

The Effect of Scaffolding-Assisted Project-Based Learning Model on the Creative Writing Skills of Narrative Texts Among 7th-Grade Students at SMP Negeri 5 Denpasar

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Abstract

This study aims to analyze the differences and the effect of the scaffolding-assisted Project-Based Learning (PjBL) model on the narrative text creative writing skills of 7th-grade students at SMP Negeri 5 Denpasar. The study was motivated by students' low writing proficiency, evidenced by the fact that 60% of students struggled to develop ideas, structure plotlines, and use appropriate language. The experiment used quasi-experimental design specifically the Nonequivalent Pretest-Posttest Control Group Design. The population consisted of all 7th grade students totally (273 individuals), and the sample was selected using cluster random sampling: Class VII A (39 students) served as the experimental group receiving scaffolding-assisted PjBL, while Class VII B (40 students) served as the control group taught using a model involving lectures, assignments, and presentations. The narrative text creative writing assessment instrument utilized a rubric with a 0–20 scale (maximum score of 20); this instrument was validated by experts and demonstrated a Cronbach's Alpha reliability coefficient of 0.76. Data were analyzed using the Independent Samples T-test to determine differences in creative writing skills between the experimental and control groups, and the Analysis of Covariance (ANCOVA) test to examine the effect of the scaffolding-assisted PjBL model while controlling for students' initial ability based on pretest scores. Hypothesis testing results showed a significance value (2-tailed) of 0.000 ($p < 0.05$), indicating a significant difference in creative writing skills between the two groups. The average post-test score for the experimental class was 16.38 (Good category), higher than that of the control class, which scored 14.65 (Fair category). Improvements in writing quality were observed across all indicators, including content, organization, vocabulary, language use, and writing mechanics. The study concludes that the scaffolding-assisted Project-Based Learning model is effective and significantly improves the creative narrative writing skills of 7th-grade students at SMP Negeri 5 Denpasar; therefore, it is recommended as an innovative instructional alternative to address the issue of students' low creative writing proficiency.

Keywords: *Project-Based Learning, Scaffolding, Creative Writing Skills, Narrative Text, Junior High School (SMP).*



A. INTRODUCTION

In facing the challenges of globalization and the 4.0 industrial revolution, the landscape of education is undergoing fundamental shifts. This revolution causes significant changes and affects various aspects of our lives, including the education sector (Almuddin et al., 2023). The demands on individuals are no longer limited to the mastery of academic content alone, but have shifted toward the development of essential skills that enable adaptation, innovation, and active participation in the global community. These skills, often known as the 4Cs (critical thinking, creativity, collaboration, and communication), have become the main foundation for success in

various aspects of life and the workplace. These skills must be mastered by every student (Simanjuntak, 2019). The learning process now is not only centered on "what should be taught," but more crucially on "how to teach it." One tangible manifestation of mastering that competence is thru writing skills, which enable individuals to articulate ideas, arguments, and knowledge clearly and structurally. Therefore, the development of students' writing skills becomes highly relevant in the context of education in this era. This research will further examine how certain strategies can optimize students' writing skills so that they are prepared to face global challenges.

The education system in Indonesia, thru the implementation of the Merdeka Curriculum, explicitly integrates the development of soft skills and the construction of the Pancasila character profile in students. Government Regulation No. 57 of 2021 on National Education Standards emphasizes the importance of creating an active learning environment. The goal is to help students develop their potential, both spiritually, intellectually, and in terms of skills. The emphasis on the development of 4C skills and Pancasila character is not merely an addition of material, but an indication of a fundamental shift in the educational paradigm. This shift moves from a passive knowledge transmission model to a more active, participatory model oriented toward the development of holistic competencies. If the goal of education is to develop these complex skills, then traditional/conventional teaching methods that revolve around lectures, assignments, and teacher-centered presentations and memorization are likely to be inadequate. Therefore, there is an inherent need to adopt innovative learning models that actively promote the development of these 21st-century skills.

Writing is a language skill that requires the most complex abilities and plays a very important role, serving as the main means to express ideas, feelings, and thoughts in a structured and meaningful way. This skill is fundamentally important to support success in the workplace and as a foundation for lifelong learning. Writing is also a means of creative thinking aimed at broadening knowledge, serving as inspiration, entertaining oneself, and even as a way to recognize and develop the full potential you possess, whether it be talent, ability, or personal values (Sardila, 2015). In school, writing skills are not just a tool for communication, but also a reflection of how well students use critical, analytical, and creative thinking. Good writing skills are essential for academic success at higher education levels, including in the preparation of various academic projects such as papers, articles, summaries, and in-depth research theses.

Writing skills require a long process and involve sophisticated thinking processes. It involves more than just seeing and then communicating thru writing; these skills also involve organizing the writing into a coherent and meaningful whole. The statement that writing is a "long process and a sophisticated thinking process" indicates that difficulties in writing are not merely surface-level mechanical or linguistic issues. On the contrary, it points to potential deficits in deeper cognitive abilities, such as idea organization, logical reasoning, and information synthesis. Therefore, learning interventions should go beyond mere grammar or spelling

corrections and instead target the development of the underlying thinking processes that support effective writing skills (Abidin, 2021); (Hadi, 2021).

Creative writing plays an important role in education today. These skills are not only oriented toward written outcomes but can also be developed as a means to express ideas, as well as to encourage critical and creative thinking among learners. Narrative texts specifically allow students to explore and develop imagination, plot, characters, and conflict, which are essential elements in the development of creativity and expressive abilities (Rosdiana et al., 2023).

The development of creative writing skills in narrative texts becomes an important focus at the junior high school level, especially in seventh grade, in accordance with the Learning Outcomes (LO) of the Merdeka Curriculum Phase D. This curriculum encourages students to compose writings based on facts, experiences, and imagination in a beautiful and engaging manner in prose form, using vocabulary creatively. Moreover, creative writing skills are also aimed at fostering a love for the nation's language and culture. The curriculum's emphasis on "beautiful and engaging imagination" in prose writing, along with its connection to "fostering a love for the nation's language and culture," reveals a deeper and socio-cultural educational goal. This means that mastering narrative writing skills is not only an academic goal but also a tool for holistic personal development (emotional, imaginative) and cultural identity formation. If students struggle with this aspect, the implications extend to the potential hindrance of self-expression, cultural appreciation, and even character formation, which are broader goals of national education.

Writing narrative texts independently plays a crucial role in developing students' imagination and storytelling abilities. However, in reality, the creative writing skills of seventh-grade students at SMP Negeri 5 Denpasar are still low. In the narrative text composition lessons taught in seventh grade at SMP Negeri 5 Denpasar, 60% of students still struggle to develop ideas creatively in their writing and have not yet been able to construct a coherent storyline. Additionally, it was found that a majority of students make mistakes in language usage (spelling, diction, punctuation). The results of interviews with Indonesian language teachers at SMP Negeri 5 also presented the same opinion that in teaching skills, students still experience difficulties and their writing ability is low, as seen from the grades obtained. This data indicates that many students experience significant difficulties in developing ideas, structuring coherent stories, and using language effectively and expressively when writing narrative texts.

These weaknesses ultimately lead to dishonest actions such as copy-pasting (Sardila, 2015). This issue requires serious attention and innovative approaches in learning to improve the quality of students' writing skills. Thus, there is a need for proven strategies to overcome these obstacles and encourage students to become more proficient writers.

The low writing skills of students can be caused by various factors, including a lack of motivation to write and monotonous teaching methods. Teachers are accustomed to the old method that starts with a lecture (explaining concepts or

theories), students taking notes, then students being given assignments, and ending with a presentation. The lack of intensive guidance in the creative writing process also causes students to feel confused about developing ideas (Haryati, 2017). In many cases, teachers still often use a teacher-centered approach that is not able to maximally stimulate students' creativity, causing students to feel bored and less challenged. This approach often focuses on the final result without giving enough attention to the writing process itself.

Therefore, an innovative learning approach is needed that is not only engaging but also capable of activating students' roles as active learners. This innovation must be able to support them at every stage of the writing process, from pre-writing to post-writing, to foster better and more sustainable writing skills.

One of the characteristics of 21st-century education that emphasizes higher-order thinking skills (HOTS) is positioning learners as active agents in their learning (Umar et al., 2025). One way is by using the Project Based Learning (PjBL) model. This model fundamentally emphasizes the active involvement of students thru real projects that challenge their creativity, collaboration, and problem-solving abilities. Project Based Learning (PjBL) has been proven to have a positive impact on enhancing various aspects of students' skills, including creative writing skills (Khabibah & Munir, 2025). Thru structured projects, students are encouraged to produce relevant and meaningful writings. However, the success of Project Based Learning (PjBL) in improving writing skills greatly depends on the appropriate mentoring strategies from teachers. Without effective mentoring, the full potential of PjBL in developing students' writing skills may not be optimally achieved. Therefore, this research will also explore the most effective forms of mentoring in the context of Project Based Learning (PjBL) to optimize students' narrative writing abilities.

In this context, scaffolding or gradual assistance emerges as a highly potential approach to be integrated into the Project Based Learning (PjBL) model. Scaffolding allows teachers to provide systematic support tailored to the individual needs of students, gradually reducing assistance until they are able to complete tasks independently. This is crucial in developing students' learning independence. Unfortunately, until now, there has been minimal research specifically examining the impact of integrating the Project Based Learning (PjBL) model with scaffolding on students' creative writing skills in narrative texts. Learning thru the Project Based Learning (PjBL) model to improve writing skills has been widely used. The research conducted by (Monica & Sinur, 2021) states that learning based on Project Based Learning (PjBL) using a quasi-experimental design (pretest-posttest) shows that the group using Project Based Learning (PjBL) improved in their ability to write anecdotal texts compared to the control class using the lecture/inquiry method. Meanwhile, (Habibah & Safrudin, 2024) state that learning by applying the Project Based Learning (PjBL) model shows a significant improvement in students' writing skills, increasingly active group engagement, and their critical thinking abilities.

In addition, the implementation of the Project Based Learning (PjBL) model has proven to make the learning process more interactive, collaborative, and enjoyable.

Thru Project Based Learning (PjBL), students are encouraged to be more creative and active in expressing ideas, organizing writing systematically, and using language accurately. This model also instills a sense of responsibility in group work while simultaneously strengthening their writing skills. The implementation of Project Based Learning (PjBL) is not only effective in improving writing skills but also encourages creativity, understanding of story structure, and critical thinking abilities (Zamiah et al., 2024). Learning using the Project Based Learning (PjBL) model makes students more skilled in developing creative and original story ideas (Lusianti et al., 2024). This indicates that Project Based Learning (PjBL) is capable of encouraging students to generate ideas for critically solving problems. However, the Project Based Learning (PjBL) model has not yet been widely implemented with the addition of scaffolding strategies.

Scaffolding is a learning strategy that involves providing a certain amount of assistance, which can include instructions, warnings, encouragement, breaking down problems into solution steps, and providing examples, thereby enabling students to become independent (Nasrulloh & Umardiyah, 2020). The provision of scaffolding strategies is used to guide students thru critical questions to test the ideas, arguments, and reasoning produced by students in order to create a project. Therefore, scaffolding not only results in cognitive development but also accommodates the emergence of skills necessary to solve problems independently in the future (Suryono and Hariyanto in Yanti, 2023).

Based on the above description, a study was conducted to examine the influence of the Project Based Learning (PjBL) model assisted by scaffolding on the creative writing skills of seventh-grade students at SMP Negeri 5 Denpasar on narrative text material.

B. LITERATURE REVIEW

Project-Based Learning (PjBL) is a student-centered learning model that makes projects the core of the learning activities. This model is based on constructivist theory, which positions students as active individuals who build knowledge through authentic experiences, investigation, and solving real problems. In the process, students not only gain conceptual understanding but also develop critical thinking, creativity, communication, and collaboration skills through activities that produce meaningful products (Berhиту et al., 2020; Kokotsaki et al., 2016; Nurzizah, 2025).

Unlike conventional learning, which is still dominated by the teacher, PjBL provides students with the opportunity to design, implement, evaluate, and present project results both independently and collaboratively. The teacher acts as a facilitator who provides guidance and support throughout the learning process. This approach allows students to integrate various disciplines in solving contextual problems, making the learning experience more meaningful and relevant to real life (Mahendra, 2017; Almulla, 2020; Chiang & Lee, 2016).

Various studies indicate that the implementation of project-based learning has a positive impact on increasing students' learning motivation, creative thinking skills,

communication, collaboration, problem-solving, and learning outcomes. This model is also considered capable of developing 21st-century competencies (4C), namely critical thinking, creativity, communication, and collaboration, making it very suitable for implementation in the Merdeka Curriculum, which emphasizes active, contextual learning, and is oriented toward strengthening the Pancasila Student Profile (Muis & Dewi, 2021; Sumarni, 2015; Nugraha et al., 2021; Jatmika et al., 2020). However, the effectiveness of PjBL is greatly influenced by the teacher's ability to design projects, manage time, facilitate collaboration, and provide adequate guidance throughout the learning process (Kokotsaki et al., 2016).

Scaffolding is a learning strategy rooted in Vygotsky's Zone of Proximal Development (ZPD) theory. This strategy emphasizes providing gradual assistance to learners when they encounter difficulties in completing learning tasks. As learners' abilities increase, we gradually reduce the assistance (fading) until they can learn independently. Thus, scaffolding not only helps learners achieve learning objectives but also develops independence, responsibility, and critical thinking skills (Djokowidodo, 2023; Adinda et al., 2024; Septriani et al., 2014).

In learning practice, scaffolding can be realized through various forms of support, such as providing conceptual guidance, procedural directions, problem-solving strategies, visual aids, the use of technology, or reflective questions that encourage students' metacognitive abilities. Various forms of assistance are provided according to the learning needs of the students so that they can understand complex concepts, organize knowledge, and complete tasks more effectively (Zuo et al., 2023; Belland et al., 2017; Tseng, 2025; Iskandar et al., 2024).

Various studies show that the application of scaffolding can enhance learning motivation, critical thinking skills, academic achievement, and the quality of interaction between teachers and students. This strategy also helps reduce learning difficulties by providing structured support, allowing students to be more confident in completing tasks. However, the success of scaffolding is greatly influenced by the teacher's competence in determining the appropriate form of assistance according to the students' needs and the ability to gradually reduce support when students have shown adequate learning progress (Rahmatiah et al., 2016; Adinda et al., 2024; Mustofa et al., 2021; Yusra et al., 2023).

Conceptually, the integration of scaffolding strategies into project-based learning has the potential to create a more effective learning environment. During the project completion process, students still have the freedom to explore ideas, but at the same time, they receive systematic guidance when encountering obstacles. This combination is expected to enhance the quality of the learning process while also producing better learning outcomes. Creative writing is a productive skill that requires students to develop ideas, organize concepts, and express experiences or imagination in a communicative written form. In narrative text learning, this ability is reflected through the narrative writing of seventh-grade students.

C. METHOD

This study employed a quantitative research approach using a quasi-experimental design, specifically the Nonequivalent Pretest–Posttest Control Group Design. This design was selected because the researcher was unable to randomly assign individual students to newly formed groups, as the participants had already been organized into existing classroom units by the school administration. Consequently, randomization was conducted at the class level to determine the experimental and control groups while preserving the natural classroom structure.

The research was carried out at SMP Negeri 5 Denpasar during the second semester of the 2025/2026 academic year, spanning the period from January to April 2026. The study population consisted of all seventh-grade students, totaling 273 learners distributed across seven intact classes. Considering that the population was organized into pre-existing classroom groups, cluster random sampling was applied to select the research sample. Two classes were randomly chosen to participate in the study. Class VII A, comprising 39 students, was assigned as the experimental group, while Class VII B, consisting of 40 students, served as the control group. Thus, the total number of participants involved in the study was 79 students. The experimental group received instruction through Project-Based Learning integrated with scaffolding, whereas the control group was taught using conventional instructional practices that primarily involved lectures, assignments, and classroom presentations.

The study involved three variables. The independent variable was the implementation of Project-Based Learning assisted by scaffolding, while the dependent variable was students' creative narrative writing skill. In addition, students' initial writing ability, as reflected in their pretest scores, was treated as a covariate to control for potential differences in baseline writing competence between the two groups prior to the intervention.

The instructional treatment administered to the experimental group followed the procedural stages of Project-Based Learning integrated with scaffolding strategies throughout the writing process. The learning sequence included: (1) identifying authentic writing-related issues through essential questions, (2) collaboratively designing writing projects, (3) establishing project schedules and timelines, (4) carrying out project activities accompanied by continuous scaffolding in the form of modelling, guiding questions, verbal prompts, feedback, peer interaction, and teacher assistance, (5) evaluating students' writing products, and (6) conducting reflection and assessment of the completed projects. As students demonstrated increased competence and confidence, the level of instructional support was gradually reduced, enabling them to perform writing tasks with greater autonomy.

Data collection was conducted through observation, questionnaires, and performance-based assessments. Observational data were gathered to ensure that the implementation of the instructional model followed the procedures outlined in the research design. Questionnaires were administered to obtain supplementary information regarding students' perceptions and experiences during the learning process. The primary data source consisted of creative narrative writing tests

administered before the intervention (pretest) and after the intervention (posttest). Students' written products were evaluated using an analytic scoring rubric encompassing five assessment components: content, organization, vocabulary, language use, and mechanics. Prior to implementation, the instrument underwent expert validation to ensure content appropriateness. Reliability testing indicated a Cronbach's Alpha coefficient of 0.76, suggesting that the instrument possessed an acceptable level of internal consistency for educational research purposes.

The collected data were analyzed using both descriptive and inferential statistical techniques. Descriptive statistics were employed to provide an overview of students' writing performance before and after the intervention. Prior to hypothesis testing, several assumption tests were conducted to verify the suitability of the data for parametric analysis. These included tests of normality, homogeneity of variance, homogeneity of variance-covariance matrices, linearity, multicollinearity, and homogeneity of regression slopes. To determine differences in creative narrative writing performance between the experimental and control groups, an Independent Samples t-test was applied. Furthermore, the influence of Project-Based Learning assisted by scaffolding on students' creative writing skills, while controlling for initial writing ability, was examined using Analysis of Covariance (ANCOVA). All statistical analyses were performed using a significance level of 0.05.

D. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

This study was conducted to test the effectiveness of implementing Project-Based Learning (PjBL) combined with scaffolding in improving the creative writing skills of seventh-grade students in narrative text at SMP Negeri 5 Denpasar. Before the hypothesis testing was conducted, the research data was first analyzed to ensure that all the requirements for parametric analysis were met. The prerequisite tests conducted include normality test, homogeneity of variance, linearity, multicollinearity, and homogeneity of regression slopes.

Based on the series of prerequisite tests conducted, the data in this study are stated to meet all statistical assumptions, allowing for the continuation to Independent Samples t-test and ANCOVA analysis. From the linearity test, a significance value of $p = 0.000$ was obtained, indicating a significant linear relationship between the independent variable and the dependent variable. This is further supported by the Deviation from Linearity value of $p = 0.229$, which shows that the linear regression model is appropriate for explaining the relationship between the two variables. Furthermore, the results of the multicollinearity check show a Tolerance value of 0.821 and a VIF of 1.218. Since the Tolerance value is > 0.1 and the VIF is < 10 , it can be confirmed that there is no multicollinearity issue in the data. With the fulfillment of all these assumption tests, the data is considered statistically valid and ready to be used to test the research hypothesis.

Table 1. Summary of Statistical Assumption Tests

Assumption	Statistical Evidence	Interpretation
Normality	$p > 0.05$	Data are normally distributed
Homogeneity of variance	$p > 0.05$	Homogeneous variance
Linearity	$p = 0.000$	Linear relationship exists
Deviation from Linearity	$p = 0.229$	No significant deviation
Multicollinearity	Tolerance = 0.821; VIF = 1.218	No multicollinearity detected

To test the first hypothesis, this study uses the Independent Samples t-test. This test was conducted to compare the ability to write creative narrative texts between two groups of students: the experimental group who learned with the Project-Based Learning (PjBL) model combined with scaffolding, and the control group who learned conventionally thru lectures, individual and group assignments, and then presentations. The results of the statistical calculations yielded a 2-tailed Sig. value of 0.000. Since this value is below the $\alpha = 0.05$ threshold, it can be stated that there is a statistically significant difference in writing skills between students taught with the PjBL-scaffolding method and those taught with the conventional method.

Based on the results of the descriptive analysis, the average post-test score of the experimental group reached 16.38, while the control group obtained an average of 14.65. The average difference of 1.732 points indicates that the achievements of the experimental group were better compared to the control group. This is also supported by the 95% confidence interval that does not include the value of zero, so the difference obtained can be stated as statistically significant.

The results of this study indicate that the Project-Based Learning (PjBL) model combined with scaffolding is more effective in developing students' creative narrative writing skills compared to the conventional approach. Therefore, the first hypothesis is proven correct: there is a significant difference in creative writing skills between the group applying PjBL-scaffolding and the group learning conventionally.

Table 2. Independent Samples t-Test Results

Variable	Experimental Group	Control Group	<i>t</i>	Sig.
Creative Narrative Writing Skills	16.38	14.65	-4.685	0.000

The second hypothesis test was conducted using Analysis of Covariance (ANCOVA). The aim is to see the effect of the learning model on students' creative narrative writing skills, with initial writing ability used as a covariate. The results show that the learning model still has a significant impact on students' learning achievements, even tho the differences in initial abilities have been statistically neutralized. This is evident from the F value = 22.262 with Sig. 0.000, which is less than 0.05.

The contribution of the learning model to the improvement of writing skills can be seen from Adjusted $R^2 = 0.359$. This means that approximately 35.9% of the difference in students' creative narrative writing skills scores can be explained by the combination of the learning model and their initial abilities. Meanwhile, the remaining

64.1% is suspected to be caused by other factors outside this study, such as learning motivation, student character, previous experience, or language proficiency.

From these results, it can be concluded that the increase in students' creative narrative writing skills is not solely due to their initial abilities, but also because of the use of the Project-Based Learning (PjBL) model with scaffolding during learning. This means that even tho the initial ability factor has been statistically controlled, the PjBL-scaffolding model still has a significant impact on the improvement of students' writing skills.

Table 3. ANCOVA Results

Source	F	Sig.	Adjusted R ²
Learning Model	22.262	0.000	0.359

Based on the analysis results, it can be concluded that the Project-Based Learning (PjBL) model with scaffolding assistance has a better impact on improving creative writing skills for narrative texts compared to conventional learning. The advantage is reflected in the achievements of the experimental class, which obtained higher learning outcomes compared to the control group after the treatment was given. These results indicate that learning which combines project-based activities with gradual learning assistance can create a more meaningful learning experience. During the learning process, students not only focus on completing the final task but also engage in every stage of the writing process, from finding ideas, outlining the story, developing the content, revising, to perfecting the resulting narrative text. Learning occurs when students construct meaning thru real experiences, making the writing process more directed and creative.

The effectiveness of this learning model is influenced by the characteristics of Project-Based Learning, which places students at the center of the learning activities. Thru project completion, students are given the opportunity to explore contextual problems, build knowledge based on experience, and produce outcomes that reflect their understanding (Kokotsaki et al., 2016; Almulla, 2020). These conditions provide students with the space to make decisions, manage their learning process, and take responsibility for their work outcomes. Activities like this help in mastering the material and train creativity, critical thinking skills, communication abilities, and teamwork, which are important competencies in 21st-century learning (Sumarni, 2015; Muis & Dewi, 2021).

However, the success of learning is not solely determined by the implementation of PjBL. The results of this study indicate that the presence of scaffolding is a factor that enhances the effectiveness of the model. The assistance provided by the teacher is tailored to the needs of the students at each stage of writing so that they receive support when facing difficulties. At the initial stage, the teacher helps students understand the structure of narrative texts, identify the elements of the story, and create an outline as the basis for developing their writing. When the writing process is underway, assistance is provided thru prompting questions, writing examples, feedback on their work, and discussions among students. The support facilitates students in developing ideas, improving the organization of their writing,

selecting appropriate vocabulary, and enhancing the coherence of the story's content. This research positions Project-Based Learning (PjBL) as the core learning model, with scaffolding integrated as a support technique throughout the stages of the PjBL syntax. Various types of scaffolding ranging from visual, verbal, conceptual, procedural, strategic, social, to metacognitive are not included as phases in PjBL itself. Scaffolding is a temporary support from the teacher aimed at helping students complete tasks that are still beyond their independent capabilities (Marlina, Lina, & Yayuk Muji Rahayu, 2025).

Among the various forms of scaffolding, verbal scaffolding and social scaffolding are the most dominant. Verbal scaffolding is widely used because the writing process requires continuous guidance and feedback. This assistance is provided thru prompting questions, concept clarification, guidance, and idea reinforcement during the discussion stage, schedule preparation, or sharing of written results. Meanwhile, social scaffolding dominates because the characteristics of PjBL emphasize collaborative learning. Thru group discussions, peer reviews, presentations, and peer feedback, students receive learning support not only from teachers but also from their peers in developing ideas, solving problems, and refining their writing.

In line with the increasing abilities of the students, the intensity of assistance is gradually reduced so that the students can complete tasks more independently. This process reflects the application of the fading principle in scaffolding, which is the systematic reduction of assistance in accordance with the development of students' abilities. The findings are in line with what Vygotsky proposed in 1978 in the Zone of Proximal Development (ZPD) theory, which explains that learners can achieve a higher level of ability when they receive appropriate assistance while facing tasks that they are not yet able to complete independently. The results of this study also support the research of Adinda et al. (2024), Belland et al. (2017), and Tseng (2025), which concluded that scaffolding can enhance cognitive development while also fostering students' learning independence.

In addition to improving learning outcomes, the use of this model also influences various aspects of creative writing skills. Students demonstrate better abilities in developing original ideas, structuring storylines logically, using more varied vocabulary, applying language rules more accurately, and improving their written work thru the revision process. This shows that learning not only produces higher quality written products but also improves the thinking process underlying writing activities. In other words, the improvements that occur encompass both the process and the learning outcomes simultaneously.

The collaborative implementation of the project also contributes to the improvement of students' abilities. Thru group work, students have the opportunity to exchange ideas, provide feedback, discuss alternative solutions, and reflect on the written work that has been produced. That interaction helps students see the weaknesses in their writing from various perspectives while also gaining inspiration from their peers' work. Therefore, the learning becomes more interactive and provides

students with the opportunity to learn not only from the teacher but also from their fellow students.

These findings reinforce various previous studies that reveal Project-Based Learning positively impacts students' writing skills, creativity, collaboration, and higher-order thinking abilities (Monica & Sinur, 2021; Habibah & Safrudin, 2024; Zamiah et al., 2024). However, this research offers a different contribution by consistently integrating scaffolding at every stage of project-based learning. Thus, the success of learning does not only come from the project activities carried out by students but also from the gradually designed assistance strategies according to their learning needs. The integration of these two approaches represents a novelty in the research, showing that project-based learning will yield more optimal results when supported by well-planned scaffolding.

Pedagogically, the results of this study imply that the Project-Based Learning (PjBL) model with scaffolding assistance is worth considering as an alternative for teaching Indonesian, particularly in creative narrative writing at the junior high school level. In addition to improving the quality of written work, this model is capable of developing critical thinking, creativity, communication, collaboration, independent learning, and the ability to manage the learning process independently. All of these competencies align with the direction of the Merdeka Curriculum implementation, which emphasizes student-centered learning and the development of skills relevant to the 21st century. Therefore, the application of this model has the potential to provide broader contributions, not only to the improvement of writing skills but also to the comprehensive development of student competencies.

E. CONCLUSION

This research proves that the application of the Project-Based Learning (PjBL) model with scaffolding assistance provides positive benefits for the improvement of creative narrative text writing skills among seventh-grade students at SMP Negeri 5 Denpasar. Compared to students who followed conventional learning, students in the experimental group showed better writing skills after undergoing the learning process. The findings indicate that the combination of project-based activities with planned learning assistance can create a more effective learning process in developing writing skills.

The improvement in writing skills obtained by the students is not only influenced by their initial abilities but also by the quality of the learning process during the research period. The guidance provided by the teacher at each stage of writing, from brainstorming ideas, outlining the story, developing drafts, revising, to editing the final piece, helps students overcome various difficulties that arise during the writing process. As the students' abilities develop, the assistance is gradually reduced so that they can complete the writing activities more independently. This condition not only improves the quality of the writing produced but also strengthens students' self-confidence, creativity, and responsibility toward their learning outcomes.

Conceptually, the results of this study reinforce the view that the effectiveness of writing instruction can be enhanced thru the integration of the Project-Based Learning model with scaffolding strategies. Learning occurs when students construct meaning thru real experiences, while scaffolding serves as support that helps students achieve abilities that they could not previously attain independently. The integration of these two approaches results in a more directed learning process because students gain space to explore while also receiving assistance that meets their needs.

The implications of this research indicate that the Project-Based Learning (PjBL) model with scaffolding assistance can be a viable alternative to be applied in Indonesian language learning, particularly in the material of creative narrative text writing. In addition to contributing to the improvement of learning outcomes, this model also supports the development of various important competencies, such as creativity, critical thinking skills, communication, collaboration, and independent learning. This is in line with the concept of the Merdeka Curriculum, which positions students as active learners in creating their own knowledge.

Nevertheless, this research still has room for development. Therefore, subsequent research is recommended to implement this model at different educational levels, materials, or student characteristics to obtain a broader picture of its effectiveness consistency. In addition, future research can also examine other factors that may influence learning success, such as learning motivation, self-regulated learning ability, digital literacy, creative thinking ability, and other relevant variables in Indonesian language learning.

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