Project-based learning in English language teaching: a bibliometric exploration

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Abstract

This bibliometric study aims to analyze the trends and developments in PBL research within the field of ELT by examining scholarly publications from the past decade. Using data from prominent academic databases such as Sinta and Google Scholar, this study maps the evolution of PBL research, identifies key publications and authors, and highlights emerging research themes and methodologies. The analysis reveals a notable increase in the number of publications on PBL, with a significant surge in 2022. This rise is indicative of a growing interest in innovative teaching methods, potentially driven by the challenges and changes brought about by the COVID-19 pandemic. The study finds a predominant use of qualitative research methods, including observations and interviews, which offer in-depth insights into the practical application and impact of PBL. Research subjects primarily consist of students and teachers, though there is a limited focus on junior high school students, suggesting areas for future exploration. Data collection instruments employed across the studies include observations, questionnaires, interviews, and pre-tests/post-tests, reflecting a diverse methodological approach. The topics covered by the reviewed articles span various aspects of English language learning, such as English for Specific Purposes (ESP), metacognitive abilities, and spoken English. These findings underscore PBL's versatility and its potential to enhance specific language skills. In conclusion, the bibliometric analysis highlights the dynamic nature of PBL research in ELT, demonstrating its growing significance and the continued potential for refining educational practices through this innovative approach.

Keywords: Project-based learning, ELT

INTRODUCTION

In the context of English language teaching, Project-Based Learning (PBL) appears as a strong pedagogical approach focused on student-centered learning with pertinent real-world projects (Samarji, 2020; Zhao et al., 2023) This stands contrast to traditional language learning models that often emphasize memorization and passive knowledge acquisition(Aubrey, 2022; Hidayati et al., 2023; Wijayanti & Budi, 2023). PBL encourages critical reflection, teamwork, and the use of language in practical contexts all powerful avenues for extending linguistic competence (Alvionita et al., 2022; Mohamed, 2023). In this introduction, we investigate the development and importance of PBL in ELT to pave way for a profound bibliometric analysis of research trends and progress within this field.

The growing recognition of the importance of communicative competence and learner autonomy in ELT has stimulated interest in different teaching approaches, among them PBL. Rather than focusing purely on grammar or vocabulary, PBL combines language usage with problem-solving and project-management (Huang, 2021; Sholahuddin, 2023) skills. This model fits current educational paradigms that aim to get students ready for the real world through project-based learning while using language functionally and serving as a part of collaborative effort (Nukak et al., 2021; Nurjanah & Nurbatra, 2023). For this reason, the use of PBL not only sustains L2 language acquisition but also facilitates additional academic outcomes such as collaborative work and project implementation.

By quantifying research publications in this field, a bibliometric study of PBL studies on ELT is concerned with harvesting the proliferation of related exploratory evidence. This analysis aspires to provide a comprehensive snapshot of the ways in which PBL has been utilised and revised with ELT, via research mapping by key themes,and evaluation impact reports on seminal primary studies. The thematic approach facilitates the recognition of trends, methodologies and key literary contributions which trace back to how PBL practices developed into what we see in language teaching today.

PBL in ELT PBL covers a wide range of activities: designing, implementing and assessing projects (Samarji, 2020; Zhao et al., 2023). This research investigates the effects of PBL on students learning outcomes, student engagement and teacher practices frequently. Research could also embrace the oppor- tunities and difficulties of PBL, bringing valuable knowledge on its limits and problems.forRoot. The intention of this research study is to

identify the advancements in PBL and their consequences on current language teaching practices, by examining these elements systematically.

This study also aims to scrutinize the global consequences of PBL in ELT and its consistency with educational theories as well as integrate it into different pedagogical systems. As PBL grows in popularity, it is important to investigate its relationship with other pedagogical frameworks and how this framework can be adapted for different learning environments. This scrutiny will help unveil PBL as an agent of change in the formation of modern ELT practices and its response tuning to updates to language learners' needs. In particular, the bibliometric exploration of PBL in ELT will seek to offer a panoramic overview mapping both historical development and key research findings together with new trends all necessary preliminary for further studies along this line. This study, therefore, provides an overview of the advancement in PBL methodologies and their implications on language education to guide teachers/researchers/educational policymakers/practitioners towards effective practices for future directions of implementing project-based learning in English Language Education.

METHODS

The current research work presents the bibliometric investigation on Project-Based Learning (PBL) in English Language Teaching (ELT). Bibliometric analysis is an application of quantitative techniques to evaluate, and interpret academic publications which could provide evidence with respect to the growth rate in a field,directionality and impact as well development variation within a particular research domain [1]. Using bibliometric tools, the current study is designed to showcase the progress made in PBL research within ELT by identifying leading publications and authors as well as salient emerging themes of interest alongside applied methodologies.

A total of 270 literature was analysed from prominent academic data bases, i.e. Sinta and Google Schoolar. These were chosen based on comprehensive coverage of scholarly publications and citation metrics. This research chose to investigate literature published within the past 10 years, reflecting recent and significant changes in PBL found throughout ELT. To collect this data, we searched for journal articles, conference papers and academic books keywords like Project-Based Learning," "English Language Teaching" and "PBL methodology."

The key steps in the analysis process were as follows: First, we classified the profiled publications by publication year as well as other common bibliometric indicators authorship types, and citation count. Research productivity and impact were assessed using quantitative metrics (i.e., number of publications per year; references citations). Methods: Visualization tools, including VOSviewer and Bibliometrics, were employed to present research trends as visual graphs of the citation networks for full clustering maps on theme development.

The study touched upon thematic and methodological trends within PBL research in ELT by examining how different foci experienced notable increases or decreases within three years. This consisted of exploring mainstream PBL research regarding the nature of studies (project content, projects analog, and assessment) in practice which is identified by teaching practitioners. The results from this bibliometric study will be useful for researchers to understand the development of PBL methodologies and their influence on language teaching practice.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Results

Number of Publication

The number of article publications indicated how frequent the research was conducted in certain period. Alluding to the graph shown in Figure 1, the articles that Reviewed Project Based Learning in Teaching English could be found since 2017.
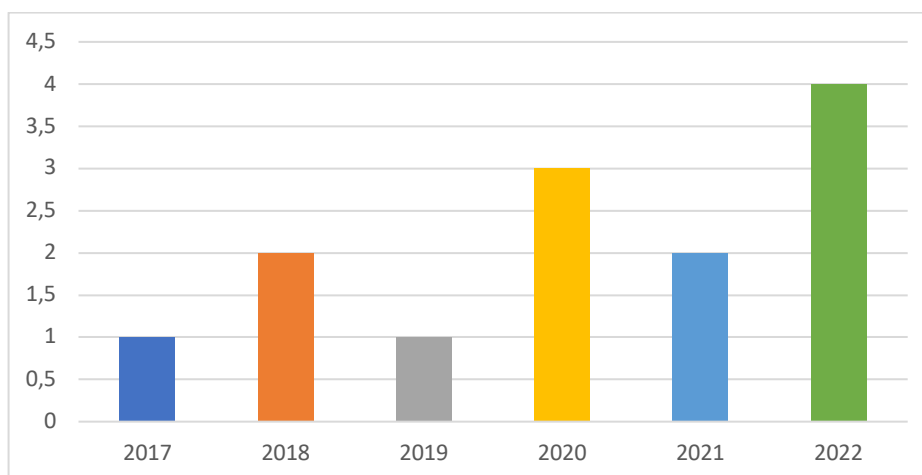

Based on the bar chart above, the articles obtained by the researcher show that in 2022 it has the highest presentation chart with 4 articles and in 2017 and 2019 only has 1 article. These 13 articles have become reference articles by authors who have gone through the stages of conformity and similarity to the title of the article that the researcher wants to examine.

PBL is defined as active student-centered teaching that emphasizes student autonomy, productive investigation, goal setting, cooperation, communication, and reflection in practical application, a research will influence educational practices because of various reasons, namely that: (1) its findings can be referred as credible information that can be implemented by teachers; (2) it can be a fundamental basis for educational decision making, in national, local, or specific institutions; and (3) its findings can affect teachers' ways of thinking. From the graph above, we can see that the most widely used articles as references in the preparation of this article are articles published in 2022. Meanwhile, the fewest or none at all, namely articles published in 2022.

Type of Research

Investigate Project-Based Learning (PBL) The higher number of qualitative researches than other types of research is in line with some previous studies reporting that the researchers preferred quantitative research design to conduct research in education. In addition, qualitative approach is considered relatively new for educational researches (Sharma, 2013). However, the trend of qualitative design has been shown to start increasing (Shakouri, 2014) and have targeted social researches, including some issues of education (Mohajan, 2018). Such a condition was closely interlinked to the advantage of qualitative approach to define a phenomenon in detailed and comprehensively. For that reason, the lack of qualitative research existence has been a good chance for further researchers to make use of qualitative design and focus their researches with title Project-Based Learning (PBL).
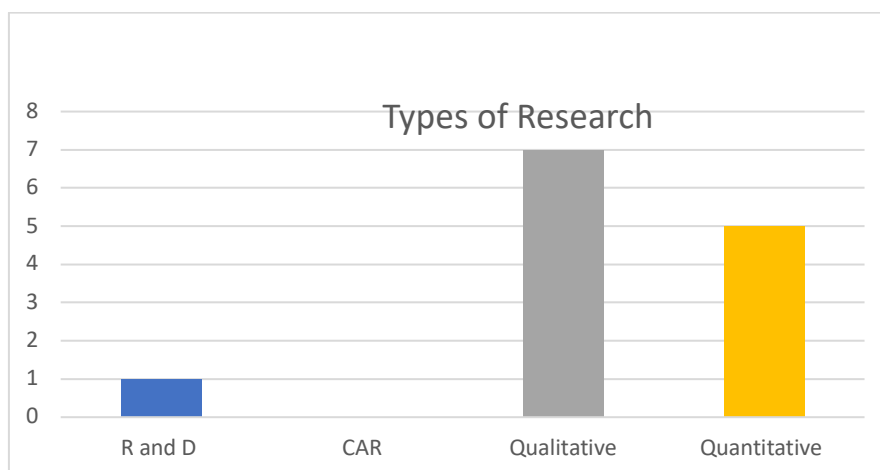
Of the 15 articles that we used in compiling this article, it can be seen that there were 11 articles that used qualitative research methods and there were 4 articles that used quantitative methods.

Research Subject

Article	Years	Participant
Development of Project-Based Learning Models for Teaching Accounting English in Higher Education	2020	Lecturers in English courses and lecturers in the accounting study program at the Faculty of Economics and Business at Malikussaleh University.
The Implementation of Project-based Learning Method in Teaching ESP (English for Specific Purposes): Case Study		The 8th semester students of English Language Education Department of Universitas PGRI Adi Buana Surabaya who took ESP program.
Comparison Between Cooperative Learning Methods And Problem Based Learning Using Personal Letter In Teaching Students' Ability In Writing At Sma Sebelas Maret Bandung		In this study, the writer decided to choose the eleventh graders of SMA Sebelas Maret, Bandung in the academic year of 2018/2019 as the population. They are three classes each class consists 30-32, so the total population is 92 students.
The Implementation of Project Based Learning Strategy in Teaching Spoken English		A teacher who taught English at the tenth grade of Futuhiyyah Senior high school in Mranggen
The Use Of Project Based Learning In Teaching English At Second Grade Of Smp Negeri 1 Barru	2021	All of the second grade students of SMP Negeri 1 Barru academic years 2019/2020. The sample of this research are VIII 1 and VIII 2 of SMP Negeri 1 Barru where each class consist of 20 students. Total the sample were 40 students.
Developing student's metacognitive ability in science through project-based learning with e-portfolio		Eighty-seven undergraduate students from three different classes belong to math, biology, and physic education study programs
E-STEM project-based learning in teaching science to increase ICT literacy and problem solving		Teacher and students of year VIII MTs N in Aceh Besar.
Teaching Project Based Learning in English for Specific Purposes	2022	Students and the English teachers on the departments in Faculty of Engineering, Faculty of Economic and Business, Faculty of Humanities, and Faculty of Mathematics and Science.
Project-Based Learning in Teaching English for Business in a Blue Economy Perspective		Thirty-five students business administration at Hang Tuah University
Preservice Teachers' Perception On The Implementation Of Online Project-Based Learning		The participants of this research were the 36 seventh-semester preservice teacher enrolled at Translation course at the English Education

Article	Year	Subject
The Use Of Project-Based Learning In Teaching Ccu (Cross Cultural Understanding) At The Sixth Semester Students Of English Education Department Of Purworejo Muhammadiyah University: A Classroom Observation	2019	Department of a University in Surakarta, Indonesia. The subject of this research is the sixth semester students of English education Department which take CCU class. There are 30 students in the class which are divided into 10 groups suited to the topic of CCU.
Applying Project Based Learning Strategy In Teaching Speaking At English Community Course Of American Corner, Pattimura University – Ambon	2017	There were twenty five (25) students
The Students' Perceptions Of The Implementation Of Ict-Supported Project Based Learning In English Teaching		Private junior schools in Surabaya which has already implemented PBL for the English subject
Developing an English Teaching Model Using Project-Based Learning for SMA Students in Surakarta	2018	-
The Implementation Of Project Based Learning Method In Teaching English As A Foreign Language At Secondary School		An English teacher and 32 number of students of SMP Negeri 36 Makassar.

Based on the table, students and teachers who teach English are the most used as research subjects. There are only a few articles that make junior high school students the subject of research.

Data Collection Instruments

Article	Year	Research Instruments
Applying Project-Based Learning Strategy In Teaching Speaking At English Community Course Of American Corner, Pattimura University – Ambon	2017	Observation
The Students' Perceptions Of The Implementation Of ICT-Supported Project Based Learning In English Teaching	2017	Questionnaire, Student Report
Developing an English Teaching Model Using Project-Based Learning for SMA Students in Surakarta	2018	Observation, Questionnaire, Interview, FGD
The Use Of Project-Based Learning In Teaching CCU (Cross Cultural Understanding) At The Sixth Semester Students Of English Education Department Of Purworejo Muhammadiyah University: A Classroom Observation	2019	Questionnaire, Observation
Development of Project-Based Learning Models for Teaching Accounting English in Higher Education	2020	Interview Data
The Implementation Of Project Based Learning Method In Teaching English As A Foreign Language At Secondary School	2018	Observation, Interview
The Implementation of Project-Based Learning Method in	2020	Observation, Interviews with

Article	Year	Research Instruments
Teaching ESP (English for Specific Purposes): Case Study		Open-Ended Questions
Comparison Between Cooperative Learning Methods And Problem Based Learning Using Personal Letter In Teaching Students' Ability In Writing At SMA Sebelas Maret Bandung	2020	Pretest and Posttest with Quantitative Approach
The Implementation of Project-Based Learning Strategy in Teaching Spoken English	2020	Classroom Observation, Field Note, Document Analysis, Questionnaire, Speaking Transcription, Interview
The Use Of Project-Based Learning In Teaching English At Second Grade Of SMP Negeri 1 Barru	2021	Collect Data
Teaching Project-Based Learning in English for Specific Purposes	2022	Questionnaire
Project-Based Learning in Teaching English for Business in a Blue Economy Perspective	2022	Observation Guide, Interviews
Preservice Teachers' Perception On The Implementation Of Online Project-Based Learning	2022	Classroom Observations, Online Questionnaires
Developing Student's Metacognitive Ability in Science Through Project-Based Learning with E-Portfolio	2021	Evaluation Sheet
E-STEM Project-Based Learning in Teaching Science to Increase ICT Literacy and Problem Solving	2021	Test Instrument, Questionnaire

The data collection instruments used in the reviewed studies on Project-Based Learning (PBL) in English Language Teaching exhibit a range of methodologies, reflecting the diverse approaches to gathering information on PBL implementation and outcomes. Observations were a common instrument, utilized across multiple studies to provide insights into the practical application and effectiveness of PBL strategies in real classroom settings. This method allows researchers to directly witness and record interactions, activities, and student engagement, offering a detailed view of how PBL is applied.

Questionnaires were frequently employed to gather perceptions and feedback from students and teachers, which helps in understanding the subjective experiences and opinions about PBL. This instrument was used to assess various aspects, such as the effectiveness of ICT-supported PBL and the impact on learning outcomes. Additionally, interviews, including those with open-ended questions, provided qualitative data that enriched the findings from observations and questionnaires, allowing for deeper exploration of participants' experiences and attitudes. Some studies incorporated multiple instruments, such as combining questionnaires with classroom observations and interviews. This mixed-method approach offers a more comprehensive view by triangulating data from different sources, enhancing the reliability and validity of the findings. For instance, combining field notes, document analysis,

and interviews helped in evaluating the effectiveness of PBL strategies in teaching spoken English. Overall, the use of varied data collection instruments in these studies reflects the complexity and multifaceted nature of researching PBL in ELT. The combination of quantitative and qualitative methods allows for a nuanced understanding of how PBL is implemented and its impact on teaching and learning, providing valuable insights for educators and researchers in the field. According to the entire article, the most widely used research instruments are observations and questionnaires. There are also several articles that use research instruments and interview forms and one article uses pre-test and post-test as research instrument and there are also those who use evaluation sheets.

English Topics

Project-based learning (PBL) defined as an instruction of an active student-centered based which is covered by autonomy of students, constructive investigations, setting of goal, collaboration, communication and reflection within real-world practices (Kokotsaki, et.al, 2016) Thomas (2000) said that project-based learning (PBL) is a model which arranges learning in the projects. The projects are complex tasks based on real problems while students were doing design, overcoming the problem, making decision, and/or investigating activities, that facilitate student chances to work relatively autonomously individual or group work in specific of time, and produce them as real products or presentations.

Topics	Number of Articles
ESP	4
Achievement	1
Classroom Observation	1
Preservice Teachers	1
Improvement Student Speaking	1
Perceptions Of The Implementation Of Ict-Supported	1
writing skill	1
Developing an English Teaching	1
Strategi Spoken english	1
Implementation Of Project Based Learning Method	1
Science	1
Metacognitive Ability	1

Discussion

The analysis of the number of publications on Project-Based Learning (PBL) in English Language Teaching reveals notable trends and insights. From 2017 to 2022, the frequency of publications has varied, with a significant increase in 2022, indicating a growing interest and research focus on PBL in recent years. This surge could be attributed to the heightened emphasis on innovative teaching strategies during the COVID-19 pandemic,

which drove educators and researchers to explore more effective methods of instruction. The increase in publications over the years underscores the evolving nature of educational research and the need to adapt to contemporary teaching challenges.

The types of research methodologies employed in these studies reflect a strong inclination towards qualitative approaches, with 11 out of 15 articles utilizing qualitative methods. This preference aligns with the growing recognition of qualitative research's ability to provide in-depth insights into educational phenomena. Qualitative methods, such as observations and interviews, allow researchers to capture the nuanced experiences of students and teachers, which is essential for understanding the practical implications of PBL. This trend indicates a shift towards more detailed, context-sensitive research that complements the often broad findings of quantitative studies.

Research subjects in the reviewed articles predominantly include students and teachers, highlighting their central role in PBL research. The focus on these groups is crucial as they are the primary stakeholders in the implementation of PBL strategies. However, the relatively limited focus on junior high school students suggests an opportunity for further research in this area. Investigating PBL in younger student populations could provide additional insights into the adaptability and effectiveness of PBL across different educational stages.

The variety of data collection instruments used in the studies demonstrates a comprehensive approach to researching PBL. Observations and questionnaires are the most commonly employed instruments, reflecting their effectiveness in capturing both qualitative and quantitative data. The combination of these methods with interviews and pre-tests/post-tests in some studies enhances the robustness of the findings. This methodological diversity is beneficial for obtaining a well-rounded understanding of PBL's impact and effectiveness.

English topics covered by the reviewed articles highlight the diverse applications of PBL. Topics such as English for Specific Purposes (ESP), metacognitive ability, and spoken English indicate the broad scope of PBL research in addressing different aspects of English language learning. The prevalence of articles focusing on ESP and speaking skills underscores the relevance of PBL in enhancing specific language competencies. The variety of topics also reflects PBL's versatility in addressing various educational needs and contexts.

CONCLUSION

The bibliometric exploration of Project-Based Learning (PBL) in English Language Teaching reveals a dynamic field of research with evolving trends and methodologies. The increase in publications over recent years highlights the growing interest in PBL as an innovative teaching strategy. The predominance of qualitative research methods and the focus on students and teachers as research subjects underscore the importance of understanding the nuanced experiences and practical implications of PBL. The diverse data collection instruments and topics covered in the studies reflect a comprehensive approach to evaluating PBL's effectiveness. Overall, the findings suggest that PBL remains a significant area of research with continued potential for advancing educational practices in English language teaching.

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