

EFL TEACHERS' PERSPECTIVES ON TEACHING WRITING AND PRESENTING SKILLS THROUGH PROJECT-BASED LEARNING IN THE MERDEKA CURRICULUM

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Article Info	Abstract
Article History Received: June 2025 Revised: August 2025 Accepted: September 2025 Published: October 2025	<i>Project-based learning (PjBL) has been widely applied in English language education, yet its classroom implementation often presents considerable challenges for teachers. This qualitative study investigates these challenges in teaching writing and presenting skills within the context of the Merdeka Curriculum, where integrated skills are emphasized as key learning outcomes. Four English teachers who have actively applied PjBL participated in the study. Data were collected through semi-structured interviews and an open-ended questionnaire, which were analyzed thematically using Braun and Clarke's framework to enhance trustworthiness. Triangulation techniques were employed during data collection and analysis. The findings revealed several challenges, with the most critical being the limited facilities and unequal access to resources, as well as the complexities of assessing group projects. These findings underscore the importance of professional development, curriculum support, and institutional policy in enabling EFL teachers to teach writing and presentation skills through PjBL effectively. Addressing these challenges can improve the sustainability of PjBL practice and foster students' engagement and skills development in English language learning.</i>
Keywords Project-based learning; Merdeka Curriculum; Integrated language skills; Challenges;	
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INTRODUCTION

Project-based learning (PjBL) has appeared as a dynamic pedagogical approach in language teaching, significantly different from traditional approaches (Jaleniauskiene & Venckiene, 2025; Somani & Rizvi, 2018; Yiling et al., 2025; Zhang & Wang, 2023). This approach offers students a meaningful experience by providing an opportunity for students to explore information, materials, and projects together in a group (Cahyono et al., 2024; Ngereja et al., 2020). Furthermore, implementation of PjBL utilizes interdisciplinary knowledge, problem-solving, authenticity, teamwork, inquiry process, time management, and real-world context (Meng et al., 2023; Zhang et al., 2021). Besides, PjBL emphasizes a student-centered approach to promote critical thinking, collaboration, learning, agreement, and motivation (Garim et al., 2023). Implementing PjBL in the classroom engages students to be actively involved in the learning process and facilitates students to achieve learning outcomes (Yong & Saad, 2023). In the English as a Foreign Language (EFL) context, evidence also suggests that PjBL can improve writing, reading, listening, and speaking skills when the tasks are carefully scaffolded and aligned with assessment (Susanti et al., 2020; Lestari et al., 2023; Februani et al., 2024; Riswandi 2018). From the benefits of the PjBL approach in language teaching, it is essential to clarify teachers' challenges in implementing PjBL in the classroom.

Previous studies have documented several challenges teachers face in implementing PjBL, such as time constraints, limited learning resources, class size and management issues,

project planning and monitoring the project, and assessment complexities (Winarno, 2023; Cintang et al., 2018; Evenddy et al., 2023; Jiang, 2024). However, most of these studies were conducted in a general education context, not specifically in an EFL classroom, where teachers often encounter additional challenges in teaching language skills. Research on writing has reported obstacles in scaffolding ideas, ensuring grammatical accuracy, and providing timely feedback (Cahyono et al., 2024). Studies on speaking have highlighted challenges such as limited instructional time, diverse learner styles, and uneven student participation when implementing PjBL (We, 2020). In reading, teachers face issues in developing comprehension strategies and supporting vocabulary growth when projects are used (Ngereja et al., 2020). However, while these studies provide useful insights, they largely focus on single skills. Few studies have examined how these challenges specifically affect the teaching of integrated writing and presenting skills within the context of the Merdeka Curriculum.

Merdeka Curriculum has been introduced as part of Indonesia's educational reforms, emphasizing the development of essential skills for the 21st century, including critical thinking, communication, and creativity (Kemendikbudristek, 2024). Besides, this curriculum promotes integrated skills such as listening and speaking, reading and viewing, and writing and presenting to support holistic language development (Damayanti, 2022). Among these, writing and presenting skills are crucial within this framework. Students are expected to be able to express their ideas clearly through written and oral performance. Writing involves the ability to generate relevant content, organise ideas coherently, use appropriate text structures, apply correct vocabulary, and mechanics, including grammar, punctuation, and spelling (Mahapatra, 2024; Marzuki et al., 2023; Song & Song, 2023; Wardani et al., 2021; Wijaya, 2021). On the other hand, presentation skills involve more than simply delivering content; effective presenters must be able to control their tone of voice, use appropriate body language, apply clear communication techniques, and manage the time effectively during oral delivery (Horiuchi et al., 2022; Ginotite, 2024; Smakman, 2024). Hence, writing and presenting foster students' ability to express ideas clearly, both in written and spoken form, making them essential not only for academic achievement but also for successful communication in real-life contexts. Therefore, in this framework of the Merdeka Curriculum, the ability to write and present effectively is not only essential for academic success but also fundamental for preparing students to participate actively and confidently in a real-world communication context.

Teaching writing-presenting skills in the context of the Merdeka Curriculum is complicated to conduct. Students should achieve many aspects of skills, but it is still uncommon, and not all schools have adopted the Merdeka Curriculum. Recognizing this situation, it is crucial to investigate the challenges teachers face in implementing PjBL to teach writing-presenting skills in the Merdeka Curriculum context. By resolving this issue, educators, practitioners, and policymakers could receive valuable insight to create a more effective learning process in teaching writing and presenting skills through PjBL. Hence, the research question of this study: *What are teachers' challenges in implementing PjBL to teach writing-presenting skills in the context of the Merdeka Curriculum?*

RESEARCH METHOD

Research Design

In this research, researchers employ a descriptive qualitative research design since the result provides a deep description of an issue rather than numeric data (Creswell, 2018). The design was chosen because the research aimed to explore the challenges faced by teachers in implementing PjBL to teach writing and presenting skills. Considering the complexity of teaching these integrated skills, a qualitative approach enabled a more nuanced understanding of teachers' perspectives, practices, and strategies in their specific classroom contexts.

Research Participants

The subject of this research was selected by purposive sampling based on the specific criteria that are relevant to the theme of the research. Creswell (2009) states that purposive sampling was used to categorize subjects with particular expertise, experiences, and interest in the case being studied. However, the participants of this research are four teachers who have experience in implementing PjBL to teach writing and presenting skills. These individuals were chosen based on their teaching experiences, ages, gender, and qualifications. Moreover, they had already implemented PjBL actively in teaching writing and presenting skills, had background knowledge of PjBL, and joined some personal development programs such as Merdeka Belajar, Master Students, and Literacy Community. To add contextual depth, participants were drawn from different institutional settings with varying teaching loads. Pseudonyms were used to ensure confidentiality and protect participants' identities. The participants' demographic information is represented in Table 1.

Table 1
Participants Demography

Teachers	Gen	Ages	Experiences	Qualification	Grades	Personal Improvement
EFL Teachers	F	26	3 years	English Teacher	7th & 8th	Merdeka Belajar
EFL Teachers	F	28	8 years	English Teacher	9th	Merdeka Belajar
EFL Teachers	F	23	6 years	English Teacher	11th & 12th	Master Student
EFL Teachers	F	43	16 years	English Teacher	10th & 12th	Master Student, Merdeka Belajar, Literacy Community

Instruments

Semi-structured interviews and an open-ended questionnaire were used to collect the data in this research. A semi-structured interview was employed to gather in-depth information on how teachers face challenges in implementing PjBL to teach writing and presenting skills. Questions in the interview were used to develop corresponding answers related to the objective of the research (Jacob & Furgerson, 2012). The interview guide was developed based on the research objectives and validated through expert judgment and pilot testing with one teacher outside the sample. Besides, a semi-structured interview is important to achieve the research context because it allows individuals to express their ideas, thoughts, and insights in-depth and in detail (Leech, 2002). Then, that information is supported with an open-ended questionnaire that gives deep information about teachers' challenges in implementing PjBL for teaching writing and presenting skills in the classroom. The open-ended questionnaire consisted of ten questions to stimulate teachers' consistency in expressing their experiences in the context of the challenges in implementing PjBL to teach writing-presenting skills.

Data Analysis

To clarify the data collected in detail, this study used thematic analysis (TA) based on the theory presented by Braun and Clarke (2020), which consists of a six-phase framework, including: familiarizing with data, generating initial codes, searching for themes, reviewing themes, defining the themes, and producing the report. Initial codes were generated inductively from the data; the examples of codes included "difficulty selecting project topics" and "time management issues." These codes were then clustered into broader themes such as "project design" and "time allocation." A thematic map was constructed to visualize the relationship between themes. To strengthen methodological rigor, a peer researcher reviewed a subset of the coded data, and discrepancies were resolved through discussion to ensure inter-rater reliability. Triangulation across interviews and questionnaires further enhanced the credibility of the findings.

RESEARCH FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

Research Findings

In this section, researchers provide the findings of the study based on the research question in the context of teachers' challenges in implementing PjBL to teach writing and presenting skills. Furthermore, the following tables are used to present the challenges that four teachers faced in teaching writing-presenting skills through PjBL in this study. However, T1 signs as teacher 1, T2 signs as teacher 2, T3 signs as teacher 3, and T4 signs as teacher 4.

Table 2
The Challenges of PjBL Encountered by English Teachers In Teaching Writing-Presenting Skills

Challenges	T1	T2	T3	T4
1. Deciding the Topic of The Project	√	√	√	
2. Managing Group Discussion	√	√	√	√
3. Addressing Limitations of The Facilities or Sources	√	√	√	
4. Managing The Project	√	√	√	√
5. Sustaining Time Management	√		√	
6. Assessing The Project	√	√	√	√

From the table above, it could be seen that most challenges encountered by English teachers in implementing PjBL to teach writing-presenting skills were students' group management, managing the project, and assessing the project, which were faced by all teachers (T1, T2, T3, T4). Deciding the topic of the project and limitations of the facilities or sources came as challenges to the three teachers, who were: T1, T2, and T3. Meanwhile, sustaining time management was faced by T1 and T2. Hence, there were six challenges faced by teachers in implementing PjBL to teach writing and presenting skills. Among these six themes, two emerged as particularly critical in this study: the issue of limited facilities and unequal access to resources, and the complexities of assessing group projects. These challenges not only occurred across participants but also had broader implications for equity and instructional quality in PjBL.

Designing The Topic of The Project

Designing the topic is an essential activity that the teacher should do as the facilitator in implementing PjBL in the classroom. The topic should be decided before the teaching and learning process starts. The topic required the inquiry process, which related to students' lives and experiences. Hence, the topic should interpret the objective of the learning activity and improve students' critical thinking, problem-solving, and interest. Therefore, the topic must be interesting to engage students' enthusiasm and stimulate student achievement.

Furthermore, based on the interview and questionnaire given, T1, T2, and T3 were facing challenges in deciding the topic of the project. T1 was very difficult in deciding the topic, which was *“suitable to students' needs and interesting because most of the students had low ability in English”* (Lines: 26-28), so this was very challenging in achieving the goal of writing and presenting skills. Meanwhile, T2 explained it was challenging to decide on the topic because *“it required an inquiry process to motivate students in creating a good project”* (Lines: 81-83). Thus, the situation was challenging because each student had a different experience background. Furthermore, T3 faced challenges after trying different topics where the *“students were not interested in those topics”* (Lines: 140-141). In the next project, she analyzed the topic based on students' needs and interests, which aimed to improve students' motivation in creating a proper project with their group. Unlike the situation that T4 faced, she did not face challenges in designing the topic of the project. Before deciding on the topic, she analyzed *“the trend or viral issues to improve students' motivation for the topic given”* (Lines: 202-203). Then, from the viral topic, she made a correlation with students' needs and the requirement of an inquiry process. If it were possible to achieve the goal of learning, she would conduct that topic in implementing PjBL to teach writing and presenting skills. Hence, she paid attention to students'

needs, trends, students' motivation, and students' achievement in deciding the topic of the project in implementing PjBL to teach writing-presenting skills.

Selecting an appropriate topic for PjBL is a pedagogically complex process that significantly influences the effectiveness of learning, particularly in fostering students' writing and presenting skills. The challenges encountered in topic design highlight the tension between the theoretical principles of inquiry-based, student-centred learning and the practical realities of diverse students' needs, limited proficiency, and motivational factors. It indicates that topic selection is not a neutral or straightforward task but requires careful consideration of contextual, cognitive, and affective dimensions. Consequently, greater pedagogical support and reflective planning are essential to help teachers bridge the gap between curriculum intentions and classroom implementation.

Managing Group Discussion

The nature of PjBL requires a student-centered approach and provides constructive knowledge by integrating inquiry processes to improve students' critical thinking, problem-solving, communication skills, and teamwork skills. Therefore, in implementing PjBL, the teacher is not the director but acts as the facilitator to achieve the goal of the learning activity. However, several stages should be done by the teacher in implementing PjBL, such as deciding the project, conducting a preliminary activity, giving key questions, and assessing the project. Thus, teachers must be able to facilitate and guide students in learning activities. On the other hand, this research found that student group management became one of the most challenging aspects faced by teachers in implementing PjBL to teach writing and presenting.

Based on the interview and supported by the questionnaire submitted, all the teachers found it difficult to manage the students' groups for the project. It happened because the T2 students *“decided to gather with their certain friends in a group”* (Line: 86). Then, in the T3 situation, *“most of the students did not want to make a group randomly”* (Lines:147-148), which had an impact on their motivation to make the project. Besides, T1 added that this happened because *“each student had different English competence”* (Line: 35). This made students choose their group based on the same competence; meanwhile, no one was placed together with students who had low English competence. In facing this situation, T1 *“made a group based on students' needs before the learning activity was started”* (Lines: 38-39), so after explaining the project, students directly gathered with their team, which had already been mentioned by the teacher. Moreover, in the T4 situation, *“some students were playful with their friends in the group rather than doing the project”* (Lines 209-210). It does not allow all the students to actively contribute to the project.

These findings highlight that effective student group management is a critical yet often underestimated challenge in the implementation of PjBL to teach writing-presenting skills. The tendency of students to self-select peers based on friendship or similar language competence undermines the collaborative and inclusive nature of project work, potentially reducing opportunities for peer learning and equitable participation. It indicates a gap between the intended goals of PjBL, such as fostering teamwork, responsibilities, and communication, where social dynamics and different abilities shape group formation. Thus, strategy grouping and clear teacher facilitation are essential to ensure that group-based projects function as an authentic space for collaborative learning rather than reinforcing existing students' divisions.

Addressing Limitations of the Facilities or Sources

In implementing PjBL, they need more facilities and resources to address problems from the inquiry process and improve students' critical thinking in making the project. Hence, teachers should give more than one source in the learning activity to stimulate students' ideas in producing the project. Moreover, students should search for information related to the project

that they will be working on. Thus, textbooks are not enough to be a source of learning activity in implementing PjBL to teach writing and presenting skills.

In this study, researchers found that T1, T2, and T3 were facing challenges in implementing PjBL to teach writing-presenting skills because of the limitations of the facilities and sources. In the interview process, T1 explained:

"Most of my students have low competence in English, and they need a dictionary as a source of information to translate their work in making the project of writing and presenting skills. In the class, only five students have a dictionary. This makes them need more time to make the project." (Lines: 49-53)

The situation also happened to the T2 teacher; she said:

"In implementing PjBL, it is difficult for me because in teaching and learning activities, there are some limitations. The school, which is located in the village, and most of the students come from low economic backgrounds, means that the students do not have enough resources for learning activities. Moreover, PjBL needs some cost for making the product, which makes some students feel it is too much to contribute their money for making the project." (Lines: 111-115)

However, the T3 situation is almost the same as T1 and T2. Hence, she explained that in facing those challenges, she decided that *"having a simple project based on a student's background, competence, and facilities was very important"* (Lines: 150-152). Meanwhile, those challenges are different from the situation that happened to T4. She explained that *"the school gives facilities like free Wi-Fi access so students can search for information about the topic, not only from textbooks but also from the internet or websites"* (Lines: 212-214). In addition, the students were also very enthusiastic about the project; they had a good motivation to create a good project and did not think about how much money was spent on the project.

These findings show that the success of PjBL strongly depends on the availability of learning resources and facilities. When students do not have access to basic tools like dictionaries, internet connections, or money for materials, it becomes difficult for them to complete their projects or develop critical thinking through inquiry. The differences in each teacher's experience also reflect the issue of unequal access to resources between schools in different areas. Therefore, if schools do not provide enough support, the goals of PjBL may not be fully achieved, especially in schools with limited facilities. This resource inequality was one of the most striking findings in this study, as it highlights how socio-economic differences between schools can directly shape the feasibility and fairness of PjBL implementation.

Managing the Project

The next challenge that is faced by teachers in implementing PjBL to teach writing-presenting is managing the project. The interview conducted by researchers found that all teachers faced challenges in managing the project. Although the teacher had already explained the detailed information about the project in advance, the teacher could not leave the students to manage the project by themselves. Teachers need to guide the students and stimulate the idea of the project. On the other hand, teachers also need to monitor and facilitate students for effective learning.

The result of this research shows that all the teachers from T1, T2, T3, and T4 experienced this challenge. T1 explained that not all students contributed to designing the project and worked at different paces. Meanwhile, *"some groups worked very quickly on the project, and there were groups that worked very slowly on finishing the project"* (Lines: 40-41). Furthermore, T2 experienced a different case about managing the project in which *"many of her students were confused about how to organize their ideas to be written and presented in an oral context"* (Lines: 85-86). Many of them *"decide to use the same project in general"*

(Lines: 89). This made students less critical thinkers and problem solvers. Besides, T3 experienced that PjBL was seldom a strategy that was implemented in the classroom. This situation made her be active in giving more detailed information on how to manage the project. Moreover, *"students were not in command of the strategy and the project"* (Lines: 159). Meanwhile, based on the experience that happened to T4, the student did not bring some attributes for the presentation of the project, so they could not present the result as seen in the following statement:

"One of the hardest things in implementing PjBL to teach writing-presenting skills is how to manage the project that can be presented by the students. In my case, there is a group who are not ready to present the project and do not bring the attributes that should be presented. Of course, I need to give more feedback and guidance on how to manage the project. Then, give them a chance to present in the next meeting." (Lines: 235-239)

Relating to the case, T4 made a solution for the group to make a timeline of the project, make a to-do list, keep in contact with their group, and assign responsibility to finish the project. The findings show that managing student projects in PjBL is not as simple as giving instructions and letting students work on their own. Even though teachers have already explained the project clearly, many students still need help to organize their ideas, divide tasks, and finish the project on time. This means teachers have to guide students step by step, monitor students' progress, and give support during the project. So, while PjBL is designed to help students become more independent, students still need strong guidance from the teacher to make the project successful.

Sustaining Time Management

In implementing PjBL to teach writing-presenting skills, extended time frames are used, which supposes students not only focus on critical thinking but also on problem-solving. However, the activity in the classes should be suitable with the lesson plan that has already been made and balanced with the syllabus and the academic calendar. This requires the teacher to manage the time properly in achieving the goal of learning using PjBL, which consists of several stages.

In this research, T1 and T3 experienced challenges in implementing PjBL to teach writing-presenting skills. T1 was stated:

"I just have 2 x 40 minutes each meeting for teaching and learning activities. Meanwhile, this time is not enough for me to implement PjBL to teach writing and presenting skills. This one meeting only focuses on how students create their writing product, and the presentation project is done in the next meeting. Furthermore, if the students have low competence, I will need more than two meetings. Hence, time management still becomes a challenge for me, in order to have the same schedule as the lesson plan I made." (Lines: 55-59)

T1's statement was supported by T3 argument, she argued:

"Elements of writing and presenting skills require the projects with deep research in looking for the information to organize the written form, and preparing presentations often takes more time than expected. Students sometimes have trouble managing their time, combined with other assignments. As a teacher, I need to make sure the schedule is realistic, provide guidance and checkpoints to monitor students' progress regularly, so they can finish the project well on time." (Lines: 235-239)

Those experiences were different from T2 and T4, as they were not difficult in managing the time for implementing PjBL to teach writing and presenting skills. Based on their explanation, they had already thought about the time before choosing the PjBL as a strategy to achieve the objective of the learning activity. Then, they also decided to choose a simple project and effective time management based on the lesson plan.

These findings highlight that time management remains a significant challenge in implementing PjBL, particularly for complex tasks like writing and presenting skills. Teachers often struggle to fit the multi-stage nature of PjBL into the limited time in the classroom, especially when students require more guidance due to low language proficiency. This situation shows that successful PjBL implementation demands careful planning of both instructional time and project complexity. It also emphasizes the importance of teacher flexibility, realistic scheduling, and continuous monitoring to ensure that learning goals can still be met within existing time constraints.

Assessing the Project

In the assessment stage, the project not only consists of giving a score for their project but also provides students with feedback and suggestions related to the objective of the teaching and learning process. Result of the project in assessing segments to figure out whether the strategy of PjBL can help students achieve the goal of writing and presenting or not. This can also be a decision to keep applying PjBL in teaching writing and presenting skills. Evaluation and assessment are an important part of conducting PjBL, to know students' achievement levels in their studies. As mentioned above, there are several stages in PjBL, so teachers not only focus on assessing the project but also the process.

This situation made T1, T2, T3, and T4 quite challenging in assessing the project stages. Based on the T2 explanation, this stage is *"the most challenging in conducting PjBL"* (Line: 117). The T3 conducted *"formative and summative assessments in this stage"* (Line:179). The formative assessment is used to evaluate students' attitude, teamwork, collaboration, problem-solving, and critical thinking; meanwhile, the summative assessment is related to a specific rubric or indicator of their project. One difficulty the T1 had in applying PjBL was *"managing the assessment objectively"* (Line: 59) because projects often involve many subjective factors, such as creativity and student innovation. On the other hand, the T4 was *"very difficult to assess students' process since not all of the students worked on the project collaboratively in the group"* (Lines: 241-242). In conclusion, assigning the project in implementing PjBL is complicated and challenging for all of the teachers.

Discussion

This study was conducted by giving a semi-structured interview and an open-ended questionnaire to four teachers with several different backgrounds but the same profession as English teachers in a Junior High School in Indonesia. The result of this study shows there are several challenges for teachers in implementing PjBL to teach writing-presenting skills, including deciding the topic of the project, managing group discussion, addressing limitations of the facilities or sources, managing the project, sustaining time management, and assessing the project. However, these challenges arise because PjBL promotes a complex task with a challenging question and problem to improve students' problem-solving, critical thinking, teamwork, collaboration, and time management.

These results also align with another previous study, which talked about some challenges in implementing PjBL in the classroom. Research on the Finlandia teachers' perceptions by using an e-survey with content analysis found that the most challenging aspect in implementing PjBL consists of three aspects. First, in facilitating PjBL, it is related to time management, organization of the project, and the skills of the teacher. Second, technical issues related to sources and facilities of teaching and learning. Third, students learn from students' collaboration in doing the project (Aksela & Haatainen, 2019). Other research also mentions how teachers' perceptions of challenges in implementing PjBL to teach English are the lack of teachers' competence in implementing PjBL, sustainable time management in implementing PjBL, and COVID-19 creates an ineffective situation in implementing PjBL (Sartika et al., 2022). Then, a mixed-method study examines the teachers' experiences in implementing PjBL

from planning and implementation and found some challenges faced by the teachers, such as a lack of mentoring, preparation time, and lack of experience in implementing PjBL (Yang et al., 2021). Furthermore, Systematic Literature Review (SLR) on Scopus, Erics, and Google Scholar databases spanning the last 10 years related to implementation of PjBL in language teaching found some challenges that faced by teacher such as preparation of the project need more time, limitation of the sources and facilities in the school, managing collaborative learning because not all of students active, and spend much money to make the project (Ferwati et al., 2023).

From those results and previous research above, it shows that implementing PjBL in the classroom is not easy. Ban (2023) highlights the roles of teachers in implementing PjBL, such as designing the teaching program, guiding the teaching and learning process, organizing the teaching atmosphere, and assessing the teaching outcome of the learning process. On the other hand, Grant (2002) argues that the concept of PjBL in the teaching and learning process consists of introduction stages, giving the key questions of the topic, providing and facilitating some sources, guiding group discussion, supporting students with a scaffolding approach, collaborative learning, and evaluation. Furthermore, in implementing PjBL in the language learning process, Stoller and Myers (2019) promote some cycles that should be conducted by the teacher; those are preparation and introduction, gathering information on the topic, information processing, information display, and reflection.

In conclusion, teachers have several roles in implementing PjBL in the classroom. There are some solutions which to face the challenges in implementing PjBL, those are analyzing students' background and need before deciding the topic, making group mapping before the learning process, choosing a simple project which suitable with school sources and facilities, monitoring the progress of the project, making the schedule and timeline of the project and assessing the project from the process until the result. However, other solutions are providing training and mentoring to English teachers to improve their competence in implementing PjBL, which is more innovative and creative to achieve the educational goals and prepare for future challenges (Zahroh et al., 2023). Besides, a positive environment and perception are crucial for teachers' readiness in implementing PjBL. This situation supports teachers' professionalism and creates an effective PjBL in the classroom (Chaaban & Du, 2020). Every teacher has their own style and strategy to solve the obstacles in implementing PjBL in the classroom because they already understand students' characteristics and appropriate strategies that are suitable for their students (Rivan et al., 2024). Some strategies that teachers can adapt include modifying the project, giving opportunities for students to make the project creatively with their group, giving praise and appreciation to an active student, and making a lottery to distribute students in their group to avoid students gathering with certain friends (Galuh & Manik, 2024).

Beyond these practical solutions, the findings of this study have several broader implications. First, it indicates the urgent need for systematic teacher training that equips teachers with strategies for assessment, group management, and resource adaptation, particularly in schools with limited facilities. Second, it calls for greater institutional and policy support, including resource allocation and clear assessment frameworks, to ensure equity in PjBL across different school contexts. Future research could build on this study by conducting comparative analyses across different regions or school types to explore how socio-economic and institutional contexts shape teachers' challenges in implementing PjBL. Longitudinal studies would also be valuable to examine how teachers' strategies evolve as they gain more experience and professional development. Another promising avenue would be to investigate not only teachers' perspectives but students' experiences, to provide a more comprehensive picture of the dynamics of PjBL in the classrooms. In conclusion, sustaining PjBL to teach English in the Merdeka Curriculum context requires more than individual teacher effort.

CONCLUSION

This study explored the challenges faced by teachers in implementing PjBL to teach writing and presenting skills within the Merdeka Curriculum. Six key challenges were identified: deciding the project topic, managing group discussions, addressing facility and source limitations, project management, sustaining time management, and assessing the project. These findings show that sustaining PjBL requires more than teacher initiative; it also depends on targeted professional development, equitable resource allocation, and supportive curriculum policies. While this study focused only on teachers' perspectives, future research could include students' views and a broader context to provide a more comprehensive understanding of PjBL implementation.

This study provides practical insights for teacher development and curriculum implementation. For teachers, professional training should emphasize strategies for managing group work, adapting resources, and conducting fair assessment in PjBL. For schools and policymakers, greater resource allocation and a clear assessment framework are essential to ensure equitable implementation across different contexts. At the curriculum level, aligning the goals of the Merdeka Curriculum with classroom realities is crucial to make PjBL sustainable and effective.

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