. The lecturers created different WhatsApp and Google Classroom classes to communicate with the students at the very first meeting. Moreover, one of the observed lecturers also used the Hangouts application as a variation of



communication platform. The findings revealed the lecturers asked the students to submit their final product at Instagram, Google Classroom, and YouTube media. The students were interested in uploading their artifacts on this digital social media since this next generation was very familiar with digital technology. Alwehaibi (2015) had managed experimental research to study the impact of using YouTube in an EFL classroom in a Saudi Arabia college. The findings indicated that integrating YouTube into EFL teaching has gained satisfying students' outcomes. Therefore, YouTube was recommended as an effective instructional digital tool in EFL classes.

Integrating digital technology into the teaching and learning process was not a relatively recent issue in PBL instruction (De La Paz & Hernández-Ramos (2013) and Alexander et al. (2014)). Similar to the findings of this research, those studies pointed out to ensure the lecturers' and students' readiness of integrating digital technology as the focal point to start with. Otherwise, the integration would create a damage loss.

## Conclusion

It is interesting that these lecturers-participants have shared mostly similar features in enacting PBL. The PBL design is focused on syllabus integration, design and implementation, objective and assessment, and digital technology integration. Project work in PBL will gain its highest benefit when the lecturers and students work together to complete the project. The lecturer will be the one who guides the students as well as motivates them to learn autonomously. Students typically benefit from the project management method in which they review and change their work based on the lecturer's and peers' feedback. The lecturers may also encourage the students to present the final product to parents and community members to a general audience. It will support them for their hard work and be proud of what they have done.

Nevertheless, this research result is limited in terms of the impact of implementing the design itself. Therefore, future researchers are invited to continue this study to investigate its impact and efficacy. Finally, it is expected that this practical design might contribute to PBL instruction in English language classroom situations.

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