

A Review on Pragmatism-Philosophy: Project-Based Learning in Grammar Teaching

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Abstract

The challenge of teaching English grammar in Indonesia, aggravated by evolving curricula and the concept of “Merdeka Belajar,” compels the teachers to adapt more creative and critical teaching methods. This study evaluates the effectiveness of Project-Based Learning (PjBL) as a promising method for enhancing grammar learning. Grounded in pragmatism-philosophy of John Dewey perspectives, the research aims to recognize the significance of creating an optimal teaching-learning process. Utilizing document analysis, the study delves into five article which discussing PjBL in grammar teaching. The findings offer valuable insights that bridge traditional pedagogy with today's school needs. By highlighting the transformative potential of grammar teaching, this research supports teachers in navigating the ever-changing of language teaching.

Keywords: *project-based learning, pragmatism, grammar*

Introduction

Reporting on the “Merdeka Belajar” article at Kemdikbud, according to the speech of the Indonesian Minister of Education and Culture, Nadiem Anwar Makarim at the commemoration of National Teacher's Day in 2019, which became the foundation for the concept is defined as the freedom of teachers to assess student learning outcomes with various assessment instruments, free from burdensome administration, and free from pressure that hinders innovation. (Kusumaryono, 2020). Officially, the “Merdeka Belajar” curriculum provides changes that indicate a paradigm shift from a teacher- and curriculum-centered learner approach to an approach that is more focused on students' freedom and independence in the learning process.

To achieve an appropriate learning goal, students must have enough space to be proactive in understanding the lesson taught. Because of that, the teacher facilitates students' need by giving students freedom to create, comprehend, and improve their own abilities during the learning process so that can accomplish the original goals as EFL learners. (Aminah, Maulida, & Supriadi, Project-based learning in promoting learner autonomy, 2023). This fits perfectly with the fundamental concept of what has been described previously regarding the concept of “Merdeka Belajar”

Teaching grammatical accuracy is a challenging task for teachers, especially in the context of English as a Foreign Language (EFL) learner who face various inhibiting factors, including a lack of confidence in producing language output. In response to this problem, the prior researches have advocated the implementation of Project-based learning (PjBL) as a

potential solution (Nurcahyoko, 2014; Dilekli, 2020; Aminah, Maulida, & Supriadi, 2023). Moreover, evaluated by researchers, including Chen & Yang (2019), PjBL has been recognized to have a positive impact on academic achievement and soft skill development, especially in primary and secondary education. Besides, PjBL serves as an effective method for students to overcome grammar challenges and improve their overall language proficiency. This method encourages students to actively participate in activities that involve exploration, negotiation, interpretation, and creation, providing them with opportunities to construct solutions and, consequently, improve their language skills (Lee, 2015). In this way, PjBL appears as a comprehensive and impactful method to tackle the hurdles associated with teaching grammatical accuracy to EFL learners.

Based on the previous findings above, the researcher sums up that teaching grammar by the use of PjBL method can enhance achievement in teaching and learning process. While existing literature extensively covers the broader implication of “Merdeka Belajar” in transforming Indonesian education how this educational initiative intersects with PjBL when applied to the teaching of grammar. Despite recognized positive impacts of PjBL on academic achievement and soft skills development, as indicated by Chen and Yang’s (2019). There is limited research addressing the nuanced implementation of PjBL in grammar teaching on the perspective teaching philosophy.

Moreover, project-based learning in grammar teaching finds its philosophical foundation in pragmatism. Why is PjBL important in pragmatism? A prominent pragmatist philosopher and educator, Dewey, J (1916), emphasizes the importance of experiential learning and the practical application of knowledge in his work “Democracy and Education.” PjBL, by its nature, promotes active engagement and problem-solving in real-world context, and contributing to the holistic development of students, aligning with Dewey’s pragmatic educational philosophy.

In pragmatism, PjBL aligns with practical, real-world applications, emphasizing experiential learning and recognizing the dynamic nature of knowledge (epistemology and ontology), PjBL embraces axiological values by prioritizing the real-world relevance of grammar, reflecting the pragmatic emphasis on practical utility. These underpinning but also resonates with core values and fosters comprehensive students development. The study’s data findings contribute valuable insights into how pragmatism-grounded PjBL effectively shapes grammar teaching, informing future considerations in teaching philosophy.

Method

Qualitative research methods were used in this study to analyze document. Understanding and classification of primary sources, or direct reports from people who have direct experience with the topic. During the research process, researchers use credible sources to gather thoughts and data that support their theories. By following this process, researcher can determine whether the information provided by the sources they consult will be valuable to their research by evaluating their purpose and value. For many years, document analysis has been a helpful research approach (Morgan, 2022). The consistency of the data makes document analysis including that of book and journal article can be beneficial as well. Nevertheless, the data are unaffected when the researcher analyze pre-existing text (Merriam & Tisdell, 2016). Discovering the study’s documents is the first step in document analysis (Morgan, 2022). Researchers have to take a few things into consideration

when choosing the documents. While choosing which documents to include, these four considerations (Flick, 2018):

1. Authenticity
2. Credibility
3. Representativeness
4. Meaning

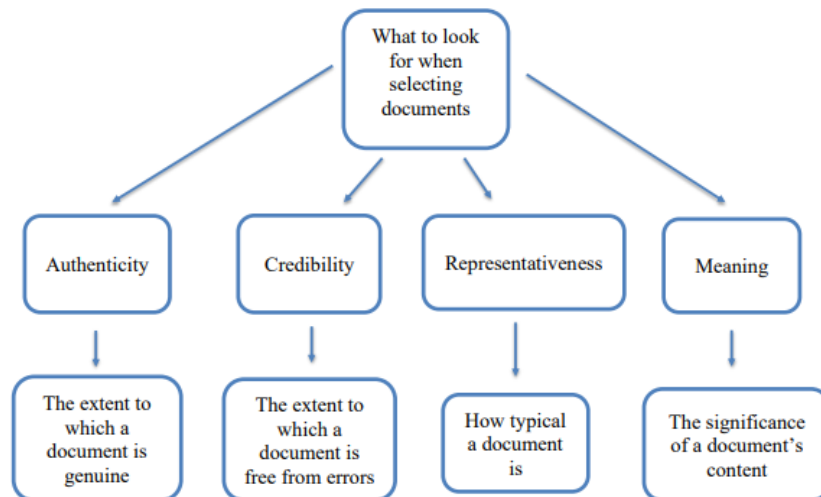


Figure 1. Factors to use for selecting documents (*Kridel, 2015*)

The researcher used pre-existing text and data from five academic papers that addressed PjBL and grammar teaching in this study. Within ten years, the documents were collected from online journal publications. The researcher concluded the findings and analyzed whether PjBL as best promising method in grammar teaching will be insightful through teaching philosophical perspectives.

Results

Based on the results of document analysis on PjBL as a method of teaching grammar found that the success of Project-Based Learning (PjBL) in grammar teaching, rooted pragmatism aligns with various philosophical perspectives, encompassing epistemology, ontology, axiology. Astuti, Ampa, & Natsir (2021) contribute to epistemology, asserting that PjBL allows students to actively engage in learning through self-decided projects, shaping their understanding of grammar. Aminah, Maulida, & Supriadi (2023) contribute to ontology and axiology, showcasing how PjBL enhances students' autonomy in EFL, specifically in grammar teaching, reflecting a philosophical stance on the nature of being and values.

Moreover, the researcher's results align with empirical evidence which is contributed in pragmatism dividing into three researches, (1) emphasizing PjBL's purpose in providing students the space to self-improve, as indicated by Nurcahyoko (2014), where the result of the study showed that PjBL was effective to be used in grammar teaching for both high and low motivated students. Additionally, (2) Asuan's (2023) another empirical research PjBL, demonstrating a slightly significant improving on students' grammar learning. Likewise, (3) the pedagogical aspect of pragmatism is reinforced by Guo, Saab, Post, & Admiraal (2020), emphasizing how PjBL, when promoted by teachers, cultivates innovation by granting

students the freedom to experiment and succeed with ideas, fostering a deeper comprehension of grammar principles.

Essentially, these diverse philosophical perspectives converge to endorse PjBL as a comprehensive and effective approach to grammar teaching, encompassing a holistic teaching philosophy. As education is fundamentally intertwined with philosophical underpinnings, these perspectives collectively affirm the pedagogical significance and transformative potential of PjBL in grammar instruction.

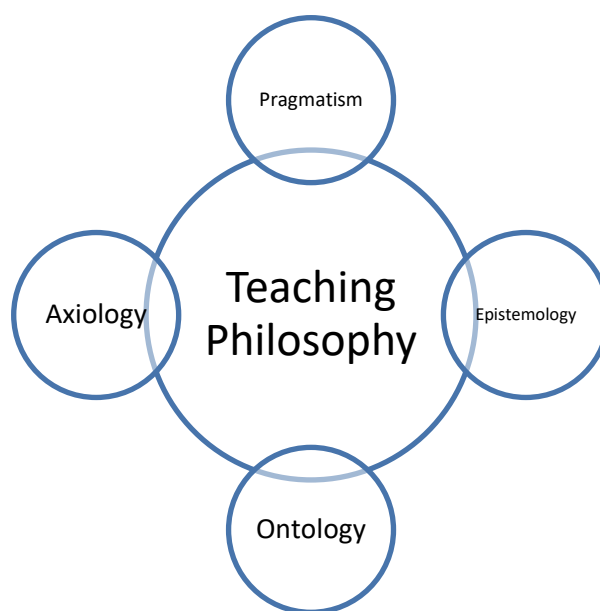


Figure 2 The Correlation among teaching philosophy perspectives

Discussion

This study advocates for the inclusion of Project-Based Learning (PjBL) as a transformative educational method to enhance grammar instruction, based on the result of the preceding document analysis. The study highlights the shortcomings of traditional grammar and the need for more innovative teaching strategies. Writing, sentence structure, and vocabulary could be included in the expansion of grammar proficiency.

PjBL is developed as pedagogical method and widely used in education to assist academic learning and develop critical thinking, cooperation, and communication skills. In addition, PjBL draws from various philosophical perspectives, is an innovative and successful method to grammar instruction. The following philosophical postulates must be used in order to analyze how project-based learning in grammar instruction uses teaching philosophy perspectives, particularly in pragmatism: (1) ontology in PjBL for grammar instruction, emphasizing student autonomy and reflecting a philosophical perspective on being and values; (2) epistemology in PjBL for grammar instruction, stressing student participation in self-directed projects and forming a deeper understanding of grammar concepts; and (3) axiology of PjBL for grammar instruction, highlighting the importance of students' autonomy and aligning with philosophical perspectives on the significance of personal development and values.

Ontology in PjBL for Grammar Teaching

Based on one of the previous research are conducted by Aminah, Maulida, and Supriadi (2023) investigate how Project-Based Learning (PjBL) which is based on ontology, improves EFL students' autonomy in teaching grammar. In line with with the larger conversation about ontological integration in grammar education, follows Guarino & Giaretta (1995); Thomas (2000); and Noy & McGuinness (2001) by emphasizing ontology as a framework for arranging grammar concepts within real-world projects. According to Brusilovsky & Millán (2007), ontology in PjBL promises personalized experiences by enabling adaptive learning pathways.

According to Blumenfeld, et al (1991), PjBL projects that incorporate ontological issues are in line with curriculum objectives, effortlessly integrate grammar, and promote interdisciplinary connections. Ontology contributes to the collaborative nature of PjBL by encouraging teamwork in the application of grammatical knowledge (Kolodner, 2002). The integration helps students become proficient communicators by stressing practical application. According to Jonassen and Rohrer-Murphy (1999), ontology-based PjBL promotes lifelong learning and delves into complex grammar ideas outside of the curriculum.

Teachers, as facilitators, guide students through ontological structures, deepening grammar understanding within meaningful project. Reflective PjBL with ontology encourages introspection, refining grammar skills based on real-world experiences. In conclusion, Aminah, Maulida, and Supriadi's (2023) exploration highlights the dynamic, engaging, and applicable learning environment created by integrating ontology and PjBL in grammar education, offering a comprehensive approach in contemporary educational contexts.

Epistemology in PjBL for Grammar Teaching

The study is conducted by (Astuti, Ampa, & Natsir, 2021) has greatly advanced the subject of epistemology in project-based learning (PjBL) for grammar teaching. Based on that research, PjBL assists students learn grammar more easily and gives them the occasion to actively participate in the process by choosing their own projects, which helps them develop a deeper knowledge of the language. This viewpoint is consistent with the wider discussion over the epistemic advantages of practical, hands-on learning in the context of language teaching.

Additionally, the epistemological underpinnings of PjBL are theoretically supported by researchers like (Vygotsky, 1979) and (Dewey, 1916). The importance of social interactions and cooperative learning activities in the process of creating knowledge is emphasized by Vygotsky's socio-cultural theory. PjBL supports Vygotsky's theory that learning is a social process by emphasizing group project work. Leading educational philosopher Dewey promotes active participation and experience-based learning. By the theories align with the idea that PjBL enables students to take an active role in their education and develop a deeper comprehension of grammar through real-world application in relevant projects.

Furthermore, highlighting to the importance of actively engaging in problem-solving within projects, the findings align with the theoretical perspectives of Vygotsky and Dewey, as well as the practical insights of Hmelo-Silver (2004). In this framework of PjBL, this study's body of work highlights the significance of experiential learning in helping students grasp grammar and emphasizes the cognitive advantages of practical, cooperative method to language learning.

Axiology in PjBL for Grammar Teaching

The study conducted (Aminah, Maulida, & Supriadi, Project-based learning in promoting learner autonomy, 2023) adds a great deal to the field of axiology in project-based learning (PjBL) for grammar instruction. Their research sheds light on how PjBL not only improves students' autonomy and makes grammar instruction in English as a Foreign Language (EFL) easier, but also reflects a philosophical position on values and the nature of being. This is consistent with more general conversations on the significance of encouraging autonomy in language learning (Benson, 2001) and the usefulness of integrating philosophical ideas into teaching methods (Noddings, 2002). The study supports the notion that PjBL, when created in accordance with axiological principles, empowers students to take charge of their language learning process by promoting independent projects that align with their values and worldview.

Implication of Pragmatism on PjBL for Grammar Teaching

The knowledge of pragmatism is greatly enhanced by empirical data, especially it comes from three distinct research investigations. Firstly, Nurcahyoko (2014) states that the value of Project-Based Learning (PjBL) in giving students space to grow as individuals and demonstrates how well it works for teaching grammar to both highly and low-motivated students. Besides, Asuan (2023) shows that students' grammar learning has significantly improved. Moreover, Guo, Saab, Post, & Admiraal (2020) support the pedagogical side of pragmatism by emphasizing how PjBL, when supported by teachers, encourages creativity by giving students the chance to try newer things and be successful with their ideas. This method improves understanding of grammatical principles.

Pragmatism's impact on PjBL for grammar teaching lies in its emphasis on practical methods, experimentation, and critique of traditional systems. It aims to cultivate adaptable thinking by integrating philosophy and education, embedding grammar lessons in real-world contexts. The methodology encourages effective learning through curiosity and rejects traditional approaches, fostering a student-centric environment that aligns with their needs for an enjoyable and relevant learning experience. The implications for information literacy underscore grammar's role in addressing communication challenges, with a curriculum adapting based on tested experiences. In the pragmatism-PjBL framework, teachers guide experiences, aligning grammar skills with effective communication needs through real-world problem-solving.

Conclusion

Project-Based Learning (PjBL) stands as a cutting-edge method, representing an innovative approach to grammar instruction that is gaining momentum. This method underscores the importance of seamlessly integrating PjBL into instructional procedures, advocating for a substantial shift from conventional teaching practices. The transformative nature of PjBL allows teachers to reshape grammar instruction by fostering collaboration, critical thinking, and communication skills. A philosophy review further supports the efficacy of PjBL, reinforcing the theory that PjBL is an effective approach. This philosophical underpinning adds weight to the recommendation that PjBL be implemented in schools, providing a strong rationale for its adoption.

Moreover, the success of PjBL is rooted in its student-centric approach, urging teachers to conduct an initial assessment of students' knowledge and interests before implementation. This personalized approach ensures that PjBL aligns with the specific requirements and learning styles of the students, enhancing its effectiveness. Additionally, PjBL's interactive grammar investigation encourages collaborative efforts among students, fostering an engaging learning environment that promotes a profound comprehension of grammatical concepts. In conclusion, the philosophy review, coupled with the student-centric approach and interactive elements of PjBL, strengthens the recommendation for its widespread implementation in schools as an effective and transformative method for grammar teaching.

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