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ENHANCING DESCRIPTIVE WRITING VIA PROJECT-BASED LEARNING: A QUASI-EXPERIMENTAL STUDY WITH EIGHTH-GRADE STUDENTS

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Abstract Descriptive writing remains one of the most challenging text types for junior high school EFL students, requiring the simultaneous development of content, organization, grammar, vocabulary, and mechanics — demands that conventional, teacher-centered instruction often fails to fully address. This study investigated the effectiveness of Project-Based Learning (PjBL) in improving descriptive writing achievement among eighth-grade students, using a quantitative, quasi-experimental two-group pretest-posttest design. From a population of 351 eighth-grade students, 70 were selected through purposive sampling and assigned to an experimental group (n = 35), taught using PjBL, and a control group (n = 35), taught using conventional methods. Writing achievement was measured using an expert-validated, highly reliable descriptive writing test scored across five weighted aspects (content, organization, grammar, vocabulary, mechanics), and data were analyzed through normality and homogeneity tests, N-Gain analysis, and an independent samples *t*-test. The experimental group's mean score rose from 66.54 (pretest) to 86.09 (posttest), a gain of 19.54 points and an N-Gain of 56.47% (medium category), compared to the control group's rise from 58.89 to 71.63, a gain of 12.74 points and an N-Gain of only 30.12% (low category) — a difference of more than 26 percentage points. The independent samples *t*-test confirmed this gap was statistically significant ($p = 0.000 < 0.05$). These findings demonstrate that PjBL's collaborative, project-based structure produces substantially greater gains in descriptive writing achievement than conventional instruction, offering empirical support for its adoption as a more effective pedagogical alternative in junior high school EFL writing classrooms, particularly within the framework of Indonesia's Merdeka Curriculum.

Keywords: *Project-based learning; descriptive text; writing achievement; quasi-experimental study; junior high school*

INTRODUCTION

Writing is widely regarded as the most difficult skill to master among the four language skills. It is not merely a process of arranging words into written form, but a complex cognitive activity that requires writers to generate ideas, organize them coherently, and adapt language to specific purposes, contexts, and audiences (Firmansyah, Idris, & Aisyah 2025). Because writing demands simultaneous control over content, organization, vocabulary, grammar, and mechanics, many EFL learners continue to find it particularly challenging (Rahmawati, Syafrizal, & Handayani 2025).

Writing descriptive texts is one of the essential competencies that junior high school students, especially those in grade 8, must master according to the Merdeka Curriculum. This learning goal aims to enable students to describe people, animals, objects, or places clearly, in detail, and vividly so that readers can visualize the described subjects as if they were seeing them directly

(Nisa, Damayanti, & Yunus 2026). In addition to developing linguistic accuracy, descriptive writing also trains students' observational skills, language sensitivity, and creativity in producing expressive sentences (Fitria 2024).

Despite its importance, many junior high school students still experience significant difficulties in writing descriptive texts. These difficulties commonly include limited vocabulary mastery, the use of simple and repetitive sentence structures, weak organization of ideas, and an inability to create vivid imagery (Widiasari, Raja, & Nurweni 2024). As a result, the texts they produce often lack clarity, detail, and reader engagement. Such problems have frequently been linked to conventional, teacher-centered instruction that prioritizes grammatical drills and mechanical exercises rather than meaningful writing practice (Ragab, Kaid, & Sayed 2024).

Traditional teaching approaches generally focus on lecturing and drilling language patterns. While these methods may help students understand basic structures, they are often insufficient for developing higher-order thinking skills, creativity, and independence in writing (Li 2023). Consequently, students struggle to express ideas freely and imaginatively when required to produce longer and more complex texts such as descriptive writing. This situation highlights the need for more innovative and student-centered pedagogical models.

In response to these challenges, educators have increasingly adopted Project-Based Learning (PjBL) as a promising alternative. Grounded in constructivist and social constructivist principles, particularly Vygotsky's Zone of Proximal Development, PjBL positions students as active participants who construct knowledge through authentic, collaborative, and extended projects (Williamson 2023). Unlike traditional methods that place the teacher at the center of instruction, PjBL requires students to investigate, collaborate, and create real products in this case, structured and communicative descriptive texts (Nababan, Marpaung, & Koresy 2023). Through challenging and relevant projects, students are encouraged to think critically, solve problems, and develop both linguistic and collaborative skills (Brahmandika & Sutama 2024).

A growing body of recent empirical research has confirmed the positive impact of PjBL on students' writing performance. Ruswandi et al., (2024) demonstrated that Project-Based Learning integrated with digital tools significantly improved students' descriptive writing achievement. Rahmawati et al., (2025) found that PjBL effectively enhanced tenth-grade students' descriptive writing skills, with clear gains in content, organization, and vocabulary. Fatimah (2024) reported that PjBL helped junior high school students generate richer ideas and expand their vocabulary when writing descriptive texts. Similarly, Ardiana et al. (2023) showed that PjBL significantly improved high school students' descriptive writing scores through collaborative project activities. Putri (2023), Widiasari et al. (2024), Firmansyah et al. (2025), and Nisa et al. (2026) consistently showed that PjBL not only improved writing scores but also increased student engagement, motivation, and confidence. Collectively, these studies indicate that PjBL is more effective than conventional methods in developing descriptive writing competence.

Moreover, a recent meta-analysis by Cahyono et al. (2024) provided strong cumulative evidence that Project-Based Learning produces a significant positive effect size on EFL/ESL writing performance across different educational levels and contexts. Yang et al. (2025) further reported that PjBL enhanced EFL learners' intrinsic motivation and contextual writing skills in a junior secondary school setting. Qomariyah et al. (2025) also found that PjBL fostered greater creativity, idea development, and linguistic expression among Indonesian secondary students in creative writing tasks. Collectively, these studies indicate that PjBL is more effective than conventional methods in developing writing competence.

Nevertheless, a critical review of the literature reveals an important research gap. While many recent studies have examined PjBL in relation to general writing ability or other text types (narrative, recount, or procedural), relatively few investigations have specifically focused on its influence on descriptive writing among eighth-grade students in junior high schools. Most existing research either targets higher secondary levels or employs classroom action research designs with limited generalizability. This gap is significant because descriptive writing places unique cognitive and linguistic demands, detailed observation, precise lexical choice, and coherent spatial organization. That may interact differently with the project-based approach.

To address this gap, the present quasi-experimental study provides a detailed and contextual analysis of how Project-Based

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Learning enhances eighth-grade students' descriptive writing skills. The study is guided by three research questions: (1) What are the descriptive writing scores of eighth-grade students taught through the PjBL model? (2) What are the descriptive writing scores of eighth-grade students taught through conventional methods? (3) Is there a significant difference in descriptive writing achievement between students taught using PjBL and those taught using conventional methods?. Theoretically, this study contributes to the expanding literature on student-centered approaches in EFL writing pedagogy by offering empirical evidence from a quasi-experimental design focused on a specific text type and educational level. Practically, the findings are expected to provide English teachers with evidence-based insights into the implementation of PjBL within the Merdeka Curriculum framework, thereby supporting efforts to improve students' descriptive writing competence in Indonesian junior high schools.

METHOD

This study used a quasi-experimental, two-group pretest-posttest design, appropriate given that random assignment was not feasible with existing intact classes (Idawati & Neyarasmi, 2025). The independent variable was the Project-Based Learning (PjBL) model, implemented through its six stages (essential question, project planning, scheduling, monitoring, assessment, evaluation); the dependent variable was descriptive text writing achievement, scored across five weighted aspects: content (30%), organization (20%), grammar (20%), vocabulary (15%), and mechanics (15%), using a rubric adapted from Brown (2010).

Table 1. *Research design and study overview*

Component	Detail
Design	Quasi-experimental, two groups, pretest-posttest (O_1 X O_2 / O_3 – O_4)
Population	351 eighth-grade students, 10 classes, SMPN 1 Karangrejo (2025/2026)
Sample	Experimental: VIII F (n=35, PjBL); Control: VIII D (n=35, conventional)
Sampling	Purposive (regular class, average ability, no prior PjBL exposure)
Instrument	Descriptive writing test, pretest/posttest, different topics per phase
Validity	Pearson r = 0.936–0.971 (r-table = 0.3338, df = 33, α = .05)
Reliability	Cronbach's Alpha = 0.979 (excellent)
Analysis	Normality (K-S, Shapiro-Wilk), homogeneity (Levene's), N-Gain, independent samples *t*-test

Both groups were taught over five meetings between the pretest (19 January 2026) and posttest (24 February 2026), following parallel but distinct instructional sequences. Following the pretest and posttest, data were screened for normality (Kolmogorov-Smirnov, Shapiro-Wilk) and homogeneity (Levene's test, both α = .05) before computing N-Gain scores (high ≥ 0.70, medium 0.30–0.69, low < 0.30) and testing between-group differences using an independent samples *t*-test (α = .05), with H_1 accepted if $p < .05$.

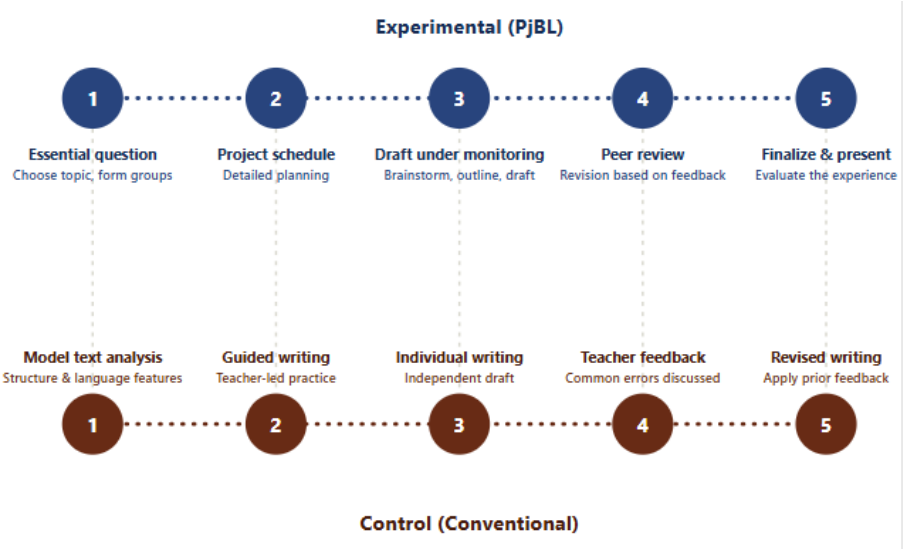


Figure 1. *Parallel five-meeting instructional sequence for the experimental (PjBL) and control (conventional) groups.*

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Descriptive statistics of the experimental class

The experimental group, consisting of 35 eighth-grade students from class VIII F, received instruction in descriptive text writing through the Project-Based Learning (PjBL) model. Data were collected through a pretest administered before the intervention and a posttest conducted after five treatment sessions. Table 2 displays the scores from the pretest and posttest for the experimental group.

Table 2. *Pretest and posttest scores of the experimental class (N=35)*

No	Experimental Class			
	Student Code	Pre Test Score	Post Test Score	Gain Score
1	A.A.F.	66	90	24
2	A.D.	66	89	23
3	A.A.R.A.	65	90	25
4	A.B.A.	66	87	21
5	D.H.W.	69	85	16
6	D.L.	64	80	16
7	D.P.C.	60	82	22
8	F.R.A.	62	85	23
9	F.A.	60	90	30
10	H.T.C.P.	65	90	25
11	I.A.A.H.	70	87	17
12	I.M.A.	66	85	19
13	J.F.R.D.	72	88	16
14	K.Q.W.	60	80	20
15	K.I.	83	75	-8
16	M.G.A.A.	69	90	21
17	M.P.N.	65	92	27
18	M.I.S.	75	95	20
19	M.N.	66	80	14
20	M.F.N.I.S.	68	82	14
21	M.F.A.Y.	70	85	15
22	M.G.E.S.	67	80	13
23	N.Z.A.	65	85	20
24	N.R.T.	67	92	25
25	N.M.Z.	68	90	22
26	N.Z.A.	66	79	13
27	P.A.I.	76	82	6
28	R.P.P.	60	90	30
29	R.F.	65	85	20
30	S.R.Z.	69	95	26
31	S.S.A.A.	66	85	19
32	T.M.A.A.F.	60	78	18
33	Y.P.S.	63	80	17
34	Z.J.K.	54	95	41
35	Z.J.P.	76	90	14
	Mean	66,54	86,08	19,54

The mean pretest score of the experimental group was 66.54. The highest score recorded on the pretest was 83, while the lowest was 54. Following the implementation of PjBL, the mean posttest score increased to 86.09, with the highest scores reaching 95 and the lowest score being 75. This resulted in a mean gain of 19.54 points. These results indicate a substantial improvement in students' descriptive writing performance after being taught through the PjBL approach.

Descriptive Statistics of the Control Class

The control group VIII D was made up of 35 learners who received instruction on writing descriptive texts through traditional techniques (non-PjBL). In Table 3, the initial and final test scores of the control group are shown.

Table 3. *Pretest and Posttest Scores of the Control Class (N=35)*

No	Control Class			
	Student Code	Pre Test Score	Post Test Score	Gain Score
1	A.P.R.	63	71	8
2	A.N.K.	67	70	3

3	A.D.I.	59	70	11
4	A.S.	65	71	6
5	A.L.P.	67	77	10
6	D.C.R.	69	77	8
7	D.C.P.	60	77	17
8	D.S.M.	50	73	23
9	E.A.Z.S.	51	72	21
10	F.I.A.I.	64	69	5
11	F.H.P.	58	72	14
12	I.A.S.	69	70	1
13	J.R.B.	52	72	20
14	J.N.N.	66	74	8
15	K.B.M.P.	58	79	21
16	K.W.	66	79	13
17	M.A.V.	64	81	17
18	M.N.I.S.	59	64	5
19	M.N.F.Z.	45	60	15
20	M.R.N.	56	79	23
21	M.F.P.P.	54	83	29
22	M.H.F.	69	79	10
23	N.A.S.	61	72	11
24	N.S.N.S.P.	52	67	15
25	N.R.N.	46	69	23
26	P.M.A.W.	59	65	6
27	R.A.A.	57	79	22
28	R.Y.	64	70	6
29	S.R.F.	54	65	11
30	S.E.P.	59	64	5
31	S.I.K.	56	60	4
32	V.D.A.	67	81	14
33	Y.A.	55	65	10
34	Y.S.A.	44	66	22
35	Z.C.M.	56	65	9
	Mean	58,89	71,63	12,74

The mean pretest score of the control group was 58.89, with the highest scores reaching 69 and the lowest score being 44. After five sessions of conventional instruction, the mean posttest score rose to 71.63, with the highest score reaching 83 and the lowest scores being 60. The mean gain score for the control group was 12.74. Although there was an improvement, the magnitude of the increase was noticeably smaller than that observed in the experimental group.

Normality test

The assessment of normality was performed employing Kolmogorov-Smirnov and Shapiro-Wilk tests with SPSS version 25.0. Data is deemed normally distributed when the significance value (Sig.) is greater than 0.05 (Avram and Mărușteri 2022). The findings are displayed in Table 4.

Table 4. *Normality test results*

Variable	Class	Kolmogorov-Smirnov Sig.	Shapiro-Wilk Sig.	Interpretation
Pretest	Experimental	0.083	0.055	Normal
Pretest	Control	0.200	0.170	Normal
Posttest	Experimental	0.061	0.156	Normal
Posttest	Control	0.200	0.210	Normal

The findings from the normality assessment demonstrate that the data from the pretest and posttest for each group follow a normal distribution (Sig. > 0.05). Hence, additional analysis may continue with the homogeneity examination.

Homogeneity test

The equality test for variances was performed utilizing Levene's Test through SPSS version 25.0. Data is regarded as homogeneous when the significance value (Sig.) exceeds 0.05. The findings are shown in Table 5.

Table 5. Homogeneity Test Results

Variable	Levene Statistic	Sig.	Interpretation
Pretest	3.485	0.066	Homogeneous
Posttest	0.796	0.061	Homogeneous

The significance values for both pretest and posttest data exceeded 0.05 (0.066 and 0.061, respectively). Confirming that the variances between the two groups were homogeneous. These results fulfilled the assumptions required for further parametric analysis.

N-Gain test results

The N-Gain assessment was determined to evaluate the progress between the initial test and the final test. The findings are displayed in Table 6.

Table 6. *N-gain test results*

Class	Mean N-Gain (%)	Classification
Experimental (PjBL)	56.47	Medium
Control (Conventional)	30.12	Low

The group that participated in the experiment obtained an average N-Gain of 56.47%, categorizing it as medium according to the N-Gain standards ($0.30 \leq$ N-Gain < 0.70). In contrast, the control group reached an average N-Gain of 30.12%, placing it in the low category (N-Gain < 0.30). The difference of more than 26% indicates that the PjBL model produced a greater improvement in students' descriptive writing skills compared to conventional methods.

Independent sample t-test

An independent sample t-test was conducted to determine whether there was a significant difference in descriptive text writing achievement between the experimental and control groups. The significance level was set at $\alpha = 0.05$. The results are presented in Table 7.

Table 7. *Independent sample t-test results (gain scores)*

Variance Assumption	F	Sig.	t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)	Mean Difference	Std. Error Difference	95% CI Lower	95% CI Upper
Equal variances assumed	0.320	0.573	3.781	68	0.000	6.800	1.799	3.211	10.389
Equal variances not assumed			3.781	67.302	0.000	6.800	1.799	3.210	10.390

The results showed a significance value (2-tailed) of 0.000, which is lower than the predetermined alpha level of 0.05. Therefore, the null hypothesis was rejected and the alternative hypothesis was accepted. This confirms that there was a significant difference in descriptive writing achievement between students taught using the PjBL model and those taught using conventional methods.

The improvement of descriptive writing skills using project-based learning

The findings of this study show that implementing the Project-Based Learning (PjBL) method significantly improved the descriptive writing abilities of students in the experimental group.The average score from the pretest, which was 66.54, rose to 86.09 in the posttest, showing a gain of 19.54 points. This enhancement demonstrates that PjBL positively influenced students' writing capabilities for descriptive texts, particularly regarding content development, organization, grammar, vocabulary, and mechanics. This conclusion aligns with the views of Goodman & Stivers (2010), who noted that one of the benefits of project-based learning is its capacity to engage students actively in the educational process while making learning enjoyable. PjBL represents a type of student-centered education grounded in three fundamental principles of constructivism: mastering particular content, encouraging active participation of learners in the educational journey, and attaining learning goals through collaboration and exchanging knowledge (Handrianto & Rahman 2018; Mahtumi, Purnamaningsih, & Purbangkara 2022). PjBL proves to be an effective alternative for overcoming the weaknesses of traditional teaching methods, which have long been more teacher-oriented and rote-based (Triyana & Sutopo 2025).

The learning process in the experimental class emphasized collaborative work and gradual guidance from the teacher as a facilitator. In line with Williamson (2023) view the advantage of PjBL lies in its ability to develop students' critical thinking, creativity, and communication skills through active involvement in projects. This interactive learning environment proved effective in building students' self-confidence and reducing

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writing anxiety, as they felt supported by both their peers and the teacher (Talebi et al. 2025). Students at SMPN 1 Karangrejo not only learned to write descriptive texts individually but also discussed and provided peer feedback in groups, which ultimately improved the quality of their writing.

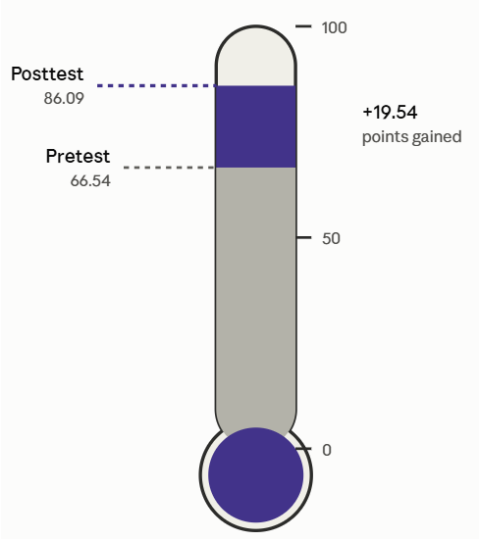


Figure 2. *Pretest and posttest descriptive writing scores of the experimental group, showing a gain of 19.54 points following the PjBL intervention*

The results of this study support previous empirical evidence. Amali, Hidayat, & Priajana (2024) found that the implementation of PjBL contributed significantly to writing achievement. Similarly, Lestari et al. (2025) also reported that the skill of writing narrative essays demonstrated notable enhancement before and after the use of PjBL.. The consistency between the present findings and prior studies reinforces the argument that PjBL provides an effective pedagogical framework for developing students' writing competence.

Furthermore, the N-Gain score of 56.47% achieved by the experimental class, although falling into the medium category, still demonstrates the efficiency of the PjBL model. The medium category reflects the reality that improving descriptive text writing skills is a complex process requiring the simultaneous accumulation of language skills, thinking structures, and creativity. All these components require time and sustained practice to develop optimally. Because according to Said et al., (2022) proficient writing requires adequate vocabulary mastery, solid grammatical understanding, the ability to organize ideas logically, and imaginative capacity to produce vivid and engaging descriptions.

With a limited intervention duration of only five meetings, the achievement of 56.47% indicates that PjBL transformed students' abilities more rapidly compared to conventional learning. From the perspective of social constructivist theory, particularly Vygotsky's concept of the Zone of Proximal Development (ZPD), PjBL facilitated students' progress from their current writing skills to higher levels of competence through collaborative engagement with peers and guided support from teachers (Gibbes & Carson 2014). PjBL created a dynamic learning environment in which knowledge was not passively transmitted from teacher to student but actively constructed through social interaction (Abad & Villafuerte-Holguín 2025). These interactions encouraged joint learning and collaborative problem-solving, making the learning process more dynamic and student-centered.

The improvement of descriptive writing skills using conventional methods

The traditional teaching class showed progress in descriptive writing, though less than the experimental group. The average score rose from 58.89 in the pretest to 71.63 in the posttest, a gain of 12.74 points and an N-Gain of 30.12% (low category), demonstrating that conventional methods, despite their limitations, still contribute to basic writing development.

The conventional method combined lecture, question-and-answer, and individual assignment strategies: the instructor first presented the framework of descriptive text (introduction and detailed description) and its linguistic features (simple present tense, descriptive adjectives, linking verbs), then shared model texts and led an interactive recognition activity, before students independently composed a descriptive text on a given topic.

Any systematically designed learning model tends to improve student competence, though effectiveness varies. Putri, Mustafa, and Zulhafizh (2024) similarly found that a conventionally taught control class improved, though less than an experimental class using a more innovative model — reinforcing that conventional methods remain relevant for building basic writing skills, even as they fall short of more active approaches.

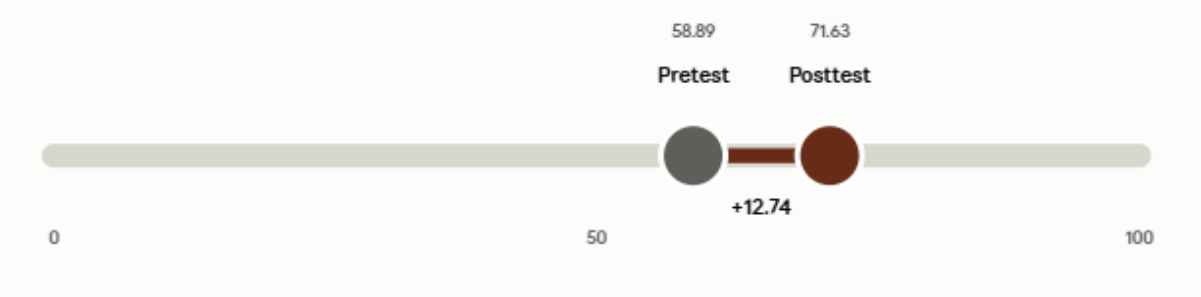


Figure 3. *Control group's pretest and posttest descriptive writing scores, showing a gain of 12.74 points following conventional instruction*

The gap between the control group's more modest improvement and the experimental group's larger gain reflects several limitations inherent to conventional methods. First, the one-way nature of lecture-based learning positions students as listeners rather than active participants, even though writing is a procedural skill requiring active practice and cognitive engagement (Septiaji & Nisya, 2023). Second, individual assignments without intensive collaboration deny students access to formative feedback during the writing process itself, so weaknesses are only discovered after the teacher has already corrected the completed assignment, leaving no room for in-process improvement (Dewi, 2025). Third, conventional methods leave little space for deep or creative idea exploration (Revenko et al., 2024), prioritizing timely task completion and formal accuracy over the creative writing process.

As Dewi (2026) notes, conventional methods work well at the introductory stage but are not powerful enough to bring students to higher levels of writing proficiency requiring creativity, independence, and reflection — consistent with Harmer's (2015) view that effective writing instruction demands active student involvement, ongoing feedback, and real opportunities for revision, without which instruction remains procedural and fails to reach writing's creative and reflective dimensions.

The significant difference between PjBL and conventional methods

The data analysis demonstrates that Project-Based Learning (PjBL) notably enhances students' descriptive writing abilities compared to traditional approaches. The independent samples *t*-test showed $p = 0.000$ ($p < 0.05$), leading to rejection of H_0 in favor of H_1. N-Gain results reinforce this: the experimental group achieved 56.47% (medium), while the control group reached only 30.12% (low) — a gap of more than 26 percentage points confirming PjBL's greater effectiveness.

These findings align with Rahmawati, Syafrizal, and Handayani (2025), who found PjBL develops writing skills by embedding learning in authentic, contextual experiences, and with Andargie, Amogne, and Tefera (2025), who reported PjBL improves both writing process and product quality. They also support Alvi, Hidayat, and Praijana (2024), who highlighted PjBL's effect on content quality, as project-based environments allow students to make independent decisions and express personal perspectives, producing more original and detailed writing while fostering communication, collaboration, creativity, and critical thinking.

These advantages reflect social constructivist theory: Mones and Irawati (2023) note that meaningful learning arises from authentic social interaction, and in this study PjBL helped students advance through collaborative engagement with peers and teacher support, unlike the control group's more limited, teacher-centered approach. This is consistent with Yang et al. (2025), who found PjBL enhances intrinsic motivation and contextual writing skills, and Qomariyah et al. (2025), who found it fosters creativity and idea development among Indonesian students.

PjBL encourages students to build knowledge through meaningful, real-world projects (Al-Thani & Ahmad, 2025), requiring not just writing but observation, data collection, and repeated drafting — transforming descriptive writing into an act of communication rather than a purely linguistic exercise. Its student-centered, collaborative, reflective structure is operationalized through observation, discussion, and revision, reinforcing writing as a recursive process of planning, drafting, revising, and editing that builds both linguistic accuracy and metacognitive awareness (Ratu et al., 2025). This aligns with the Merdeka Curriculum's recognition of PjBL as fostering the communication,

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collaboration, creativity, and critical thinking essential to effective descriptive writing.

Figure 4 makes the magnitude of this difference immediately visible: the PjBL bar rises nearly twice as high as the conventional-instruction bar, translating the statistical significance reported above into a clear visual gap between the two groups' improvement.

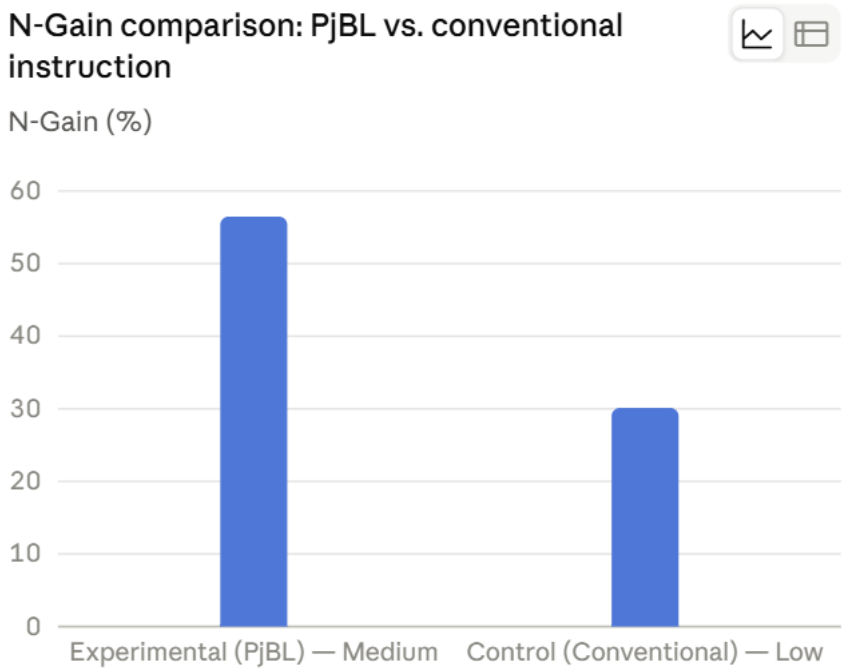


Figure 4. *N-Gain comparison between the experimental (PjBL) and control (conventional) groups, showing a difference of more than 26 percentage points and confirming the statistically significant advantage of PjBL (p = .000) reported in this section*

CONCLUSION

This study investigated the effectiveness of Project-Based Learning (PjBL) in improving the descriptive writing achievement of eighth-grade students at SMPN 1 Karangrejo Tulungagung. The findings revealed that students taught through the PjBL model showed a substantial improvement in their descriptive writing skills, with the experimental group's mean score rising from 66.54 in the pretest to 86.09 in the posttest, a gain of 19.54 points and an N-Gain of 56.47% (medium category). Students taught through conventional methods also improved, but to a lesser extent, with their mean score rising from 58.89 to 71.63, a gain of 12.74 points and an N-Gain of 30.12% (low category). The independent samples *t*-test confirmed a statistically significant difference between the two groups (p = 0.000), indicating that PjBL was more effective than conventional instruction in enhancing students' descriptive writing achievement.

These results demonstrate that the student-centered, collaborative, and authentic nature of PjBL provides greater opportunity for students to develop content, organization, vocabulary, grammar, and mechanics simultaneously. Through project stages involving planning, collaboration, peer feedback, and presentation, students engaged more actively in the writing process and produced higher-quality descriptive texts than those who received teacher-centered instruction. However, these findings should be interpreted with some caution: the intervention spanned only five sessions, a duration that may not have been sufficient for students to fully internalize the linguistic, organizational, and creative demands of descriptive writing, and the relatively short, novel implementation raises the possibility that a portion of the observed gains reflects heightened engagement with an unfamiliar approach rather than the instructional model alone. The study was also limited to regular classes at a single school, constraining how confidently these findings can be generalized to other educational contexts, school types, or student populations, and although a detailed analytic rubric was applied carefully and consistently, writing assessment retains an inherent degree of subjectivity that cannot be fully eliminated.

Taken together, the study offers evidence that PjBL can meaningfully strengthen descriptive

writing achievement in an Indonesian junior high school context, particularly within the framework of the Merdeka Curriculum, and its collaborative, project-based structure appears well suited to developing multiple writing sub-skills in tandem rather than in isolation. At the same time, confirming the durability and generalizability of this effect will require future work that extends the intervention period to assess longer-term impact, involves multiple schools and educational levels, examines PjBL's effectiveness across other text types such as narrative, recount, or procedural writing, and incorporates longitudinal or mixed-method designs capable of capturing both the quantitative outcomes and the qualitative processes underlying students' writing development.

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