

The Impact of Project Strategies' Implementations on Eighth Grade Students' Proficiency in Crafting Argumentative Paragraphs

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Abstract- This experimental study investigates the impact of Project Strategy on the argumentative writing skills of eighth-grade students. The study aims to (1) evaluate the students' writing proficiency using Project Strategy, (2) assess their skills without this strategy, and (3) determine if Project Strategy significantly enhances their writing ability. The population consists of 120 students, with a sample of 60 students selected randomly. Data were collected through essay tests, and a pretest confirmed the groups' homogeneity. The experimental group's mean pretest score was 63.00, while the control group's was 53.50. Post-treatment, the experimental group's mean score improved to 73.33, indicating a good proficiency level, compared to the control group's 63.67, which was deemed adequate. Hypothesis testing showed a significant effect ($t_{count} = 5.110$, $t_{table} = 2.002$), suggesting that Project Strategy positively influences students' writing abilities. Based on these findings, it is recommended that English teachers adopt innovative strategies to improve writing skills, emphasizing the importance of effective paragraph construction in English education.

Keywords: Project-Based Learning, Argumentative Writing, Eighth Grade, Educational Strategies

I. INTRODUCTION

Since writing is one of the abilities that are covered in junior and senior high school according to the curriculum, writing is one of the most crucial aspects of learning English. Unequivocally that your proficiency in reading, writing, speaking, and comprehending English will be essential to your academic achievement (Yorkey 1968:1). It means writing is one of the main keys as our way to express something and to reach success in learning English. Eventhough students are capable of listening, speaking, reading, but without the ability of writing they will get difficulty of learning. Thus, it is required of students studying English to have a strong

writing foundation.

Writing skill is needed to be owned by students. As Ruby (2000:10) says, "Writing allows you to express yourself in words". It means that students are expected to be able to construct their opinions, ideas individually in written form. As we all know that every student is given a chance to convey something freely and privacy based on their point of view on the topic. After that, Crimmon states (Writing With A Purpose, 1986:6), "Writing is also an opportunity to communicate ideas to those outside of your immediate neighborhood, to learn something you didn't know, and to express something about yourself. One may argue that writing is a

communication instrument that we can use to share our thoughts, opinions, and ideas with others.

Furthermore, Hartfiel and his colleagues (1985:1) state that writing is the principal means of conveying information, ideas, beliefs, and impressions to another individual when verbal communication is impractical, concepts are too complex to convey, or a more permanent mode of communication is needed. In conclusion, writing is essential to human communication since it enables understanding between parties even when they are not in physical proximity. It also enables people to be aware of one another's situations.

One of the most vital learning skills in human existence is writing. The four components of language are speaking, listening, reading, and writing (Tarigan 1985:1). According to the researcher, writing is one of the language skills that pupils should be proficient in because it is essential to mastering the other four language skills.

Paragraph is consists of some sentence. Carroll (2001:48) says, "A paragraph is a unit of information unified by controlling idea". The statement mean that, in a paragraph discusses one of main idea refer to the topic, which the purpose is the readers easy to know what is the paragraph tells about.

One of the types of paragraph is argumentation paragraph. Wishon & Burks (1980:383), argumentation is used in persuading and convincing. So, we have to know also that argumentation is a kind of writing which is used by people as a tool of communication. In writing argumentation paragraph, the researcher should make the paragraph which persuades and makes the readers convinced and understand when they read the paragraph. Then, Cobb (1985:121) states, "There are two basic kinds of arguments, they are factual argument and moral argument". Factual argument is used to convince someone who gives a true proposition. So, to write factual argument, the researcher should make a paragraph in proposition form which contents of it is true, believed, understood by the students.

It seems sense that one of the four skills taught in the KTSP curriculum (2006:70, 133), writing, requires pupils to be able to express themselves verbally in writing. The SMP in English for Junior High School pupils, Year VIII syllabus on Sky helps pupils organize their arguments, particularly when writing. The fundamental skill of the curriculum is accurately

and clearly answering the meaning and steps in the essay to gain access to the information found in the narrative, descriptive, and news items. In the meantime, elementary-level English expression of the essay's meaning is expected according to standard competency. Once pupils meet the minimum competency criterion of 60 in their school, they are eligible to compose argumentative paragraphs.

In fact, even though the students have been studying English for many years, but they still are not able to write in English well. It is proved by the researcher when she took PPL-II in SMP Negeri 4 Gunungsitoli. The students are not able to arrange their opinions and ideas in written form. It means that the teacher's ability in writing has not meet success yet or they are not able to argue their point of view on the topic in written form when the teacher orders them to write their reasons why education is important in our lifes. And then the students are not able to arrange it in good writing and then they become frustrated and do not know how to begin. The average of the students' score is 59. It describes that they are not successful in writing.

The researcher draws the conclusion that students encounter numerous challenges when composing argumentative paragraphs, based on the aforementioned facts. It occurs for a variety of reasons, including the teacher's lack of passion in teaching writing, due to the teacher's exclusive employment of the speech and discussion methods.

In order to address the issues, the researcher is interested in implementing a project-based teaching method that teachers might employ in the teaching-learning process.

Among the various tactics that encourage students to take an active role in their writing education is the project technique. Another cooperative learning technique is the project strategy, which can let students express their opinions on paper and include them in the teaching and learning process. According to Bransford (1993:3), a project is an instructional approach that involves students in intricate tasks. This indicates that the meaning of a project is to provide learners with stimulating experiences that allow them to work on challenging, real-world tasks while honing their knowledge and abilities. It's a good way to help pupils improve their writing skills, particularly when it comes to crafting argumentative paragraphs.

The researcher will conduct a study under the heading "The Effect of Using Project Strategy

toward the Students' Ability in Writing Argumentation Paragraph at the Eighth Grade of SMP Negeri 4 Gunungsitoli in 2011/2012," taking into account some of the previously mentioned explanations.

II. METHODS

This study employs an experimental research design, aligning with Wiersma's (1991) definition, which identifies experimental research as involving at least one independent variable that the researcher manipulates. The application of a project technique for teaching argumentative paragraph writing is the independent variable in this study. This method's objective is to evaluate how this teaching strategy affects students' proficiency.

Two groups of study participants will be formed: an experimental group and a control group. The project technique that will be used to teach the experimental group is intended to improve their ability to write argumentatively. This strategy involves a series of structured activities that encourage active learning, collaboration, and critical thinking. In contrast, the control group will continue to follow the traditional instructional methods, which do not include the project strategy. The traditional methods will serve as a baseline to compare the effectiveness of the project strategy.

Prior to the implementation of these instructional strategies, both groups will undergo a pretest. This pretest is designed to evaluate the students' initial proficiency in crafting argumentative paragraphs, ensuring that any subsequent differences in performance can be attributed to the intervention rather than pre-existing disparities in skill levels. After administering the pretest, the experimental group will receive the treatment, which consists of a comprehensive project-based instructional program. This program will be conducted over a specified period, during which students will engage in various projects that require them to research, collaborate, and construct well-organized arguments. Following the completion of the intervention, a posttest will be administered to both groups. The results of the posttest will be compared to the pretest results to measure any changes in the students' argumentative writing proficiency, thereby determining the effectiveness of the project strategies.

III. RESULT AND DISCUSSION

Research Findings Descriptive

Try Out Instrument

a) Validity Instrument

Based on appendix 7 in the table 4.2, it shows that the result of validity test computation to item test one to two was stated VALID.

b) Reliability Test

Appendix 8 indicates that $r_{11} = 0,862$ was the reliability score. To the score r_{table} , the score r_{11} was consulted. When $r_{table} = 0,433$ was displayed to $N = 21$ at the significant level of 5% ($\alpha = 0,05$), it indicated that $r_{11} > r_{table}$. The test was dependable, it can be said.

Data Analysis

a) The Pretest Analysis

To examine the homogeneity, the researcher gave the pretest to both of the groups. The students' score of pretest, it is shown in appendix 9. Based on appendix 9, the researcher measured the mean score and the standard deviation

- **The Mean Score**

Based on appendix 10, it shows the students' mean score computations of experiment's pretest was 63,00 was stated adequate.

Based on appendix 10, it shows the students' mean score computations of control's pretest was 53,50 was stated adequate.

- **The Standard Deviation**

Based on appendix 10, it shows the standard deviation computations of experiment's pretest was 7,12.

Based on appendix 10, it shows the standard deviation computations of control's pretest was 8,20.

- **The Normality Test**

Based on appendix 11 in the table 7.1, it shows the normality test was $[\chi^2]_{count}=3,54$ with $[\chi^2]_{table}=11,07$ at the significant level (α) = 0,05 it meant $3,54 < 11,07$. Because $[\chi^2]_{count} < [\chi^2]_{table}$ so the experimental group was stated having the Normal Distribution.

Based on appendix 11 in the table 7.2, it shows the normality test was $[\chi^2]_{count}=2,33$ with $[\chi^2]_{table}=11,07$ at the significant level (α) = 0,05 it meant $2,33 < 11,07$. Because $[\chi^2]_{count} < [\chi^2]_{table}$ so the control group was stated having the Normal Distribution.

- **The Homogeneity Test**

From appendix 12, it shows the result of pretest homogeneity computations indicated $F_{count} = 1,33$ was consulted to the score F_{table} . To dk highest variant = 29 and dk low variant =

29 at the significant level 5% was gotten $F_{table} = 1,86$ it meant, $F_{count} < F_{table}$. It can be concluded that the both of the groups were stated Homogenous.

b) The Post Test Analysis

The posttest was administered to both groups by the researcher in order to investigate the hypothesis. The posttest results for the students are displayed in Appendix 13. The researcher calculated the mean score and standard deviation using appendix 13.

• **The Mean Score**

Based on appendix 14, it shows the students' mean score computations of experiment's posttest was 73,33 was stated good.

Based on appendix 14, it shows the students' mean score computations of control's posttest was 63,67 was stated adequate.

• **The Standard Deviation**

Based on appendix 14, it shows the standard deviation computations of experiment's posttest was 7,87.

Based on appendix 14 in, it shows the standard deviation computations of control's posttest was 6,74.

• **The Normality Test**

Based on appendix 15 in the table 9.1, it shows the normality test was $[\chi^2]_{count} = 2,88$ with $[\chi^2]_{table} = 11,07$ at the significant level $(\alpha) = 0,05$ it meant $2,88 < 11,07$. Because $[\chi^2]_{count} < [\chi^2]_{table}$ so the experimental group was stated having the **Normal Distribution**.

Based on appendix 15 in the table 9.2, it shows the normality test was $[\chi^2]_{count} = 1,81$ with $[\chi^2]_{table} = 11,07$ at the significant level $(\alpha) = 0,05$ it meant $1,81 < 11,07$. Because $[\chi^2]_{count} < [\chi^2]_{table}$ so the control group was stated having the **Normal Distribution**.

• **The Homogeneity Test**

The results of the posttest homogeneity computations, as shown in Appendix 16, suggest that the score F_{table} was consulted with $F_{count} = 1,36$. At the significant level of 5, dk low variant = 29 and dk highest variant = 29 were obtained; this suggested that $F_{count} < F_{table}$, as indicated by $F_{table} = 1,86$. It is clear that both groups met the criteria for homogeneity.

Examining the Hypothesis by SPSS for Windows

The hypothesis in this research as below:

Ha : There is a significant effect of using project strategy effectively towards the students' ability in using writing argumentation paragraph at the eighth grade students of SMP Negeri 4 Gunungsitoli

Ho : There is no a significant effect of without using project strategy effectively towards the students' ability in using writing argumentation paragraph at the eighth grade students of SMP Negeri 4 Gunungsitoli

The result of hypothesis examining by using SPSS 16.0 for Windows, be applied as below:

Independent Samples Test										
Result		Levene's Test for Equality of Variances		t-test for Equality of Means						
		F	Sig.	t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)	Mean Difference	Std. Error Difference	95% Confidence Interval of the Difference	
									Lower	Upper
	Equal variances assumed	.868	.355	5.110	58	.000	9.66667	1.89170	5.88001	13.45332
	Equal variances not assumed			5.110	56.653	.000	9.66667	1.89170	5.87809	13.45524

Based on the data above and appendix 17, it shows the research's hypothesis computation such as below: it got $t_{count} = 5,110$ and $t_{table} = 2,002$. Because $-t_{table} < t_{count} < +t_{table}$, was: $-2,002 < 5,110 < +2,002$ so H_a is acceptable and

H_0 is unacceptable, it means: "There is a Significant Effect of Using Project Strategy towards the Students' Ability in Using Writing Argumentation Paragraph at the Eighth Grade Students of SMP Negeri 4 Gunungsitoli in

2011/2012”.

The researcher demonstrated that there is a major impact on students' capacity to write argumentation paragraphs by employing Project Strategy. When the students in the experimental group took the pretest and posttest, their results differed from those of the control group, as the researcher could observe. The students' writing arguments paragraph ability exam resulted in poor scores for both groups when they took the pretest. Subsequently, the investigator employed project strategy to provide the treatment to the experimental group. The kids were able to demonstrate their writing skills by employing this method. By using their own language, the pupils are able to compose the reasoning paragraph effectively. Following the treatment, the researcher administered to both groups a posttest on the students' ability to write argumentative paragraphs. According to the researcher, the pupils performed better on the posttest than they did on the pretest. It indicates that the students' capacity to write Argumentation Paragraphs using Project Strategy is significantly impacted.

The research hypothesis that was mentioned in Chapter I is acceptable based on the computation of the aforesaid hypothesis.

The Common Response of the Research's Problem

➤ The Common Response of the Researcher's Problem

The primary goal of this study is to determine whether or not project strategy instruction improves students' ability to produce persuasive argumentation paragraphs. The researcher's goal is for the students to be proficient writers who can demonstrate their capacity to construct argumentative paragraphs by grasping the fundamental components of paragraph construction. Additionally, it will assist students in crafting a strong argumentative paragraph.

We can observe that there is a considerable impact of applying project strategy towards the students' ability to write argumentation paragraphs based on the testing hypothesis. This method helps students demonstrate their proficiency in English writing while also encouraging them to be more engaged, competitive, and cooperative in their English studies.

➤ The Analysis of the Research Finding

Following the completion of the learning exercise in the experimental group and control

group's classroom, the researcher requested the students to compose an argumentative essay based on the topic the researcher had provided. The results of the data analysis of the students' writing abilities showed that the experimental group of students could not produce a well-written paragraph during the pretest. The pretest results indicated that the majority of them performed adequately. The researcher computed the scores and discovered that the pupils' average score was 63,00. This result was calculated by dividing the pretest total score of 1890 by the total number of students, which was thirty.

Following the pretest, the students received instruction on paragraph composition techniques to help them compose strong English argumentative paragraphs. When carrying out the teaching and learning procedures in the classroom, the researcher employed Project Strategy. Following that, the students took a posttest administered by the researcher to gauge their proficiency in English writing.

Based on the analysis of posttest, it was found that the average score of the students was 73,33 which stated good. This score was obtained by dividing the total score of posttest 2200 by the total of the students was 30 students.

While, as the comparison in the control group, the researcher after doing the learning activity, the students were asked to write an argumentation paragraph and the result of calculating data shown that the average score of students was 53,50. This score was obtained by dividing the total score of pretest 1605 by the total number of students was 30 students.

After that, the students learned how to produce an effective paragraph so they could write in English fluently without the need for project strategy. Following the learning exercises, the students were requested to compose an argumentative paragraph by the researcher. The data calculation resulted in an average score of 63,67 for the students, which was considered sufficient. This score was calculated by dividing the posttest 1910 total score by the total number of students, which was thirty.

It is evident from the preceding description that the students were more engaged and proficient writers as a result of employing the project strategy. Conversely, this tactic had a notable impact on the pupils' capacity to compose paragraphs. It is evident that the students' writing proficiency on the pretest was deemed sufficient prior to the implementation of the project

strategy. And after doing the treatment, the students could prove their writing ability in posttest which was stated good. It means that Project Strategy is one technique making the students more competitive, and increased the students' collaboration to write a good argumentation paragraph in English.

➤ **The Research Finding Versus the Late Related Research**

There had never been any research on the use of project strategy in writing paragraphs, but one of the more recent studies in this area focused on improving students' argumentation skills through the use of discussion methods, as Laoli (2010) found when investigating students' project strategy-based argumentation skills. The similarity of them was the object of research was writing argumentation text. In his research, he found that by using discussion method can increase the students' writing ability to write argumentation text well.

In other side, Laoli and the researcher had a difference. According to Laoli's research, employing the discussion approach can help students become more proficient writers of argumentative texts, but implementing a project strategy has a major impact on students' capacity to write argumentative paragraphs effectively.

➤ **The Research Finding Implication**

Based on the research result which was found by the researcher, this research gives the advantages and implication to increase or to develop the students' ability in writing argumentation paragraph well. By mastering the important element of paragraph, the students can prove their writing argumentation paragraph ability in English well. This research has given a description of the students' result in teaching and learning activities by Project Strategy.

In order to become a professional teacher, the researcher aspires to become proficient in a variety of teaching approaches, tactics, and strategies. One of them is the project strategy, which teaches students how to work together, competitively, and problem-solving skills while completing English study assignments.

➤ **The Research Finding Implication**

The research result has the limitation subject which the research population was limited at the eighth grade in SMP Negeri 4 Gunungsitoli which consisted of four classrooms. And the researcher chose two classes as an experimental group which consisted of 30 students and a control group which consisted of 30 students.

The limitation of collecting the data was not

perfect to get accurate information because some of the students were not seriously to do the test. And also the technique of analyzing the data was done manually. Therefore, it made the calculation of the data was not accurate as we hoped.

IV. CONCLUSION

Following an analysis of the data from the previous chapter, the researcher draws the following conclusions: students who received instruction using Project Strategy demonstrated a greater improvement in their argumentation writing skills than students who did not receive such instruction; students also benefit greatly from understanding the fundamentals of paragraph arrangement, as it helps them write argumentation paragraphs effectively. It can be proved when the students were able to write text well. The students could express their opinion by using their own words; the average of the students' ability in writing argumentation paragraph by using Project Strategy namely 73,33 which was stated good; the average of the students' ability in writing argumentation paragraph without using Project Strategy namely 63,67 which was stated adequate; writing is one skill to help the students to say something or to express something by using own words well. In order to be able to write English well, it is important to the students to master the important elements to arrange paragraph well. Based on the result of examining hypothesis, It got $t_{count} = 5,110$ and $t_{table} = 2,002$ because $-t_{table} < t_{count} < +t_{table}$ was: $-2,002 < 5,110 < +2,002$, it can be concluded that there is a significant effect of Using Project Strategy towards the Students' Ability in Using Writing Argumentation Paragraph at the Eighth Grade Students of SMP Negeri 4 Gunungsitoli in 2011/2012".

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