



Alibbaa': Jurnal Pendidikan Bahasa Arab

Vol. 6 No. 2, January 2025

P-ISSN: 2721-1606 | E-ISSN: 2716-4985

doi: <http://xxx>

Exploring the Implementation of Project-Based Learning in Arabic Language Education under the "Kurikulum Merdeka"

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Abstract

The "Kurikulum Merdeka" is a curriculum that emphasizes flexibility, innovation, and student-centered learning. Implementing project-based learning (PjBL) in this curriculum is one way to improve students' Arabic language skills. This study aims to explore the implementation of PjBL in the "Kurikulum Merdeka" for Arabic language learning and the factors influencing it at MAN 2 Kutai Kartanegara. This study uses a qualitative approach with a case study method. Data was collected through observation, interviews with teachers and students, and documentation of learning tools. The data obtained were analyzed using Miles and Huberman's theory, which consists of data collection, condensation, presentation, and conclusion drawing. The results of this study indicate that PjBL is implemented through various projects, with the most commonly implemented being conversation videos and news reading videos. The implementation process consists of planning, monitoring, and evaluation stages. Supporting factors include student enthusiasm and the role of teachers as facilitators in providing freedom and guidance. At the same time, the obstacle is the difference in students' backgrounds, which affects their Arabic language skills. It can be concluded that implementing PjBL is a learning strategy to improve students' Arabic language skills, especially in terms of fluency, accuracy, and content in line with the "Kurikulum Merdeka" principles.

Keywords: *Project-Based Learning, Kurikulum Merdeka, Arabic*

Abstrak

Kurikulum Merdeka merupakan kurikulum yang menekankan fleksibilitas, inovasi, dan pembelajaran berpusat pada siswa. Penerapan pendekatan pembelajaran berbasis proyek (PjBL) dalam kurikulum ini menjadi salah satu cara untuk meningkatkan keterampilan berbahasa Arab siswa. Penelitian ini bertujuan untuk mengeksplorasi penerapan PjBL dalam Kurikulum Merdeka pada pembelajaran bahasa Arab serta faktor yang mempengaruhinya di MAN 2 Kutai Kartanegara. Penelitian ini menggunakan pendekatan kualitatif dengan metode studi kasus. Pengumpulan data melalui observasi, wawancara dengan guru dan siswa, dan dokumentasi terhadap perangkat pembelajaran. Data yang diperoleh dianalisis menggunakan teori Miles dan Huberman yang terdiri dari pengumpulan data, kondensasi data, penyajian data, dan penarikan kesimpulan. Hasil penelitian ini menunjukkan bahwa PjBL diterapkan melalui berbagai proyek, yang paling banyak diterapkan adalah video percakapan dan video membaca berita. Proses penerapannya terdiri dari tahapan perencanaan, monitoring, dan evaluasi. Faktor pendukung adalah antusiasme siswa dan peran guru sebagai fasilitator dalam memberikan kebebasan dan pendampingan, sedangkan hambatannya perbedaan latar belakang siswa yang berpengaruh kemampuan berbahasa Arab. Dengan ini dapat disimpulkan bahwa penerapan PjBL merupakan strategi pembelajaran untuk meningkatkan keterampilan bahasa Arab siswa, terutama dalam aspek kelancaran, ketepatan, dan isi yang sejalan dengan prinsip Kurikulum Merdeka.

Kata Kunci: *Pembelajaran Berbasis Proyek, "Kurikulum Merdeka", Bahasa Arab*

Introduction

The education system in Indonesia continues to evolve to meet the challenges and needs of the times.¹ Over time, the approaches used in the education curriculum have become increasingly complex.² Among these initiatives is the "*Kurikulum Merdeka*" launched by the Ministry of Education and Culture (Kemendikbud) in 2022.³ The

¹ I G N Darmawan et al., *Indonesian Education: Past, Present, and Future*, *Indonesian Education: Past, Present, and Future*, 2024, <https://doi.org/10.4324/9781032657400>; S Saa, "Merdeka Curriculum: Adaptation Of Indonesian Education Policy In The Digital Era And Global Challenges," *Revista de Gestao Social e Ambiental* 18, no. 3 (2024), <https://doi.org/10.24857/rgsa.v18n3-168>.

² Husnaini Jamil and Nur Agung, "Tantangan Pembelajaran Bahasa Arab Di Era Society 5.0: Analisis Pembelajaran Bahasa Arab Berbasis Aplikasi Interaktif," *Alibbaa': Jurnal Pendidikan Bahasa Arab* 3, no. 1 (2022): 38–51, <https://doi.org/10.19105/ajpba.v3i1.5536>.

³ Agus Setiawan and Shofi Syifa'ul Fuadiyah Ahla, "Konsep Model Inovasi Kurikulum KBK, KBM, KTSP, K13, Dan "Kurikulum Merdeka" (Literature Review),"

"*Kurikulum Merdeka*" launched in Indonesia brings a new paradigm to the world of education: encouraging a student-centered approach to learning.⁴ The "*Kurikulum Merdeka*" is designed to produce a generation capable of facing the challenges and opportunities of the modern era, where problem-solving skills are essential.⁵ One of the most recommended approaches in this framework is Project-Based Learning (PjBL), which integrates 21st-century skills through meaningful real-world projects.⁶ In Arabic language learning, the appaplyingffers great potential for improving active and contextual language skills, in line with the objectives of the "*Kurikulum Merdeka*", which emphasizes student competence, creativity, and independence.

The project-based learning approach uses projects or activities that engage students in exploring, evaluating, interpreting, and synthesizing information to create meaningful learning products.⁷ This

AL-GHAZALI: Jurnal Pendidikan Dan Pemikiran Islam, 2022, 93–114; M Astuti et al., "The Relevance Of The Merdeka Curriculum In Improving The Quality Of Islamic Education In Indonesia," *International Journal of Learning, Teaching and Educational Research* 23, no. 6 (2024): 56–72, <https://doi.org/10.26803/ijlter.23.6.3>; H K Wardani, Y Rakhmawati, and P Cahyandaru, "Eanalysis Of The Impact Of The Merdeka Curriculum Policy On Stakeholders At Primary School," *Jurnal Ilmiah Peuradeun* 11, no. 2 (2023): 513–30, <https://doi.org/10.26811/peuradeun.v11i2.801>.

⁴ F R Baharuddin and W Setialaksana, "May Student-Centered Principles Affect Active Learning and Its Counterpart? An Empirical Study of Indonesian Curriculum Implementation," *SAGE Open* 13, no. 4 (2023), <https://doi.org/10.1177/21582440231214375>; A Halim, A Ansari, and N M Halim, "A Study on How the Merdeka Curriculum Promotes Multilingualism in Indonesian ELT Classrooms," *XLinguae* 17, no. 2 (2024): 107–21, <https://doi.org/10.18355/XL.2024.17.02.07>; Ayu Desrani, Suci Ramadhanti Febriani, and Rosita Ilhami, "Persepsi Mahasiswa Dalam Penggunaan Teknologi Pembelajaran Bahasa Arab Pada Pertemuan Tatap Muka Terbatas Di Masa Pandemi Covid-19," *Alibbaa': Jurnal Pendidikan Bahasa Arab* 3, no. 1 (2022): 1–19.

⁵ Arinal Hasanah and Haryadi Haryadi, "Tinjauan "Kurikulum Merdeka" Belajar Dengan Model Pendidikan Abad 21 Dalam Menghadapi Era Society 5.0," *GHANCARAN: Jurnal Pendidikan Bahasa Dan Sastra Indonesia*, 2022, 266–85, <https://doi.org/10.19105/ghancaran.vi.7595>; A Riansyah et al., "Teachers in the Digital Age: Sentiment Analysis of the Merdeka Mengajar Platform in the Indonesian Curriculum Policy," *Journal of Information Systems Engineering and Management* 10 (2025): 137–47, <https://doi.org/10.52783/jisem.v10i15s.2437>.

⁶ B Hutahaean et al., "Analysis of Innovative and Adaptive Higher Education Curriculum Development to Education 5.0 Based Challenges in Indonesia," *International Journal of Learning, Teaching and Educational Research* 23, no. 4 (2024): 76–98, <https://doi.org/10.26803/ijlter.23.4.5>.

⁷ D DIng et al., "Micro-Project Design and Teaching Practice Based on Sticky Theory," in *ACM International Conference Proceeding Series*, 2021, 274–78,

method also allows instructors to organize classroom learning by integrating project-based activities.⁸ The main principles of PjBL include: 1) Decision-making, 2) Focus on questions or problems, 3) Constructive investigation or design, 4) Autonomy, and 5) Realism. Project-Based Learning (PjBL) principles, which focus on teamwork and collaboration, greatly support students' receptive language skills.⁹ The stages in implementing PjBL are: 1) Presenting the problem, 2) Making a plan, 3) Setting a schedule, 4) Monitoring project development, 5) Conducting assessments, and 6) Evaluation.¹⁰ With this approach, students better understand the material and develop critical thinking, creativity, and collaboration skills.¹¹

Although PjBL has been widely implemented in various subjects such as science, mathematics, and the Indonesian language in Indonesia, its application in Arabic language learning has been relatively little discussed.¹² So far, Arabic language learning in madrasahs has focused

<https://doi.org/10.1145/3481056.3481079>; M Sheikh, M Fulbright, and G Hademenos, "Captain R. Rubber Ducky: A STEM Driven Project in Aquatic Robotics," *Physics Teacher* 49, no. 9 (2011): 557–59, <https://doi.org/10.1119/1.3661101>.

⁸ Ibnu Mahtumi, Ine Rahayu Purnamaningsih, and Tedi Purbangkara, *Pembelajaran Berbasis Proyek (Projects Based Learning)* (Uwais Inspirasi Indonesia, 2022); M A Menshikova et al., "Improving the Quality of Higher Education with the Project Based Learning," in *Proceedings of the 2019 IEEE International Conference Quality Management, Transport and Information Security, Information Technologies IT and QM and IS 2019*, 2019, 50–53, <https://doi.org/10.1109/ITQMIS.2019.8928306>.

⁹ Iis Susiawati Abdullah and Dadan Mardani Samsudin, "Learning Arabic Language Skills for Adults (Jack C. Richard Thought Review)," *Alibbaa': Jurnal Pendidikan Bahasa Arab* 3, no. 2 (2022): 103–23, <https://doi.org/10.19105/ajpba.v3i2.5924>.

¹⁰ Ridwan Abdullah Sani, "Pembelajaran Saintifik Untuk Implementasi Kurikulum 2013" (Bumi Aksara, 2014).

¹¹ A J R Neves and F Ribeiro, "Enhancing Engineering Education Through Project-Based Learning: A Case Study of Biometry and Computer Vision Courses," in *IEEE Global Engineering Education Conference, EDUCON*, 2024, <https://doi.org/10.1109/EDUCON60312.2024.10578896>; J Zhang et al., "Technology-Enabled Project-Based Learning: Let Every Child Embrace 'Good Learning,'" in *Lecture Notes in Educational Technology*, vol. Part F1761, 2023, 93–99, https://doi.org/10.1007/978-981-99-6225-9_11; D Agustira et al., "Development of a Project Based Learning Model with Multiliteracy Pedagogic Content to Improve Critical Thinking Skills, Problem Solving Skills, Decision Making Skills, and Environmental Literacy," *Edelweiss Applied Science and Technology* 9, no. 3 (2025): 2402–12, <https://doi.org/10.55214/25768484.v9i3.5812>.

¹² H T M Nguyen et al., "Teaching Mathematics Through Project-Based Learning in K-12 Schools: A Systematic Review of Current Practices, Barriers, and

on memorizing language structures and translating texts using a more traditional approach.¹³ At the same time, the need to implement dynamic, interactive, and practical learning models in line with the demands of the new curriculum has become increasingly urgent.¹⁴ This condition indicates that there is still considerable room to develop and explore the application of PjBL in Arabic language teaching, especially within the "*Kurikulum Merdeka*" framework.

The Project-Based Learning approach has been proven to be successful in improving students' understanding of Arabic language learning.¹⁵ Research conducted by Yasser Hassan Al-Abdullah shows that PjBL can improve student interaction and achievement in Arabic and develop critical thinking and teamwork skills.¹⁶ In line with these findings, research by Wiwit Rahma Wati and Zainurrahkhamah also found that applying PjBL in speaking skills learning improves students' speaking skills.¹⁷

In the context of implementation in madrasahs, Madrasah Aliyah Negeri (MAN) 2 Kutai Kartanegara is one of the state Islamic educational institutions that has adopted the "*Kurikulum Merdeka*" since the 2022/2023 academic year. Initial interviews with Arabic teachers showed that PjBL was chosen as one of the approaches to improve students' Arabic language skills. One form of its implementation is a

Future Developments," *TEM Journal* 13, no. 3 (2024): 2054–64, <https://doi.org/10.18421/TEM133-33>.

¹³ M F M Zaki et al., "Teaching Methods of Arabic Language Grammar Lessons Among Arabic Teachers at Religious Secondary Schools in Malaysia," *Theory and Practice in Language Studies* 14, no. 10 (2024): 3100–3108, <https://doi.org/10.17507/tpls.1410.11>; K Versteegh, "Learning Arabic in the Islamic World," in *Studies in Semitic Languages and Linguistics*, vol. 94, 2018, 245–67, https://doi.org/10.1163/9789004365216_014.

¹⁴ Neng Silvia et al., "Manajemen Perencanaan Dan Pengorganisasian Pembelajaran Bahasa Arab," *Alibbaa': Jurnal Pendidikan Bahasa Arab* 4, no. 1 (2023): 108–23, <https://doi.org/https://doi.org/10.19105/ajpba.v4i1.7497>.

¹⁵ Abdillah Mahbubi, "Conventional and Contemporary Arabic Learning Methods (Comparative Analysis)," *Alfazuna: Journal of Arabic Language Learning and Arabic Language* 9, no. December (2024): 107–32, <https://doi.org/10.15642/alfazuna.v9i1.4057>.

¹⁶ Yasser Hassan Al-Abdullah, "The Effectiveness of Using Project-Based Learning in Teaching Arabic (A Descriptive, Analytical, and Statistical Study)," *Arab Journal for Scientific Publishing* 8, no. 76 (2025): 298–316.

¹⁷ Wiwit Rahma Wati and Zainurrahkhamah, "The Effectiveness of Project-Based Learning to Improve Maharah Kalam," *Borneo Journal Of Language And Education* 1, no. 1 (2022): 59–70.

practical assessment for grade XII students, where they are asked to create and perform a drama in three languages: Indonesian, English, and Arabic. Additionally, PjBL is applied in other classes to address students' difficulties in practicing Arabic, especially when speaking in class.

Similar findings have also been presented in several other studies. The results of research conducted by Chakhar, prospective teachers considered PjBL interesting and quite effective as a language teaching approach that helped them develop critical thinking, collaborative team skills, and independent learning.¹⁸ Research by Marlinda Rahmawati and her colleagues showed that PjBL was effective and strategic in improving Arabic speaking skills for students.¹⁹ Meanwhile, research by Nur Atika Rima Ulinnuha and Muhammad Fadhil Husein showed that using PjBL effectively improved students' Arabic vocabulary mastery.²⁰ In addition, research by Auladatil Ma'wa et al. showed that PjBL enhanced students' ability to learn Arabic.²¹ However, these studies are generally experimental and have not specifically explored the application of PjBL integrated with the "*Kurikulum Merdeka*" in the context of madrasahs. Therefore, additional studies are needed to explore how PjBL works under the new curriculum framework, including challenges, supporting factors, and innovations that have emerged in the field.

Based on these needs, this article aims to explore the implementation of Project-Based Learning (PjBL) in Arabic language learning at MAN 2 Kutai Kartanegara, which is integrated with the "*Kurikulum Merdeka*". This study also seeks to identify the elements that facilitate and hinder its implementation in the madrasah environment.

¹⁸ Achour Chakhar, "An Exploratory Practice Study on the Impact of the Problem-Based Learning Approach in a TEYL Course OnPre-Service Primary School Teachers," *Studies in Applied Linguistics and TESOL* 23, no. 2 (2023): 100–117, <https://doi.org/10.52214/salt.v23i2.12088>.

¹⁹ Marlina Rahmawati et al., "Project Based Learning Model Improves Students' Arabic Speaking Ability: An Experimental Study," *Ukazh: Journal of Arabic Studies* 5, no. 2 (2024): 256–71, <https://doi.org/10.37274/ukazh.v5i2.980>.

²⁰ Nur Atika Rima Ulinnuha and Muhammad Fadhil Husein, "The Use of Project-Based Learning Models on the Mastery of Mufradat of State Students 1 Sungai Full," *AN NABA : JOURNAL OF ISLAMIC EDUCATION THOUGHT AND RESEARCH* 7, no. 2 (2024): 139–56.

²¹ Auladatil Ma'wa et al., "The Application of Project-Based Differentiated Learning in the Implementation of the "Kurikulum Merdeka" in Arabic Language Learning," *Al-Kalim: Arabic Language and Arabic Language Education Journal* 2, no. 2 (2023): 173–88.

The findings of this study are expected to provide tangible benefits for developing more innovative approaches to Arabic language learning and enrich the academic discourse on the integration of PjBL in Arabic language education in Indonesia.

Method

This study adopts a case study methodology within a qualitative framework. This method provides a comprehensive and in-depth description of the case under study.²² The case study in this research was conducted in several steps, namely 1) Case identification, namely how PjBL was implemented in Arabic language learning in the "*Kurikulum Merdeka*" at MAN 2 Kutai Kartanegara, 2) Data collection, and 3) Data analysis.²³

Data collection in this study used observation, interviews, and documentation techniques. Observation was conducted to observe the Arabic language learning process, particularly related to applying the PjBL approach. Interviews were conducted with one Arabic language teacher who is the deputy head of the curriculum department and two students from each of the three classes at MAN 2 Kutai Kartanegara to explore information related to the implementation of PjBL, along with the supporting and inhibiting factors in the implementation process of PjBL. Furthermore, documentation was used to collect data using Arabic learning tools. The researcher used the Miles and Huberman analysis framework, including data collection, condensation, data presentation, and conclusion drawing. At the data collection stage, the researcher collected data through interviews with informants, classroom observations, and documentation.

Then, the researcher condensed the data, where the data obtained was sorted, focused, simplified, and abstracted at the data presentation stage. The researcher presented the data from the two previous stages in

²² M Sholih Salimul Uqba et al., "Students' Perception of Translation Software: A Case Study in the Bachelor and Master Programs of Arabic Education," *Alibbaa': Jurnal Pendidikan Bahasa Arab* 5, no. 1 (2024): 82–97.

²³ Y Rashid et al., "Case Study Method: A Step-by-Step Guide for Business Researchers," *International Journal of Qualitative Methods* 18 (2019), <https://doi.org/10.1177/1609406919862424>; V Simón-Moya and M Rodríguez-García, "Methodology," in *Contributions to Management Science*, 2021, 145–48, https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-030-80635-4_15; C Houghton, D Casey, and S Smyth, "Selection, Collection and Analysis as Sources of Evidence in Case Study Research," *Nurse Researcher* 24, no. 4 (2017): 36–41, <https://doi.org/10.7748/nr.2017.e1482>.

the report. Next was the conclusion-drawing stage, where the researcher presented conclusions following the focus of the research. Data validity was checked using source triangulation. In addition, the researcher also used the method of triangulation. The reliability of this research was maintained through audit trails and member checking.

Results and Discussion

Project-based learning (PjBL) has been recognized as an effective learning strategy for improving students' Arabic language skills. PjBL can improve students' Arabic language skills because students can access and utilize learning media that they are familiar with and want to use, motivating them to learn Arabic. After all, they are doing something relevant to real life.²⁴

This section describes PjBL practices carried out by Arabic teachers, the challenges faced, and the strategies developed to optimize the learning process. This section presents the research findings based on data collected through observation, documentation, and interviews. The findings are organized into two main themes: a) project-based learning (PjBL) in Arabic language learning and b) factors that influence the implementation of PjBL in Arabic language learning.

Implementation of Project-Based Learning (PjBL)

Project-Based Learning (PjBL) has been implemented in Arabic language learning at MAN 2 Kutai Kartanegara as part of implementing the "*Kurikulum Merdeka*". This is based on an interview with one of the Arabic language teachers, who stated that PjBL was implemented during the practical exam for grade XII as one of the graduation requirements, which was to create a drama in three languages: Arabic, English, and Indonesian. This drama is part of the final assessment because it integrates cross-language skills into a single project and reduces students' workload by combining practical exams for multiple subjects.

In addition to being applied in the Grade 12 practical exam, PjBL is used in Arabic language learning in Grades 10 and 11. The reason for implementing PjBL in Arabic language learning is that Arabic language

²⁴ T Slater and G Beckett, "Integrating Language, Content, Technology, and Skills Development through Project-Based Language Learning: Blending Frameworks for Successful Unit Planning," *Mextesol Journal* 43, no. 1 (2019); E Copeland Solas and K Wilson, "Lessons Learned and Strategies Used While Teaching Core-Curriculum Science Courses to English Language Learners at a Middle Eastern University," *Journal of Turkish Science Education* 12, no. 2 (2015): 81–94, <https://doi.org/10.12973/tused.10142a>.

learning requires a teaching method that accommodates the integrated mastery of receptive skills (listening and reading) and productive skills (speaking and writing). PjBL facilitates this integration through project-based tasks. Based on interviews with one of the Arabic teachers, implementing PjBL in Arabic language learning in grades X and XI consists of several main stages: 1) Planning and Scheduling, 2) Monitoring, and 3) Evaluation.

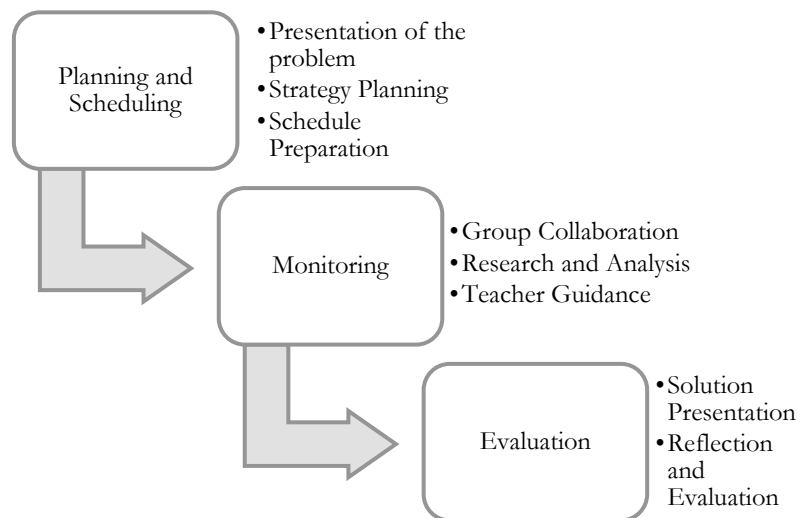


Figure 1. Stages of PjBL implementation in Arabic language learning

Planning and Scheduling

Implementing the Project-Based Learning (PjBL) method at MAN 2 Kutai Kartanegara involves a structured planning and scheduling process, which includes three main steps: presenting problems and formulating important questions, planning strategies, and scheduling activities. This approach aligns with the principles and practices of PjBL described in various studies.

The first step is to present and formulate important questions. These questions take the form of issues or problems. The problems raised must be relevant and interesting to stimulate students' interest and participation. Problem formulation is the most important factor in the success of a project. These questions will help students understand the essence of learning and stimulate their problem-solving skills. In this case, integrating the local context in the presentation of questions can enrich students' learning experiences, for example, by raising issues or

traditions that are closer to their lives, so that learning becomes more meaningful.

The next stage is the planning stage. The results of interviews with teachers indicate that students are free to determine the form of the project they want to carry out at this stage. Examples include conversation videos, comics, essays, and short news videos. The projects most frequently chosen by students were conversation videos and news videos. Therefore, these were the projects implemented in the classroom. Planning was carried out in groups using four systematic steps. The steps are as follows: 1) project concept map; 2) content idea development, such as creating a dialogue script accompanied by a glossary of new vocabulary; 3) structured division of roles among group members; 4) preparation of facilities and infrastructure; 5) project schedule preparation; and 6) determination of completion criteria. In this case, the deadline for submitting the project is one week before the final exam, and the video must contain 15 new concepts to be considered acceptable.

Table 1. Project Schedule Preparation

Result	Activity	Target Output
1	Brainstorming and script writing	Draft script approved by the teacher
2	Dialogue practice and audio recording	Raw audio files
3	Shooting scenes	Raw recordings
4	Video editing and subtitles	Draft version 1
5	Revisions based on feedback from teachers	Final video

Based on findings from observations and interviews, limited time and workload from other subjects encouraged students to choose video-based projects, which they considered more efficient. However, students' enthusiasm in designing projects remained high. These findings align with Grant's (2017) research, which shows that flexibility in choosing projects can increase students' motivation and creativity in PjBL-based Arabic language learning.²⁵ In addition, research by Aldobekhi and Abahussain also found that giving students flexibility in designing

²⁵ S Grant, "Implementing Project-Based Language Teaching in an Asian Context: A University EAP Writing Course Case Study from Macau," *Asian-Pacific Journal of Second and Foreign Language Education* 2, no. 1 (2017), <https://doi.org/10.1186/s40862-017-0027-x>.

projects strengthens their active engagement in the learning process and trains their critical thinking and independence.²⁶ In the context of planning and scheduling, the role of teachers as facilitators proved to be important because the success of the initial stages of PjBL depends on the clarity of the theme, realistic deadlines, and teacher assistance in the project preparation process. These findings reinforce the research of MAN 2 Kutai Kartanegara that structured planning and scheduling can provide clear direction for students in developing their Arabic projects.

Monitoring

The next stage in implementing Project-Based Learning (PjBL) at MAN 2 Kutai Kartanegara is monitoring, which serves to monitor the progress of students' projects during the process. At this stage, the role of teachers as learning guides is very important to ensure that students' projects run smoothly and follow the learning objectives that have been set.²⁷ This monitoring focuses not only on the progress of the final product, but also on the process undertaken by students, including collaboration in groups, investigation and analysis of project themes, and guidance provided by teachers to overcome obstacles that arise.

One important aspect of project monitoring is collaboration among group members. In PjBL, group-based activities require students to be involved in the planning and implementing of projects, such as developing conversation videos or writing short news articles in Arabic. This collaboration requires students to share ideas, divide tasks, and unite their vision in achieving the project objectives. Based on interviews with one of the Arabic teachers, a common obstacle was a lack of coordination within the group, which could affect the quality of cooperation. However, teacher monitoring helps ensure that each group member actively contributes and discusses their ideas to reach an agreement. Teachers monitor group dynamics and provide feedback if there is an imbalance in task distribution or a lack of clarity in roles among members. Thus, effective collaboration can strengthen project outcomes

²⁶ S A Aldobekhi and M O Abahussain, "Enhancing English Language Students Productive Skills through Project-Based Learning: A Mixed Method Research," *International Journal of Learning, Teaching and Educational Research* 23, no. 1 (2024): 231–57, <https://doi.org/10.26803/ijlter.23.1.12>.

²⁷ S Chen, "During the Reform: How Teachers' Lived Experiences Influence Their Beliefs and Practices of Project- Based Learning," *International Journal of Educational Reform*, 2024, <https://doi.org/10.1177/10567879241265096>.

and improve students' social skills.²⁸ Teacher monitoring is an important part of the learning process. It helps increase student engagement, guide learning activities, and assess student progress and needs to ensure more effective and targeted teaching.²⁹

The next stage of this monitoring is to investigate and analyze the project theme, which is considered important in PjBL, where students are asked to gather information, explore ideas, and analyze material relevant to their project. In this case, students are expected to explore topics, such as everyday conversation texts or current news, and understand how these topics can be developed through creative and informative projects. However, based on the interview results, students often experience difficulties composing texts appropriate to the given theme, especially in terms of diction, grammar, and correct sentence structure. Therefore, teacher monitoring is essential to evaluate students' progress in investigation and analysis and provide guidance on developing more mature content in line with learning objectives.

Teacher guidance is a key element in the monitoring stage. Teachers play an active role in providing feedback to students to overcome various obstacles, especially regarding language proficiency and correct grammatical structure.³⁰ One of the problems often faced by students is difficulty in composing conversation or news texts that are grammatically correct. To overcome this, teachers provide additional consultation, both inside and outside the classroom, to discuss and correct the texts prepared by students. This guidance covers important aspects, such as correct grammar, appropriate word choice, and proper pronunciation techniques. Students can improve their projects with ongoing guidance before the final evaluation stage. In addition, teachers also provide opportunities for students to ask questions or seek clarification on material they do not understand. This ensures that the learning process runs smoothly and students achieve optimal results.

Overall, the monitoring stage carried out by teachers in PjBL at MAN 2 Kutai Kartanegara plays an important role in supporting the success of student projects. Students can overcome challenges during the

²⁸ N Ehrenfeld and I S Horn, "Teacher Monitoring Routines: Understanding Pedagogical Judgments during Students' Collaborative Learning," in *Computer-Supported Collaborative Learning Conference, CSCL*, vol. 1, 2019, 120–27.

²⁹ Annida Zulfa et al., "Developing an Innovative Board Game Using a Cooperative Learning Approach to Foster Interest in Learning Arabic" 6, no. 1 (2025).

³⁰ Ehrenfeld and Horn, "Teacher Monitoring Routines: Understanding Pedagogical Judgments during Students' Collaborative Learning."

project process with effective group collaboration, in-depth investigation of the project theme, and intensive teacher guidance. This teacher monitoring helps students complete their projects well and improve their skills in working together, thinking critically, and applying Arabic appropriately.

Evaluation

After the monitoring stage is complete and the students' projects are collected, the next stage is evaluation. This stage is very important for assessing students' work objectively and providing constructive feedback to develop their abilities further. This evaluation uses three assessment components: solution presentation, reflection, and evaluation.

In the solution presentation stage, students show their project results to the teacher for assessment. Since most students choose conversation videos and short news reading videos, the presentation shows their work in front of the teacher and classmates. This process allows students to demonstrate their Arabic language skills in a real-life context, from fluency and grammar accuracy to communicating content effectively.³¹ This effectively encourages active learning and student participation, which helps improve fluency and communication skills.³²

Teachers use a pre-designed assessment rubric to assess the presentations in the learning device document. The rubric covers five main aspects, namely fluency (competence in grammar and phonetics), accuracy (competence in grammar/Nahwu and Sharaf), content (competence in discourse and sociolinguistics), pronunciation (competence in grammar and phonetics), and body language (strategic competence). Each element has a weighting, with a maximum total score of 100. With this approach, the evaluation focuses on academic aspects and students' ability to communicate in an Arabic contextually, and effectively.

³¹ M M Capraro and M Jones, "Interdisciplinary STEM Project-Based Learning," in *STEM Project-Based Learning an Integrated Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics (STEM) Approach*, 2013, 51–58, https://doi.org/10.1007/978-94-6209-143-6_6.

³² H Günzel and L Brehm, "A Roadbook for the Professionalization of Project-Based Learning Courses," in *International Conference on Higher Education Advances*, 2024, 1094–1101, <https://doi.org/10.4995/HEAd24.2024.17194>.

Table 2. Student Project Assessment Rubric

Assessment Aspect	Score
Fluency (competence in grammar and phonetics)	20
Accuracy (grammar or Nahwu and Sharaf competence)	20
Content (discourse and sociolinguistic competence)	30
Speech or pronunciation (competence in grammar and phonetics)	15
Gestures (strategic competence)	15
Total	100

The next stage is reflection and evaluation after the presentation and assessment are complete. At this stage, students are invited to reflect on their experiences during the project process, from the planning stage to implementation and completion. Through this reflective process, students are encouraged to recognize their abilities and areas for improvement and understand how their learning process can be improved.³³ On the other hand, teachers also conduct a comprehensive evaluation of the effectiveness of the project implementation, including assessing the extent to which the PjBL method has succeeded in improving students' Arabic language skills.

Learning becomes more meaningful through this reflection and evaluation stage because students are assessed based on the final product and guided to understand their learning process. Teachers also receive valuable feedback to improve their teaching approaches in the future. Thus, the evaluation stage in implementing PjBL serves as an assessment and self-development opportunity for students and a means of continuous improvement in teaching practices.³⁴

Based on the data presented above, there is clear evidence that the implementation of Project-Based Learning (PjBL) in Arabic

³³ N Zhai et al., "Can Reflective Interventions Improve Students' Academic Achievement? A Meta-Analysis," *Thinking Skills and Creativity* 49 (2023), <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.tsc.2023.101373>; V Indrašienė et al., "Critical Reflection in Students' Critical Thinking Teaching and Learning Experiences," *Sustainability (Switzerland)* 15, no. 18 (2023), <https://doi.org/10.3390/su151813500>.

³⁴ O Mirmotahari et al., "Student Engagement by Employing Student Peer Reviews with Criteria-Based Assessment," in *IEEE Global Engineering Education Conference, EDUCON*, vol. April-2019, 2019, 1152–57, <https://doi.org/10.1109/EDUCON.2019.8725174>.

language learning at MAN 2 Kutai Kartanegara was carried out in three main stages, namely: 1) Planning and Scheduling, 2) Monitoring, and 3) Evaluation. During the planning stage, teachers and students collaborate in formulating problems, planning strategies, and creating activity schedules. During the monitoring stage, group collaboration, the investigation process, and teacher guidance are key to the quality of the resulting projects. Meanwhile, the evaluation stage assesses the final product and emphasizes the importance of reflection on the learning process.

These findings reinforce previous research showing that flexibility in choosing projects, active student involvement, and the role of educators in a guiding capacity are highly influential in the success of PjBL. With the implementation of PjBL, Arabic language learning becomes more contextual, creative, and meaningful while promoting the improvement of modern competencies such as analytical thinking, teamwork, effective interaction, and independent learning.³⁵ This aligns with the principles upheld in the "*Kurikulum Merdeka*", which emphasizes flexibility in learning as a key aspect, project-based learning, and the development of critical, creative, and collaborative thinking skills. By implementing PjBL in Arabic language learning, the primary objectives of the "*Kurikulum Merdeka*" can be achieved, namely for students to become creative, collaborative, critical thinkers, and effective communicators in the real world.³⁶

Supporting and Inhibiting Factors

Implementing the Project-Based Learning (PjBL) approach in Arabic language learning at MAN 2 Kutai Kartanegara cannot be separated from various factors influencing its success and obstacles. Based on findings from field research through interviews with teachers and students and direct observation, these factors can be classified into two main categories: supporting and inhibiting factors. These two factors do not stand alone but interact dynamically in influencing the effectiveness of PjBL implementation in Arabic language classes.

³⁵ S D Jasti and A Pavani, "Employing Problem Based Learning System in Advancing Communication Skills Proficiency in Professional Communication for Engineering Undergraduates," *Journal of Engineering Education Transformations* 34, no. Special Issue (2021): 128–34, <https://doi.org/10.16920/jeet/2021/v34i0/157119>.

³⁶ Novita Maula Salsabila and Agung Setiawan, "The Application of Project Based Learning (PjBL) in Improving Mahārah Qirāah in the Independent Learning Curriculum," *Al Mi'yar: Scientific Journal of Arabic Language Learning and Arabic Language Learning* 7, no. 1 (2024): 273–90.

Supporting Factors

One of the key factors driving the successful implementation of PjBL is the high enthusiasm of students for this approach. Student enthusiasm can be demonstrated by 1) a 100% increase in voluntary participation in project consultation sessions outside of mandatory hours, 2) 90% of project proposals submitted before the deadline (compared to only 60% for conventional assignments), and 3) visual documentation showing intensive group work in the library/language laboratory. Despite challenges during the initial implementation phase, the students' enthusiasm was the primary driving force. Teachers strategically accelerated this potential by providing structured freedom in choosing the form and content of projects and extending the completion time to three weeks. The synergy between creative space and flexible time allowed students to turn initial challenges into innovation momentum, where enthusiasm was supported and actively drove project success. This approach is in line with the theory proposed by Griffin (2016), which asserts that giving autonomy in projects can increase ownership of the learning process and strengthen students' intrinsic motivation.³⁷

In addition, intensive teacher guidance was also a significant supporting factor. Interviews with one of the students revealed that teachers provided consultation services outside of class hours to help students overcome various obstacles, such as compiling material appropriate to the theme and revising project texts. This finding was reinforced through direct observation, which showed that teachers actively involved students inside and outside the classroom regarding the progress of their projects. This approach demonstrates the application of facilitation principles in PjBL, where teachers function not as primary material providers but as supporters of students' independent learning processes. This role of teachers reflects the learning facilitator model in Vygotsky's social constructivism theory, which emphasizes the importance of support from more knowledgeable parties to encourage optimal student development in the zone of proximal development (ZPD).³⁸

³⁷ B W Griffin, "Perceived Autonomy Support, Intrinsic Motivation, and Student Ratings of Instruction," *Studies in Educational Evaluation* 51 (2016): 116–25, <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.stueduc.2016.10.007>.

³⁸ I Thompson, "Stimulating Reluctant Writers: A Vygotskian Approach to Teaching Writing in Secondary Schools," *English in Education* 46, no. 1 (2012): 85–100, <https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1754-8845.2011.01117.x>; K Lambright, "The Effect of a Teacher's Mindset on the Cascading Zones of Proximal Development: A Systematic

Inhibiting Factors

On the other hand, several factors inhibit the effectiveness of PjBL implementation, including the diversity of students' Arabic language proficiency levels. Based on interviews with teachers, it was found that the educational backgrounds of students varied greatly, including graduates of Islamic boarding schools, Madrasah Tsanawiyah (MTs), and junior high schools (SMP). Students with prior experience learning Arabic, such as graduates of Islamic boarding schools and MTs, demonstrate better ability to complete projects. Conversely, students new to Arabic and learning it for the first time at a madrasah face greater difficulties in understanding language structure and drafting project scripts. This finding reinforces Sadler's observation that gaps in prior learning experiences can be a major barrier to implementing PjBL, especially in second language learning.³⁹

To overcome these obstacles, teachers implemented adaptive strategies by adjusting the projects' difficulty level. For example, teachers provided simple text examples for conversation video projects following the specified theme. Meanwhile, for news reading video projects, teachers limited the number of paragraphs to three so students would not feel overwhelmed. This differentiated approach aligns with the principles outlined by Tomlinson, which emphasizes the importance of adapting learning content, processes, and products, considering students' readiness, interests, and needs.⁴⁰ This is one of the main principles of effective learning based on student diversity.

Based on the above description, it can be concluded that the implementation of PjBL in Arabic language learning at MAN 2 Kutai Kartanegara is influenced by two main factors, namely supporting factors in the form of student enthusiasm and teacher assistance, and inhibiting factors in the form of diversity in students' initial abilities in Arabic. However, teachers' adaptive and responsive strategies to students' conditions can minimize existing obstacles so that all students

Review," *Technology, Knowledge and Learning* 29, no. 3 (2024): 1313–29, <https://doi.org/10.1007/s10758-023-09696-0>.

³⁹ K J Chua, "A Comparative Study on First-Time and Experienced Project-Based Learning Students in an Engineering Design Module," *European Journal of Engineering Education* 39, no. 5 (2014): 556–72, <https://doi.org/10.1080/03043797.2014.895704>.

⁴⁰ C A Tomlinson, "Differentiated Instruction in Rural School Contexts," in *Gifted Education in Rural Schools: Developing Place-Based Interventions*, 2021, 79–90, <https://doi.org/10.4324/9781003017004-11>.

can actively participate in the designed projects. This finding reinforces Grant's view that teachers in the PjBL context must act as designers, facilitators, and mediators of learning to support students' optimal success.⁴¹

Conclusion

Project-based learning (PjBL) in Arabic language learning at MAN 2 Kutai Kartanegara has been running well based on the "*Kurikulum Merdeka*" principles. PjBL is implemented by involving various projects, the most widely applied being conversation videos and short news reading videos, with the main stages being planning, monitoring, and evaluation.

The implementation of PjBL provides benefits for students in developing their language skills. The main factors supporting this include high student enthusiasm and the role of teachers as facilitators by providing freedom and guidance. However, there is a major obstacle, namely the differences in students' educational backgrounds, which result in varying levels of Arabic language proficiency. As a result, some students experience difficulties in composing Arabic texts. These obstacles are overcome through teacher guidance, adjusting project tasks to students' abilities, providing examples of simple conversation texts, and limiting the number of paragraphs in news reading projects.

As a follow-up to the findings of this study, several recommendations can be implemented, namely optimizing the role of teachers as mentors, where teachers provide regular consultations to help students develop their projects, and implementing group-based mentoring, where students with better Arabic language skills guide their peers who are still struggling. With these recommendations, Project-Based Learning is expected to continue to be an effective learning strategy in improving students' Arabic language skills at MAN 2 Kutai Kartanegara, which aligns with the "*Kurikulum Merdeka*".

To overcome the challenges of differences in educational backgrounds and gaps in Arabic language skills, further research is needed to develop a different PjBL scaffolding model that provides tiered project guidance based on initial student diagnosis. This model can be integrated with cross-ability peer mentoring strategies through quasi-experiments to measure its effectiveness in improving Arabic writing

⁴¹ Grant, "Implementing Project-Based Language Teaching in an Asian Context: A University EAP Writing Course Case Study from Macau."

skills. The study also suggests exploring the integration of AI-based technology for personalized learning, such as platforms with real-time Arabic grammar feedback and an adaptive project bank that responds to individual student profiles.

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