

Project-Based Learning in Teaching English for Business in a Blue Economy Perspective

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Abstract: English for business is part of ESP and provides learning trends by elaborating blue economy to enrich knowledge and practice. This study aims to investigate the effectiveness and application of project-based learning in improving students' language skills related to English for business from a blue economy perspective. This is a qualitative study in which a semi-structured observation guide and interview are the data collection method. Semi-structured observation guide is used to find out the application of project-based learning through the teaching activities and students' papers, meanwhile, the interview is conducted to know the students' understanding of business knowledge, and their language mastery. There are thirty-five students in English for business the participants. The results show that students improve their knowledge not only in English skills but also in business-related to blue economy perspective. Students can write business plans to provide the solution for developing small and medium enterprises for the community in the coastal area. Therefore, the language skills in terms of grammar and vocabulary are enhanced through writing. The study provides a recommendation that field study should be given for the students to know the real-world activity of businesses dealing with the blue economy and to enhance students' practice of business writing.

Keywords: Writing; English for business; blue economy; project-based learning

INTRODUCTION

Project-based learning is an educational strategy that allows students to gain information and skills by completing engaging projects that are based on real-world difficulties and issues [1] [2]. Its goal is to assist students in acquiring the requisite skills [3]. Therefore, PBL promotes higher comprehension and retention of topic knowledge. Students are more capable of applying what they have learned to new situations. There are some skills that students can obtain. Students learn how to take initiative, work responsibly, solve issues, engage in teams, and express ideas, all of which are vital abilities in today's industry and life [4]. Project-based learning combines material mastery, meaningful activity, and personal connection to generate powerful learning experiences that benefit students' academic performance as well as their personal development. Project-based learning has the potential to change students' lives, especially those who are the most disadvantaged in terms of access to education [5]. We need students who are ready, willing, and able to face the difficulties of

their life and the world they will inherit now more than ever, and Project-based learning is the best way to prepare them (5).

Because project-based learning is oriented on the activities of learners during a learning process that will generate a product after the lesson, it is a learning model that can be correctly utilized in the learning process. Based on the presentation, it is obvious that the project-based learning model is a learning model that is acceptable for use in the learning process since it highlights students' activities while allowing them to reach their full potential. Teachers' role is to act as a facilitator and offer direction and aid to pupils who are having trouble. Learning to know, learning to do, learning to live together, and learning to be are four pillars that have emerged as a result of the application of the project-based learning approach [6]. Concerning students' projects in learning English for business, Business English learning is adjusted to the vision and mission of the agency, namely maritime educators, where learning is adjusted to the direction of the Blue Economy concept, and teaching is linked to marine science and technology [7]. The concept of the blue economy is to maximize water resources which aim to increase economic growth through various innovative and creative activities [8].

Oceans are becoming increasingly important in facilitating international trade by connecting vendors and purchasers [9] [10]. As the interaction between land and water increases in its function and importance, regulatory and economic attention is being paid to the behavior patterns of such connecting facilitators on the oceans. Against this backdrop, the notion of the "Blue Economy" was born [11]. There are three main activities in the textbook, namely, students can understand material related to business English based on blue economy and critical thinking, and be able to practice this understanding in real work lectures. Providing project-based learning in English for business is very important to enhance the students' skills as problem solvers because the business practice is related to the participation of the community in giving solutions from the blue economy perspective [10]. The problem in today's higher education is growing students' critical thinking to be ready for the world of work. This is in line with the findings of other studies, namely that students do not have critical thinking to understand problems, evaluate, and solve them critically [12]. The ocean economy is restricted to the use of ocean resources and is solely aimed to enhance the seas' economic system [13]. The blue economy isn't just concerned with the ocean economy as a source of economic growth. It emphasizes the need for healthy seas for economic progress. As a result, the blue economy incorporates both the ecological and economic components of the ocean [11] [14].

Teaching business English writing should include critical thinking and its development for the student's future career. This is a general truth that making a good decision is a common activity, so critical thinking is a valuable skill to be enhanced in the business curriculum. It is widely known that writing is associated with the production of critical thought. However, it has lack further research related to business problems [15] [12] [16]. For this reason, project-based learning is applied to optimize the knowledge, experiences, and practice of business writing and critical thinking.

This learning method assists students to solve the problem in the academic context [17]. In this case, business English writing provides practice in using critical ideas for the solution. A study on the correlation between critical thinking and writing has revealed that students develop the organization of writing in logical

thinking [18]. It is also proven that critical thinking improves the coherence of sentences in writing [19]. Above all, business English writing is taught through problem-based learning to optimize critical thinking. The application of project-based learning suggests the engagement of real-life situations, such as social and economic problems, and community situations to improve understanding and language mastery [20] [21]. In line with this, it is proven that project-based learning helps students to be critical thinkers and problem solvers [22] [23] [24].

This study aims to analyze the application of project-based learning in teaching English for business from a blue economy perspective. The students are given a project related to a business problem in marine local products. In this case, students observe the business process in certain small and medium enterprises in Kalanganyar sub-district in East Java. They will observe the problems, marketing, product promotion, and the prospect. The results of this observation will be used to make a business proposal that contains the solution to overcome the problems. Business administration students are encouraged to write this project in English to improve not only their knowledge of business but also their English skills. Therefore, the study has two research questions, namely (1) How is the application of project-based learning in teaching English for business from a blue economy perspective? (2). What is the effect of writing the business proposal in developing students' language skills?

Method

This study applies a qualitative method using data collection techniques in the form of a semi-structured observation guide and interviews. The subjects of the research are business administration students in English for a business course at Hang Tuah University. Thirty-five students conduct the project in writing a business proposal. Semi-structured observation guide is used to analyze the teaching method used in the class and observe the detailed activity for findings. Furthermore, the interview is given to the students to find out the students' perception of their language mastery, and business knowledge from a blue economy perspective. Finally, the data collection is analyzed to know the application of project-based learning and the effect of writing the business proposal in developing language skills.

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

Semi-structured observation guide is used to know the application of project-based learning in teaching English for business from a blue economy perspective. Observations were carried out 16 times face-to-face in class to know the teaching strategies of lecturers and the application of business English teaching based on the blue economy.

Table 1. Semi-structured observation

No	Teaching strategy	The applica- tion
1	Explaining an example of a Blue Economy based business	√
2	Using reading, and practicing business English vocabulary based on blue economy	√
3	Explain critical thinking	-
4	Explain examples of English sentences that contain critical thinking	-
5	Explaining examples of business English sentences based on the blue economy (grammar mastery)	√
6	Explaining examples of writing business proposals based on blue economy and critical thinking in English.	√
7	Explain the activities that students do during real-work lectures	√
8	Giving real work assignments	√
9	Giving assignments to make business proposals based on blue economy and critical thinking in English adapted to real work	√
10	Students present the results of business proposals in English	√
11	Lecturer gives evaluation	√

In the

semi-

structured observation guide, it is also given the analysis of the teaching method used by the lecturer in explaining project-based learning in the form of writing a business proposal that includes blue economy perspectives and critical thinking. The result indicates that the lecturer gives real-world examples and explanations related to a business topic. Therefore, students can write business proposals because they know what to do, what to write, and how to put their ideas into writing a business proposal. Furthermore, the form of evaluation is in the form of content analysis in which the lecturer only corrects the practice of business ideas and the creativity of students' writing.

The function of explaining the blue economy perspective in English business is also important to make the students understand the business related to natural resources. It is beneficial if the students are trained to use critical thinking in their writing, however, the lecturer doesn't focus more on critical thinking because the level of students' fluency in writing a business proposal is the focus of the learning target so that they will know how to make the solution of a certain problem related to business in blue economy perspective.

The result of the teaching application indicates that providing knowledge in English for business using the blue-economy perspective is valuable for students to develop ideas in business. Furthermore, project-based learning is a suitable task for the students as it provides real-world cases to be solved. The students' writing in the business proposal shows the quality of writing in terms of coherence that students can write their ideas in chronological order from stating the problem, providing analysis, and giving solutions. In addition, the writing also indicates that students understand the blue economy perspective which can be seen from the way they

preserve the natural resources, recycle the products, and create the solution. The ability of English skills is also improved. Students can write business plans for small and medium enterprises in the coastal area. Therefore, grammar and vocabulary skills are enhanced through writing. It can be seen from the result of the interview below.

This study uses an interview to gather more in-depth answers from the students [25]. The aim is to know the students' perception of their language mastery in terms of grammar and vocabulary.

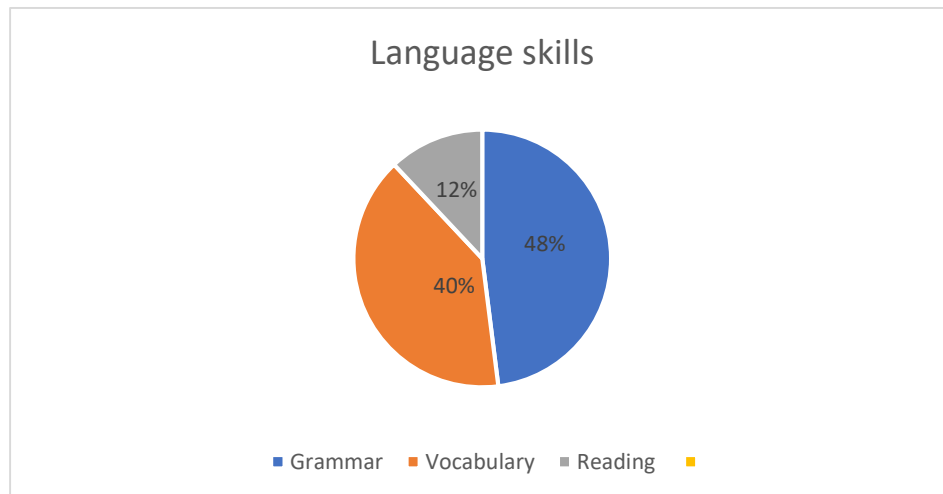


Figure 1. The students' language mastery

Figure 1 illustrates the percentage of students' perceptions of their language skills. It is important to know their opinion in general because they appreciate what the teaching and learning have targeted for writing improvement [26] [27]. They mention about three aspects, namely grammar, vocabulary, and reading. Overall, it can be seen that 48% of students develop their skills in constructing sentences using appropriate tenses. 40% of students use vocabulary related to business and blue economy perspectives. Furthermore, 12% of students state that their reading mastery is improved. It indicates that the use of project-based learning gives impacts students' English skills, especially grammar and vocabulary acquisition. The findings are in line with previous studies that real-world materials set in project-based learning motivate the students to use ideas in writing [28] [29].

CONCLUSION

The educational system in the 21st century is suggested to reflect curriculum quality to obtain practical learning outcomes. Technology, information, and innovation are essential for the student's future success. In line with this, providing solutions in project-based learning is required to address problems as quickly and effectively as feasible in our fast-growing economy. In a business context, providing solutions in project-based learning is an important skill to have for the workforce, to make them better at their jobs, and to apply logical thinking as it is needed for their future career. In the Indonesian context, embedding English skills and blue economy perspectives are suggested in business writing [30]. In line with this, the students' perception also

indicates that they have an improvement in using ideas in business knowledge and logical thinking. Project-based learning is a meaningful task for the students to give business English materials for triggering their arguments in business cases and setting. In brief, the study suggests the use of real-world context as authentic material in teaching and learning business English. Furthermore, the study provides a recommendation that field study should be given for the students to know the real-world activity of businesses dealing with the blue economy.

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