



## **PROJECT-BASED LEARNING AND ASSESSMENT FOR ESP (ENGLISH FOR SPECIFIC PURPOSE) STUDENTS: LECTURERS' PERSPECTIVE**

**Marina<sup>1\*</sup>, Muhammad Roni<sup>2</sup>, Mursidah<sup>3</sup>**

<sup>1,2</sup>Accounting Study Program, Faculty of Economics and Business, Universitas Malikussaleh, Lhokseumawe, 24351, Indonesia.

<sup>2</sup>Entrepreneurship Study Program, Faculty of Economics and Business, Universitas Malikussaleh, Lhokseumawe, 24351, Indonesia.

\*Email korespondensi : [marina@unimal.ac.id](mailto:marina@unimal.ac.id)<sup>1</sup>

Diterima Desember 2021; Disetujui Januari 2022; Dipublikasi 31 Januari 2022

**Abstract:** *This paper examines lecturers' perceptions of the project-based learning model and assessment on the teaching of English Accounting at the Faculty of Economics and Business, Malikussaleh University. Project-based Learning (PBL) is one of the Merdeka Belajar priority program plans in 2021 which is part of the Kampus Merdeka plan by the Ministry of Education and Culture and Higher Education. Projects in education are one of the assessment instruments used to assess not only learning outcomes but also student learning processes. Students are required to not only learn to understand the material but also learn how to apply knowledge in group work and produce relevant products. The purpose of developing a project-based learning model for accounting students studying English for Specific Purpose (ESP) is so that they can apply English knowledge to their field of expertise. The research results indicate that all lecturers were familiar with the concept of project in education. However, they still need more training to develop and design proper project-based learning and assessment.*

**Keywords:** *Project-based learning, project-based assessment, English for Specific Purpose (ESP), Lecturers' perception*

**Abstrak:** Tulisan ini mengkaji tentang persepsi dosen terhadap model *project based learning and assessment* pada pengajaran Bahasa Inggris Akuntansi di Fakultas Ekonomi dan Bisnis Universitas Malikussaleh. *Project-based Learning (PBL)* merupakan salah satu rencana program prioritas Merdeka Belajar di tahun 2021 yang menjadi bagian dari rencana Kampus Merdeka oleh Kementerian Pendidikan dan Kebudayaan serta Pendidikan Tinggi. Proyek dalam pendidikan adalah salah satu instrumen penilaian yang digunakan untuk menilai tidak hanya hasil belajar tetapi juga proses belajar siswa. Siswa dituntut untuk tidak hanya belajar untuk memahami materi tetapi juga belajar bagaimana mengaplikasikan ilmu dalam kerja kelompok dan menghasilkan produk yang relevan. Tujuan dari pengembangan model pembelajaran berbasis proyek untuk mahasiswa jurusan akuntansi yang belajar English for specific Purpose (ESP) yaitu agar mereka bisa menerapkan ilmu bahasa Inggris kedalam bidang keahlian mereka. Hasil penelitian menunjukkan bahwa para dosen sudah pernah mengetahui apa itu proyek dalam pendidikan. Namun, mereka masih perlu diberikan pelatihan untuk bisa mengembangkan dan mendesain pembelajaran dan penilaian berbasis proyek yang tepat.

**Kata kunci:** *Pembelajaran berbasis proyek, penilaian berbasis proyek, English for Spesific Purpose (ESP), persepsi dosen*

produce quality graduates who are ready to contribute to society. One of the efforts to improve the quality of learning is to apply learning and assessment models that are in accordance with the vision and mission of higher education. One of *Merdeka Belajar's* priority programs in 2021 is the Project Based-Learning (PBL) model which is part of the *Kampus Merdeka* plan. *Merdeka Belajar Kampus Merdeka* is a program that emerged from the policy of the Minister of Education and Culture and Higher Education, Nadiem Makariem. The purpose of implementing this program in higher education is that students are ready to work after completing education and have competencies that are relevant to social, cultural, career changes, and technological advances. (Direktorat Jenderal Pendidikan Tinggi, 2020)

According to Bell (2010), the skills that need to be possessed to survive in the 21st century are collaboration, communication, and problem solving. Therefore, students need to be equipped with the ability to become independent thinkers and learners. The application of the project in education aims to demonstrate the ability of learners to apply and integrate various abilities and knowledge and use creativity, originality, and aesthetics. In addition, if the project is done in groups, students can demonstrate their ability to work collaboratively in creating high-quality projects (Nitko & Brookhart, 2011). In learning, the application of the project aims to make students not only listen to the explanations of the educators in class but also be able to work independently both individually and in groups to apply this knowledge in the form of activities that produce authentic products.

The principle of project-based learning is in accordance with the objectives of the learning process in the *Kampus Merdeka* which is student-centered learning where students are challenged and allowed to develop their abilities according to the scientific field independently but still receive guidance from the lecturer. Universities are expected to be able to design and implement project-based learning methods that can facilitate students to be able to develop competencies that are following the needs of the community and work.

One of the Main Performance Indicators of State Universities (IKU-PTN) is IKU 7 (Collaborative and Participatory Classes). This study tries to elaborate on this issue by interviewing the lecturers for English courses in the Accounting study program to see their perspective on the implementation of Project-based Learning and Assessment at the university. More detailed information on IKU 7 can be seen in Table 1.

**Table 1 IKU 7: Collaborative and Participatory Class**

| Topic                         | Sub-topic              | Explanation   |
|-------------------------------|------------------------|---|
| Criteria for learning methods | 2.2 Team-based project | 2.2.1 The class is divided into groups (>1 student) to work on an assignment together over a long period;                       |
|                               |                        | 2.2.2 Groups are given authentic problems or complex questions, then given space to create work plans and collaboration models; |
|                               |                        | 2.2.3 Each group prepares a presentation/fin  |

| Topic               | Sub-topic                           | Explanation   |
|---------------------|-------------------------------------|---|
|                     |                                     | al work that is presented to the lecturer, class or other audience who can provide constructive feedback; and   |
| Evaluation criteria | 3.1 Final score evaluation criteria | 3.1. 50% of the final score must be based on the quality of class discussion participation (case method) and/or the final presentation of project-based learning. |

Source: (Direktorat Jenderal Pendidikan Tinggi, 2021)

## LITERATURE REVIEW

Two important aspects in education are intertwined and cannot be separated from each other, namely the importance of learning methods and assessment methods to evaluate student learning outcomes. If the learning method focuses on the use of various models and learning approaches in delivering teaching materials, the assessment method focuses on the application of various instruments to assess students. The right combination of learning methods and assessment methods will produce the right output under the educational goals.

### Project-Based Learning (PBL)

Following the Main Performance Indicators (IKU) of State Universities developed by the Directorate General of Higher Education, one of the recommended learning methods to be applied in student classes is team-based projects or projects that are carried out in groups. Students are divided into groups to work on assignments in the form of

discussions about real issues or complex questions within a certain period. Next, each group presents the results in front of the lecturer, class, or other audience to get constructive feedback. The explanation contained in the IKU is under the principles of project-based learning (PBL), which is active learning in which students must be able to demonstrate what they know and what they can do. Students must have prior knowledge, learned knowledge, and relevant skills to be able to solve realistic and authentic problems (Mansoor, 1997).

The project as an assessment method can combine summative and formative assessment, and is feasible to be applied in the classroom. In addition, the project provides an opportunity for students to not only acquire knowledge verbally from the teacher in the classroom but also to be able to implement their knowledge. In addition, projects can also facilitate students to work in groups and build communication and collaboration skills. When educators apply project-based learning, students can not only develop their cognitive but also affective and psychomotor skills. However, educators need to consider that they must develop appropriate project models and rubrics to be able to obtain an objective assessment.

Several educators and researchers have tried to develop and apply project-based learning in the teaching and learning process at various levels of education. Grant and Branch (2005) conducted a study with geography teachers at a private school in the United States. They asked students to create a Human Rights exhibition project by searching for information about human rights issues in several countries through the Internet and printed sources and then preparing a research paper on human rights

violations in the assigned country. Then, students are asked to exhibit their findings digitally or analogously depending on their preferences.

Another example of a project is producing a short video. Tiene & Ingram (2001) stated that making videos for assessment purposes would be fun for students to do in class. This project can motivate and encourage students to conduct thorough investigations and write manuscripts on certain agreed topics. This project can also develop various skills, such as imagination, creativity, investigation, writing skills, organization, social sensitivity, and other skills.

Marina (2016) designed a project called *Becoming an Expert on Geometry* for a mathematics lesson. Students were required to work in a group to prepare a lesson plan and Geometry materials assigned to them. Each group would present in front of the class. There would be questions and answers after the presentation facilitated by the teacher.

The project developed by Mali (2016) is the design of posters for Creative Writing courses at universities in Indonesia. Students are divided into groups of two or three people and they are asked to make a type of poem according to the material taught in class and illustrate it in the form of a poster. At the beginning of the project, students have been given preparations such as how to design posters and examples of posters that have been made by their seniors. Next, the poster that has been revised by the lecturer is published on a blog.

Hanardi (2015) designed a project for English lessons in high school (SMA). Students are asked to make a report on an ecotourism object and present

the results like a tourism ambassador. They have to go to one tourist spot and gather relevant information. After that, they have to make a report in the form of a description poster and present it in front of the class.

Projects provide opportunities for students to apply their knowledge in creative and productive ways and educators need to design projects that support constructivist learning (Marina, 2015). Therefore, before planning a project, educators need to consider the resources and students' skill level to create effective project-based learning.

### **Project-Based Assessment**

Assessment of learning outcomes is the next important step that must be done by educators after the learning process. Assessment is a process to obtain information that is used to make important decisions both about students, school curriculum and programs as well as educational policies (Nitko & Brookhart, 2011). The purpose of the assessment is to provide feedback to educators on whether the teaching methods used are appropriate so that learning progress data can be obtained to determine that the material being taught is appropriate. Students also benefit from the assessment, namely feedback on their ability to absorb lessons so that it can be an incentive for them to study harder.

Assessment can be done during and after the learning process is carried out. The assessment carried out while the learning process is still in progress is called formative assessment which aims to assess the understanding, needs, and progress of students while learning is still in progress. While the assessment carried out at the end of the learning

process is called a summative assessment which aims to provide a final score on students' abilities. Both types of assessment need to be carried out on an ongoing basis because they have different objectives.

In project-based learning, not only the final result in the form of a product is assessed, but also the process when working on a project. These processes and products can be assessed using a rubric, self-assessment, and peer-assessment. Because learning is constructivist not behaviorist, to assess project-based learning, both formative assessments such as self and peer assessment and summative assessments for written reports and project presentations are important to be carried out on an ongoing basis (Hunaiti, Grimaldi, Goven, Mootanah, & Martin, 2010).

According to Mansoor (1997), there are several questions to consider when designing a project-based assessment :

1. How do you know what students can do?
2. How do students know what they have achieved?
3. Can the students be assessed by the applicable assessment standards?
4. Does the project meet the assessment criteria that have been made for evaluation and scoring?

The development of appropriate assessment instruments should be able to answer these questions. Therefore, when designing project assignments, educators must ensure that students understand the project instructions so that they can carry them out properly. In addition, the performance of the project must be able to be assessed according to the criteria described.

The project is part of a performance assessment which is usually assessed using a rubric. A rubric is a multipurpose assessment guide to assess student performance and products that serve to improve student learning abilities (Wolf & Stevens, 2007). A well-designed rubric can make the assessment process more objective and efficient. However, designing rubrics that are effective and successful in assessing student performance well is not an easy job because it requires time, effort, and thoroughness (Brown & Abeywickrama, 2010). One of the main obstacles to the rubric is that it takes a long time to develop a rubric, especially to make a description of each level of performance. Therefore, rubrics were developed only for important and complex tasks. (Wolf & Stevens, 2007) .

In project-based learning, it is not only the final result that is assessed but also the work process in completing the project. However, the process will be difficult to assess directly by educators, especially when the group works outside the classroom. Therefore, the most effective assessment instrument for assessing the process is self-assessment and peer-assessment. Self-assessment is an assessment process where students monitor and evaluate themselves to see how their attitudes and behavior are while learning and also to identify appropriate strategies to improve their understanding and abilities. (McMillan & Hearn, 2008). Meanwhile, peer-assessment is an activity in which a person evaluates both the number, level, value, price, quality, and success of a product or learning outcomes from colleagues (Topping, 1998).

In group work, the benefit of self-assessment is to encourage group members to be more

responsible for their respective tasks. Meanwhile, peer-assessment can be used as a strategy to be able to assess the contribution of each member in group work.

### **English for Specific Purpose (ESP)**

Teaching English to students in the Accounting study program is an example of teaching English for Specific Purpose (ESP). According to Hutchinson & Waters (1987), ESP is an approach in teaching English in which all teaching materials and teaching methods in ESP must be adapted to the purpose of students learning foreign languages. ESP teaching is usually aimed at university students studying in programs other than English language education courses or professionals in certain fields such as business, medical, nursing, law, and so on.

The purpose of teaching Accounting English is for students to be able to communicate with each other in a work environment both orally such as in correspondence, meetings and in writing such as reading financial statements in English. To become a professional accountant, you need not only mathematical skills but also English skills as an international communication language.

The process of learning and teaching English for students who are not native speakers of the language has two ways, namely teaching language theory and practice. Teaching theories such as grammar and structure may seem more practical to do but ensuring that students can practice the foreign language they have learned is not easy. Therefore, the teacher must provide a form of task that encourages students to practice the language in

everyday life.

### **RESEARCH METHODOLOGY**

This research is qualitative research with a case studies approach. The participants are five lecturers in English courses in the accounting study program at the Faculty of Economics and Business at Malikussaleh University. They have master's degree qualifications and English teaching experience for more than five years. Data were collected in semi-structured interviews and one-week in-class observations. The interviews were conducted with lecturers who had taught English in the accounting study program to find out their perceptions of project-based learning and assessment and to obtain information regarding the implementation of the English learning project for accounting students. After that, the researcher made observations to the class to observe the teaching and learning process of English for accounting students.

Qualitative analysis was conducted to analyze interview data to produce a descriptive analysis that describes the data collected as they are. Furthermore, all data are integrated and then thoroughly analyzed to reach the conclusions of the research results.

### **RESULTS AND DISCUSSION**

To find out the opinion of the English lecturers regarding project-based learning and assessment, personal meetings with each participant were conducted. First, the participants received general information about the research and the purpose of their involvement. They were assured that their response during the interview was important, appreciated, and treated anonymously. Then, the

model of project-based learning and assessment that has been developed by the researchers was presented to the participants so that they could see and observe an example of a project that can be implemented in class.

The interview continued with three main questions to establish a holistic view of the process of English teaching and learning as well as project-based learning implementation. The participants were asked how they usually assess students for assignment, quiz, midterm, and final. The second question is whether they have used the project as assessment in class. And, the third question is whether they have used self-assessment, peer-assessment, and rubric in class? The results and discussion of the interview were elaborated according to the three questions.

### **Assessing Students' Language Mastery**

Details about the form of assessment given by the lecturers are presented below.

Question 1: How do you usually assess your students?

Lecturer A assessed her students by giving a combination of oral and written examinations. For quizzes and assignments, she would ask the students to describe certain topics such as people, profession, and organization structure in front of the class. The topic is related to accounting and general information. For midterm and final, she preferred to have a written examination. The question is in the form of writing a short essay or paragraph and fill-in-the-blank. The topic is about expressing an opinion about the previous materials and experience.

Lecturer B preferred to assess his students by

giving the oral examination. For the assignment, his students would do a presentation by describing certain figures to their peers in front of the class. For the quiz, the students prepared for an interview because he would ask them directly about what they know of the materials taught in the class. For the midterm, the students would do presentations about an economic issue such as a comparison of two countries and economic systems. However, he preferred to have a written examination for the final. The question is in the form of a short essay and multiple choice.

Lecturer C assessed his students by giving an oral test. For the assignment, he would ask the students to comprehend a text and make a video about it. For the quiz, the students would do a presentation about personal information by introducing themselves or their friends. The students also had an oral test for midterm and final by doing a presentation about what they comprehend from a reading. The topic is economic and accounting issues.

Lecturer D preferred to have a written examination followed by an oral examination. The assignment would be the collection of written tasks done by students in every meeting. For the quiz, students would do an examination consisting of 10 to 15 multiple-choice questions. For the midterm, she would ask the students to write a short opinion essay about the reading discussed in the class. For the final, the students would do a presentation in front of the class or by making a video responding to an economic or accounting issue.

Lecturer E assessed her students by giving an oral examination. The students would do a presentation for assignment, quiz, midterm, and

final. However, the type of presentation would be different. For quizzes and assignments, the students would do a short presentation and the topic is about general information. For the midterm and final, the presentation would be longer and the topic would be about economy and accounting.

### **Project-based Learning in class**

For the second question regarding whether the lecturers ever applied project-based learning in class, all lecturers stated that they sometimes required their students to complete a project in class as part of assessment process.

### **Project-based assessment in class**

Details about the assessment instrument used in class by the lecturers are presented below.

Question 3: Do you ever use self-assessment, peer-assessment and rubric in your class?

Lecturer A never used self-assessment in her class. But, she would use peer-assessment during a presentation. The students would assess their peers by using a form prepared by the lecturer. However, the grade would not contribute to the final score. She stated that several years ago after completing her master's degree abroad, she had designed and developed a rubric with criteria and descriptions. She had used it in her class to assess the students. However, she preferred now not to use a rubric but to give a direct marking for convenience reasons.

Lecturer B used peer-assessment during students' presentations. He would prepare a simple form for students to fill in. He stated that he never used self-assessment and rubric in the class. To assess the presentation, he would give a direct score based on several criteria.

Lecturer C stated that he used self-assessment and peer-assessment during workgroups. The students would discuss what they can and cannot understand. They would assess themselves and their peers. However, there was no specific form for students to fill in. To assess the oral test, the rubric he used only consisted of criteria with no description and performance level. He would give direct marking based on the criteria.

Lecturer D indicated that she has used self and peer-assessment to assess students' workgroups. Students would fill in a simple form consisting of what they have contributed to the group work. To assess essay and presentation, she would use a rubric consisting of criteria, description, and performance levels. She has developed a detailed rubric. However, she admitted that the rubric still needs revision.

Lecturer E never used self and peer-assessment in his class. To assess all of her students' presentations, she would give a direct marking based on several criteria.

## **DISCUSSION**

The interview results from the first question show that on average, lecturers often used performance assessment to assess their students. For example, students were asked to make oral presentations either in front of the class or via video with material related to accounting and general topics. Besides, students also were required to make short essays to improve their writing skills. This is very much in line with the goal of English for Specific Purpose (ESP) where students are asked to practice their language skills with certain topics directly than just taking written exams.



However, the lecturers' explanation about the implementation of a project in their class had raised an issue of whether they have used proper project-based learning to assess their students. The researcher caught the doubts from the answers of the lecturers. Based on their responses, they have assessed students using performance assessments and projects are part of this assessment. However, they doubted whether for example the oral presentation or short essay they applied in class could be included in the category of project-based learning and assessment. Their doubts arose when the researcher showed a sample of a project-based learning model and explained what a project is and what steps should be taken when designing a project for the assessment of student performance.

Several reasons led to the emergence of such doubts. The first reason is that they did not design a specific project guideline given to students. They merely explained the description of the presentation that students have to do or they just gave a brief written guideline. The second reason for doubt was that most of them did not use a detailed rubric. In addition, they also did not provide written rubrics to students as a guide for doing assignments. They just explained the assessment criteria in class.

Wolf and Stevens (2007) explained in their article that when a rubric is not presented to the students, the criteria of a strong or weak presentation or essay or assignment will be ambiguous and the assessment will seem arbitrary. This would confuse the students. 'A good rubric can take the mystery out of the assignment for all students'.

For the third question, the researcher also caught the doubts from the answers of the lecturers

who said they had used self and peer-assessment in class. When the researcher asked how the students rated themselves and their colleagues, one of the lecturers said that the students wrote their contributions on paper and collected them or the lecturer would directly ask the students. When researchers showed examples of self-and peer-assessment that had been designed, they stated that they had never used a detailed self-and peer assessment.

According to Vasileiadou and Karadimitriou (2021), self-assessment techniques include the use of rubrics, sheets, checklists, and portfolios. Their research focus on the use of a rubric for self-assessment for it has a list of criteria and is usually in the form of a table. Therefore, an effective self and peer-assessment form should have clear criteria and teachers need to discuss these criteria with the students beforehand.

Interestingly, there is one statement that the researcher found. There was an assumption that self and peer assessment cannot be used to assess student performance because they are not reliable and valid. Students are not able to give an objective assessment of themselves and their friends because it will be influenced by the feeling of like and dislike. This issue is one of the cons of self and peer-assessment. Therefore, before applying this assessment, the students must be prepared before by informing them of the successes and benefits of this assessment. The teacher must also be prepared by informing them about related studies that support the implementation of these assessments (Falchikov, 2003).

As for the third assessment instrument, the rubric, the lecturers who answered that they had

used the instrument stated that they did not use a detailed rubric. In addition, they also did not provide written rubrics to students as a guide for doing assignments and only verbally explained the assessment criteria in class. And when assessing student performance, they did not use a written rubric but only assessed using the criteria they have in mind.

According to Marina (2015), for students to be able to create an accurate project, educators must design a project that has clear details and descriptions. Moreover, creating a rubric is an essential part of assessing a project. When people evaluate something, they certainly thought about the criteria. However, these criteria are not always clear even to those who do the evaluation. Therefore, a written rubric would make it clear how to assess certain performance. (Wolf & Stevens, 2007)

Another fascinating finding that the researcher got was that one of the lecturers had designed and used a detailed rubric to assess student performance but not anymore. The reason is that using rubrics is a bit of a hassle and time-consuming, it would be faster to give a direct marking for each criterion. This has been highlighted by Brown & Abeywickrama (2010) and Wolf & Stevens (2007) that creating a rubric is time-consuming and the rubric should be used only for complex tasks. Therefore, lecturers need to prioritize which assignment should become a project and it would be better if there is only one project in one semester. Moreover, the description of the team-based project in IKU 7 (2021) stated that the project should weigh at least 50 percent of the total final score. This indicates that a project that the lecturer designs must

be an important and complex assignment.

## CONCLUSION

Based on the results and data analysis, it can be concluded that almost all English lecturers have heard of the use of projects in education but have never designed projects properly. They have implemented performance assessments in class but there are no written guidelines and not all use detailed rubrics as an assessment tool. Therefore, the researcher suggests the need for training for lecturers in designing project-based learning models so that the project that will be implemented at the university can qualify as a team-based project as described in IKU. In addition, lecturers also need to be given training in making assessment instruments such as rubrics, self-assessments, and peer-assessments because an inappropriate design of assessment instruments will make the implementation of project-based learning in universities ineffective and not follow the goals targeted by IKU. Moreover, the university needs to improve facilities and infrastructure such as the availability of adequate book sources, the internet connection that is evenly distributed throughout the campus, and other supporting technologies that support the successful implementation of project-based learning on campus.

Further research is also required to conduct because this study only focuses on the lecturers' perceptions. It would be better to also conduct research about the implementation of project-based learning and assessment for ESP students in university and also elaborate on students' perceptions.