

Making Use of Shape Poem Technique in Project-based Learning for Teaching Writing

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Abstract

In English learning, students often struggle to understand the material, especially in mastering writing skills, one of the most difficult skills to be mastered. A well-chosen teaching technique and method will significantly impact students' learning outcomes. The current study aimed to investigate the effect of the application of the shape poem technique combined with the project-based learning on students' writing skills. This study employs a quantitative research approach using a pre-experimental design, one group pre-test post-test. This study involved 38 students of at SMPN 1 Singaraja as a sample. To conduct the study, tests were given before and after the treatment. The findings demonstrated that implementation of the shape poem technique led to substantial enhancements in students' writing skills, as evident from the pre-test and post-test scores. The test result shown that students' gain better outcomes in post-test which after the treatment was given. It is also supported by the t-test result that shown the significant level was below the alpha level ($\alpha = 0.05$), indicated the alternative hypothesis was accepted, that there is a significant effect on 7th grade students' writing skills. The combination of shape poem technique and project-based learning might provide a fresh viewpoint for teachers in teaching writing.

Keywords: Project-based Learning; Shape Poem; Teaching Writing

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INTRODUCTION

In the digital age, proficiency in writing stands as a crucial English skill that students ought to master. Through adept writing skills, students can effectively communicate and articulate their opinions or ideas from diverse perspectives. Many students encounter challenges in the domain of writing, specifically within the context of English, where the act of writing is commonly perceived as intricate and demanding by a majority of students (Agustiana, 2017). In the context of English learning, students often experience feelings of nervousness or boredom due to the rigid learning environment, leading to a lack of motivation and comprehension of the material. Dişlen (2013) contends that students exhibit lower

motivation and achieve poor academic performance when lessons are tedious and tasks are complex without detailed explanations from the teacher. According to [Rohman et al., \(2020\)](#), the effectiveness and efficiency of the material in learning process encourage teachers to used instructional models and innovative media that suitable. A well-chosen teaching method or medium will significantly impact students' learning outcomes. A meaningful and enjoyable learning experience will help students become more productive while also increasing their own motivation to learn. As a result, teachers must always be innovative and creative in selecting the instructional model that will be used with their students.

In the realm of language education, [Brown \(2007\)](#) emphasizes that writing is a dynamic process encompassing both the journey of generating ideas and the end product presented to readers. [Harmer \(2007\)](#) assert that writing is a means of discovering and expressing ideas, feelings, and opinions, serving as a tool for effective communication. Teaching writing necessitates innovative methods to engage students and enhance their skills. Despite the benefits, EFL students encounter challenges in writing, with motivation being a prominent issue. Lack of motivation hinders idea exploration, causing delays in completing tasks. The second challenge involves difficulty in finding suitable words or vocabulary to articulate thoughts during the writing process ([Culham, 2005](#)). Similarly, [Persadha \(2016\)](#) and [Sepang et al., \(2022\)](#) noted that students often struggle with grammar, content, vocabulary, organization, and the mechanics of writing. [Richards and Renandya \(2002\)](#) discovered that these difficulties are not only in generating and organizing ideas but also in translating them into coherent text. [Ariyanti \(2016\)](#) suggested that the problem in mastering writing skills stems from students' personalities or learning habits, including their level of seriousness and motivation. Furthermore, traditional approaches, such as teacher-centered instruction and rote memorization of grammar rules, may not align with students' learning preferences ([Tomo et al., 2022](#)). Students require cooperative learning strategies to enhance their writing performance ([Reid & Lienemann, 2013](#)).

An innovative teaching method, project-based learning (PjBL), stands out as a promising solution. Rooted in constructivist principles, PjBL incorporates collaborative learning, real-world contexts, and a focus on discovery ([Duffy & Cunningham, 1996](#)). Project-based learning is a student-centered approach that focuses on authentic and meaningful learning experiences through projects. It actively engages students in the teaching and learning process, allowing them to solve real problem ([Guo et al., 2020](#)). This method fosters creativity, critical thinking, and collaboration through group discussions aimed at producing tangible products. As a result, students can apply classroom learning to real-world situations. [Akinoglu \(2008\)](#) and [Susanti et al., \(2020\)](#) highlight PjBL's ability to enhance motivation, deepen subject understanding, and improve writing skills. The collaborative nature of PjBL reflects the principles of effective teaching, encouraging students to learn from and support each other. Moreover, PjBL extends beyond content delivery, emphasizing holistic skill development ([Grant & Branch, 2005; Ravitz, 2008](#)). According to [Baş \(2011\)](#), project-Based Learning has the ability to provide an interesting and meaningful learning experience for students. The integration of reading and writing within a meaningful context ensures that students continually practice and refine their writing abilities, aligning with the comprehensive approach to

language learning. Incorporating a creative element such as a shape poem within the teaching methodology adds an extra layer of engagement. Shape poems, where the arrangement of words on the page forms a visual representation of the poem's subject, can captivate students' interest and stimulate their creativity (Schoone, 2021). This method not only enhances writing skills but also encourages a unique form of expression.

Project-based learning (PjBL) is presented as an instructional model to enhance students' interest in learning. This constructivist teaching strategy involves students working on projects over an extended period, encouraging exploration and problem-solving (Bakar et al., 2019). PjBL guides learners to engage with authentic problems and develop solutions, fostering language practice through group discussions and teamwork (Poonpon, 2017). The approach aims to make the learning process more meaningful and communication more purposeful. PjBL is associated with building 21st-century skills such as problem-solving, critical thinking, decision-making, teamwork, and communication. The real-world connection allows students to demonstrate practical knowledge (Rochmahwati, 2015). Kurniawati et al., (2019) have found that PjBL positively impacts students' English skills, improving communication, speaking ability, and overall performance. The method is seen as a platform for learning in authentic contexts, promoting character development and life skills values. Overall, PjBL is suggested as an effective way to enhance English language skills and student engagement.

Project-based learning (PjBL) is a learning model that makes the students to be the center of the learning process around real-world projects, aiming to provide authentic outcomes and experiences. The activities involved in PjBL include information gathering, problem-solving, discussions, and the creation or development of products aligned with the curriculum. The approach, as highlighted by Thi (2011) and Bakar et al. (2019), enhances the meaningfulness and purposefulness of learning by promoting creativity Thomas (2000) standards for successful project-based learning encompass the following: (1) prioritizing projects at the core of the curriculum, (2) directing projects toward questions or issues associated with fundamental concepts, (3) engaging students in constructivist inquiry, (4) emphasizing a significant degree of student-driven involvement in projects, and (5) integrating realistic or authentic materials instead of being overly academic.

Choosing an appropriate learning technique is crucial, and the Shape Poem Technique is proposed as beneficial when combined with project-based learning (PjBL). Shape poems, also known as concrete poems, utilize visual imagery to enhance the meaning and emotional impact of the poem. This technique encourages creativity and innovation in arranging words to form shapes, allowing students to practice vocabulary and effectively communicate their thoughts. This study emphasizes the significance of integrating PjBL and the Shape Poem Technique in English learning, highlighting their potential to foster 21st-century skills, create an engaging classroom environment, and enhance writing skills and creativity. A shape poem, also referred to as a concrete poem or visual poem, is a form of poetry where the arrangement of words on the page is just as crucial as the words themselves in conveying meaning. It falls under the category of literature that emphasizes imagination and creativity, allowing poets to express statements through visual presentation (Rainsford, 2014). The study underscores the

importance of integrating Project-based Learning (PjBL) and the Shape Poem Technique in English learning. This integration has the potential to enhance 21st-century skills, create an engaging classroom environment, and improve writing skills and creativity. One of the key advantages of this technique is its ability to stimulate creativity and imagination. "Shape poems are an effective approach to help students enhance their creative writing skills by enabling them to express their thoughts and ideas visually and aesthetically" (Schoone, 2021). Palupi (2006), in the article "Shape Poem: An Appealing Word and Form," suggests that shape poems are valuable as an alternative authentic material for EFL teachers to use in their classrooms. It is essential not only to explore both receptive (listening and reading) and productive (speaking and writing) skills but also to cater to students' needs in expressing their emotions.

In education, the shape poem technique is widely acknowledged as a valuable tool for teaching language to students. To effectively implement this technique, strategies are recommended, such as introducing the concept of shape poems to students with examples and characteristics, providing a variety of shapes for creative thinking, and stimulating imagination. Additionally, discussing the relationship between form and content, emphasizing how word placement and size contribute to meaning and visual interest, is considered an effective strategy during teaching activities. This research aims to investigate the impact of applying the Shape Poem Technique through PjBL on 7th-grade students' writing skills at SMPN 1 Singaraja.

Numerous studies have explored Project-based learning (Kurniawati et al., 2019; Sadrina et al., 2018; Poonpon, 2017; Bakar et al., 2019) and the Shape Poem technique (Palupi, 2006; Al-Husseini, 2018; Beloufa, 2021; Mertzani, 2020) independently, but the combination of using Project-based learning as the learning model along with the Shape Poem technique as the teaching technique is infrequently explored, especially among 7th-grade students at SMPN 1 Singaraja. Consequently, this research aims to examine the effect of applying the Shape Poem technique through Project-based learning on seven grade students' writing skills at SMPN 1 Singaraja.

METHOD

Design

In this study, the researchers used a quantitative research approach. Quantitative research is an approach to examining the relationship between variables (Creswell, 2018). The design used a pre-experimental one group pre-test post-test design. The pre-test serves to establish the baseline knowledge before applying any treatment to the study sample. In this context, it aims to assess the writing skills of 7th-grade students at SMP Negeri 1 Singaraja before they undergo the treatment involving the Shape Poem Technique through Project-based learning. The post-test, on the other hand, is administered after the sample has received the treatment. Both tests are utilized to gather information regarding the impact of implementing the Shape Poem Technique through Project-based learning on the 7th-grade students' writing skills.

Data Collection

The research sample included 38 students from the VII-A10 class at SMPN 1 Singaraja, selected based on the school meeting the specified research criteria—specifically, the use of

English only for a weekly subject rather than daily communication. Data collection involved both pre-test and post-test assessments, utilizing a writing skill test as the primary quantitative instrument. In this research, the utilization of essay writing aligns with [Brown's \(2013\)](#) proposal, which intended to assess the impact of the implemented technique and method that mentioned by [Savage and Mayer \(2005\)](#). An essay test served as the primary tool to assess students' writing skills, requiring them to produce a descriptive text. Pre-tests were conducted before the introduction of the Shape Poem Technique treatment, while post-tests followed the implementation of the treatment. The collected data underwent both inferential and descriptive analyses using SPSS version 26.

Data Analysis

Descriptive analysis involved examining frequency distribution, mean, standard deviation, and the range of scores obtained in the writing skill test. Inferential analysis, aimed at assessing the significant impact of implementing the Shape Poem Technique through Project-based learning on writing skills, utilized the paired t-test to compare means of the scores. The researchers used two hypotheses in this study:

H₀: There is no significant effect of using Shape Poem Technique through Project-based Learning on students' writing skills at SMPN 1 Singaraja.

H₁: There is a significant effect of using Shape Poem Technique through Project-based Learning on students' writing skills at SMPN 1 Singaraja.

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSIONS

Derived from the students' test results, the pre-test scores are presented in Table 1. Utilizing SPSS 26, the distribution analysis includes frequency, mean, standard deviation, variance, range, and the minimum and maximum scores for students' writing skills in both the pre-test and post-test.

Table 1. Students' Pretest and Posttest

	Pre-test	Post-test
Mean	72.24	79.63
Std. Deviation	6.688	6.253
Variance	44.726	39.104
Range	23.00	22.00
Minimum	60.00	69.00
Maximum	83.00	91.00

Table 1 presents the measurement of central tendency and dispersion of students' pre-test and post-test scores. The pre-test yielded a mean score of 72.24, ranging from 60 (minimum) to 83 (maximum). Conversely, the post-test exhibited a mean score of 79.63, with scores ranging from 69 (minimum) to 91 (maximum). The pre-test displayed a range of 23, while the post-test demonstrated a range of 22. Standard deviation values were 6.68 for the pre-test and 6.25 for the post-test. The pre-test variance was 44.726, and the post-test variance was 39.104. Upon analyzing the descriptive statistics of students' writing skills scores before and after the treatment involving the Shape Poem Technique through project-based learning, it can

be deduced that the treatment enhanced students' writing skills. However, to ascertain the significance of this improvement, a paired sample t-test was conducted. Before the t-test was conducted, the normality should be assessed first to make sure the data distribution is normal. The results of normality test is presented in Table 2.

Table 2. Normality Test

	Kolmogorov-Smirnov ^a		
	Statistic	df	Sig.
Pretest	.081	38	.200*
Posttest	.118	38	.200*

As illustrated in Table 2, the significance values for the data from students' scores in the pre-test were 0.188 and post-test were 0.147. The result also showed that the significance value was higher than 0.05 and the pre-test and post-test were in normal distribution. Hence, the data from both the pre-test and post-test were considered appropriate for examination using a paired t-test.

Table 3. Paired T-test

		Paired Differences							Sig. (2-tailed)
		Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean	95% Confidence Interval of the Difference		t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)
					Lower	Upper			
Pair 1	Pretest - Posttest	-7.3947	4.11023	.66677	-8.74574	-6.04374	-11.090	37	.000

Table 3 reveals that the two-tailed significance level, denoted as sig., is 0.000. This indicates that the observed significance level (sig., 2-tailed) is lower than the standard alpha level ($\alpha = 0.05$). Consequently, the null hypothesis (H_0) is rejected, and the alternative hypothesis (H_a) is accepted. In essence, it can be asserted that the application of the shape poem technique through project-based learning has a significant effect on the writing skills of seventh-grade students at SMPN 1 Singaraja.

Based on the analysis of both pre-test and post-test outcomes, as well as the results of the paired t-test, it is evident that the application of the Shape Poem Technique through Project-based Learning yielded positive effects on students' writing skills. The test results indicate a noteworthy increase in writing proficiency following the implementation of the Shape Poem Technique through project-based learning. This leads to the conclusion that the administered treatment had a discernible positive impact on students, as demonstrated by the significant improvement in their writing skills. The paired t-test further strengthens this assertion by demonstrating the statistical significance of the treatment's effectiveness. The acceptance of the alternative hypothesis affirms the presence of a substantial effect on students' writing skills through the utilization of the Shape Poem Technique within the framework of project-based learning.

Based on previous research from [Palupi \(2006\)](#) that stated “Shape poem will be very beneficial as the authentic material for EFL learners because it is not only significant to explore the receptive skill (listening and reading) and productive skills (speaking and writing) but also appealing to accommodate students/learners need to express their feeling. Align with the statement, the researcher discovered that students’ learning outcomes especially writing in 7th grade students at SMP Negeri 1 Singaraja, give a positive result after given the treatment of shape poem technique through project-based learning. Exposing students into a real problem has an effective impact on students’ process in language learning. Other research from [Beloufa \(2021\)](#) has also stated that the use of concrete poem has very positive response from the students which indicated by the increasing motivation and interest of the students in the learning process which shown by the higher participation in class. The researcher also discovered in 7 A-10 class that the use of shape poem has gain students’ interest because it is such a new experience for them to use shape poem in the learning process, the combination of collaborative and creative learning environment has led them to a better participation in group discussion and active answering questions that were asked.

The numerous benefits of shape poem technique integrated with project-based learning has also help students to become active in learning process. This is align with the statement of [Sadrina et al., \(2018\)](#) that in project-based learning students engage actively in the learning process through assigned projects that require investigation and completion. The researcher also discovered a better participation in class during group discussion when working collaboratively on project in creating shape poem. The participation in the form of brainstorm ideas, share perspectives, and collaborate on the construction of their poems is lead on students’ better understanding on the topic of the material. In accordance with [Kurniawati et al., \(2019\)](#) that mentioned by using project-based learning students become better in expressing their ideas including the improvement of their communication skills and proficiency in conveying ideas to others.

The effect of implementing Shape Poem Technique collaborated with Project-based learning in improving students' writing skills in junior high school has been demonstrated through the findings of this study. The combination of the Shape Poem Technique and Project-based Learning was very suitable for students at the junior high school level. Not only students can learn interactively, they also can learn collaboratively and creatively as in the implementation, the students were given a chance to discuss in groups for the project during the making of shape poem itself. It is supported by [Eliana et al. \(2016\)](#) who stated that project-based learning could produce better results by allowing students to participate actively in the learning process and produce something while collaborating with others. The occurrence of meaningful learning within the classroom is facilitated through collaborative efforts among students working together in groups to address assigned tasks. This aligns with the findings of a study by [Johnson et al. \(2017\)](#), indicating that students' engagement, the structures of their groups, and the organization of these groups significantly impact the extent and nature of deep learning. Moreover, the visualization of Shape Poem Technique also contributes to the enhancement of students’ writing skills. By representing ideas spatially in the form of shape poems, students are encouraged to think critically about the content they are conveying. This

creative element adds depth to their writing, fostering imaginative expression and artistic representation. This resonates with the research of Ritter et al., (2020), that emphasizing the positive impact of fostering creativity in education on cognitive development.

In summary, the implementation of the Shape Poem Technique through Project-based Learning not only enhances writing skills but also fosters interactive and collaborative learning environments, aligning with established research in educational pedagogy. The results underscore the potential of such an approach to cultivate a more engaged and effective learning atmosphere for junior high school students.

CONCLUSION

In conclusion, the study on "The Use of Shape Poem Technique through Project-Based Learning on Students' Writing Skills" provides compelling evidence of a significant positive impact on students' learning outcomes. The analysis of pre-test and post-test scores clearly indicates a notable improvement in students' writing proficiency when the shape poem technique is employed within a project-based learning framework. This research affirms the effectiveness of incorporating creative teaching methods, such as using shape poems, in language education. Not only does this approach increase student engagement, but it also leads to tangible improvements in their writing abilities. When combined with project-based learning, these positive effects are further heightened, fostering active student participation, collaborative learning experiences, and the creation of creative written works.

The implications of this study extend beyond the classroom. Educators and curriculum developers are encouraged to consider integrating similar techniques into language instruction to create a more dynamic and interactive learning environment. Moreover, the study supports a move towards incorporating project-based learning methodologies to enhance overall writing instruction effectiveness. For future research, scholars and educators could explore variations in instructional methods, assess long-term retention, and examine how well students can apply these skills in different writing contexts. Additionally, conducting comparative studies across diverse student populations or educational levels could provide valuable insights into the generalizability of these findings.

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