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The Effect of The Problem Based Learning Model on The Analytical Thinking Skills of Elementary School Students

Leni Marlina ^{*1}, Nanang Diana ², Didit Haryadi ³, Zulkifli ⁴, Desy Ningsih Komalasari ⁵

¹Primary School Teacher Education, STKIP Taman Siswa Bima, Bima Regency, West Nusa Tenggara, 84119, Indonesia

²Mathematics Education, STKIP Taman Siswa Bima, Bima City, West Nusa Tenggara, 84119, Indonesia

³Civic Education, STKIP Taman Siswa Bima, Bima Regency, West Nusa Tenggara, 84119, Indonesia

^{4&5}Indonesian Language Education, STKIP Taman Siswa Bima, Bima City, West Nusa Tenggara, 84119, Indonesia

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* Corresponding author:

E-mail: lenim9433@gmail.com

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ABSTRACT

Analytical thinking skills are a form of higher-order thinking that is important to develop from elementary school, especially through Indonesian language learning. This study aims to determine the effect of the Problem-Based Learning (PBL) model on the analytical thinking skills of fourth-grade elementary school students on the theme "The Uniqueness of My Hometown." The research method used is quantitative with a quasi-experimental design of the one-group pretest-posttest type. The research subjects consisted of 20 fourth-grade students at SDN O'o Donggo. The instrument used was an essay test consisting of 7 questions based on indicators of analytical thinking. The data were analyzed using a paired sample t-test. The results showed a significant increase in the average scores between the pretest and posttest ($p < 0.05$). The most improved indicators were the ability to construct arguments and draw conclusions. It is concluded that the PBL model is effective in enhancing students' analytical thinking skills through contextual problem-solving activities, discussions, and group work. This model is recommended for use in Indonesian language learning to make the process more active and meaningful.

1. Introduction

Analytical thinking skills are among the essential higher-order thinking skills (HOTS) that must be developed from an early age in primary education (Mahyastuti et al., 2021; Purwita et al., 2021). These skills involve students' ability to identify, categorize, compare, infer, and connect information based on logic and available evidence (Sandi et al., 2023; Yuwono et al., 2020). In the context of Indonesian language learning, analytical thinking can be cultivated through reading and understanding narrative or descriptive texts that contain social, cultural, and geographical elements familiar to students' daily lives.

Many studies have shown that elementary students still struggle with analyzing reading texts. They tend to understand texts only at the literal level, without the ability to draw conclusions or connect them to real-life experiences (Cahya et al., 2023; Trulila & Hardi, 2022). This issue is often attributed to the lack of learning models that encourage students to think critically and reflectively.

One of the approaches considered effective in enhancing analytical thinking skills is the Problem-Based Learning (PBL) model. PBL places students at the center of the learning process by using contextual problems as triggers for thinking and exploring knowledge (Mayasari et al., 2022; Setyaningsih & Rahman, 2022). Through PBL, students are engaged in solving real-world problems, participating in discussions, and constructing knowledge collaboratively (Muahor & Yulianto, 2023; Rauf et al., 2022). Studies by Djonomiarjo (2020) and Rahma et al. (2023) have shown that the implementation of PBL can significantly improve students' analytical thinking and literacy skills in primary education. Contextual learning is highly relevant to the current Merdeka Curriculum, especially within the theme "The Uniqueness of My Hometown", which is explored in fourth-grade Indonesian language classes. This theme allows students to explore local culture such as traditions, traditional foods, local houses, and socio-economic activities in their surroundings. Learning in a local context has been proven to enhance student engagement and help them connect texts to real-life experiences (Iryanto, 2021; Nilna Indriana et al., 2024).

By integrating the PBL model into local-themed Indonesian language lessons, students not only learn to comprehend texts but are also encouraged to think analytically about cultural values, diversity, and national identity. This aligns with the Pancasila Student Profile, which emphasizes critical reasoning, creativity, and appreciation of local culture (Askar, 2020; Priyanasari et al., 2021). Previous research supports the effectiveness of PBL in Indonesian language instruction. For instance, studies by Ardi et al. (2023) and Mukhsinah et al. (2023) show that PBL enhances students' critical thinking and argumentation skills. Similarly, research by Hidayatus Sholehah et al. (2023) and Syamsu Alam (2023) reveals that students become more active and develop stronger analytical abilities after engaging in problem-based learning.

However, despite the promising findings, there is still a lack of research specifically examining the impact of PBL on Indonesian language learning within the theme "The Uniqueness of My Hometown" at the primary level, especially in unique local contexts such as Donggo Subdistrict in Bima, which is rich in cultural heritage. Based on this background, this study aims to investigate the influence of the Problem-Based Learning model on the analytical thinking skills of fourth-grade students at SDN O'o, Donggo Subdistrict, in the Indonesian language subject under the theme "The Uniqueness of My Hometown." This research is expected to contribute both scientifically and practically to the development of contextual learning models that foster critical thinking and appreciation for students' local culture.

In practice, Indonesian language instruction in primary schools should not be limited to basic linguistic competence but should also aim to develop students' thinking skills through meaningful literacy activities. The theme "The Uniqueness of My Hometown" is strategically positioned to foster analytical thinking, as it encourages students to explore, understand, and reflect upon the cultural and geographical richness of their own regions. Such local knowledge can serve as a strong foundation for meaning-making and reading comprehension (Misriani et al., 2023; Mubin & Aryanto, 2024).

The PBL model provides ample opportunities for students to learn through real-life experiences and contextual problems. This is important because elementary students tend to grasp concepts more easily when content is directly connected to their daily lives (Hidayatus Sholehah et al., 2023; Wahyuni et al., 2021). In PBL, students work in groups to analyze problems, seek solutions, and present their ideas. This process not only improves text comprehension but also enhances communication, collaboration, and argumentation skills (Andriyanti & Prihastari, 2023; Budiyo et al., 2020).

Furthermore, problem-based learning aligns well with the characteristics of the Merdeka Curriculum, which emphasizes differentiated, project-based, and contextual learning (Octaliani & Reinita, 2022; Yuniar et al., 2022). The model fosters independence, curiosity, and active engagement among students. Additionally, character values such as cooperation, nationalism, and appreciation of diversity can be cultivated through the exploration of each student's local culture (Kotto et al., 2022; Manalu et al., 2023). Specifically, analytical thinking skills in Indonesian language learning can be nurtured through activities such as identifying main and supporting ideas, comparing information from different texts, or drawing conclusions from a reading passage. These tasks require students to move beyond surface-level understanding and engage in deeper reflection on the content and context of texts (Artanti et al., 2021; Sari et al., 2023).

On the other hand, successful implementation of PBL also requires active teacher involvement in designing authentic problems, facilitating discussions, and guiding students to stay focused on learning goals. In the context of local-themed Indonesian language learning, teachers must be capable of raising relevant local issues that are familiar to students yet rich in educational value (Sanjaya, 2021; Suratno et al., 2020). For example, teachers can initiate discussions with questions like, "Why is our culture different from others?" or "How can we preserve our local traditions for the future?" Given this background, it is relevant to explore to what extent the implementation of the Problem-Based Learning model affects students' analytical thinking skills, particularly in the Indonesian language subject under the theme "The Uniqueness of My Hometown." This study seeks to fill the research gap in regions with unique local characteristics such as Donggo Subdistrict, Bima Regency, West Nusa Tenggara.

2. Methodology

Type and Research Design

This study employed a quantitative approach with a quasi-experimental design. The design used was a one-group pretest-posttest design, in which a single experimental class received treatment through learning using the Problem-Based Learning (PBL) model. The students' analytical thinking skills were measured and compared before and after the treatment. This approach was chosen because, administratively, the researcher only had access to one class group without a comparison group. This design allows for a quantitative analysis of the effectiveness of the PBL model through the differences in students' pretest and posttest scores.

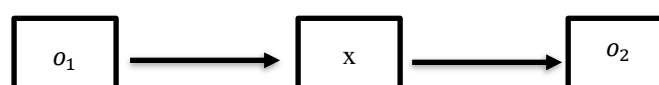


Figure 1. One-Group Pretest-Posttest Research Design.

Research Procedure

This study was conducted in five main stages:

1. Planning, which included problem identification, the development of valid instruments, and the design of a learning scenario using the PBL model adapted to the theme "*The Uniqueness of My Local Area*."
2. Instrument testing, involving validation by primary education experts and limited trials with students outside the sample to ensure the validity and reliability of the test items.
3. Pretest administration, to measure students' initial analytical thinking skills before the treatment.
4. PBL model implementation, carried out over six meetings, focusing on solving contextual problems related to the culture, environment, and social life of the students' local area.
5. Posttest administration, to identify changes in students' analytical thinking skills after being taught using the problem-based learning approach.

Research Subjects/Participants

The subjects in this study were 20 fourth-grade students from SDN O'o, Donggo District, Bima Regency. The sampling technique used was purposive sampling, considering factors such as location accessibility, teacher support, and the suitability of the class characteristics with the intervention requirements. The selected class had a diverse socio-cultural background and had never previously received instruction using the PBL model.

Data Collection Techniques and Procedures

Data were collected using an analytical thinking skills test developed based on specific indicators of analytical thinking, including the ability to identify

information, establish cause-effect relationships, compare information, make inferences, and draw conclusions. The test consisted of 7 essay questions based on descriptive and narrative texts, aligned with the theme “The Uniqueness of My Local Area.” The test was administered twice (pretest and posttest) under strict supervision and with clear instructions. Scoring was conducted using a validated scoring rubric.

Data Collection Instrument

The main instrument used in this study was an essay test on analytical thinking skills, consisting of 7 text-based questions with local context. Each question was designed to explore the following indicators:

1. Identifying important information from the text.
2. Analyzing cause-and-effect relationships.
3. Constructing arguments based on data in the text.
4. Comparing two pieces of information within one or more paragraphs.
5. Interpreting implicit meanings in the text.
6. Relating the text content to personal experiences.
7. Drawing logical conclusions from the text.

The questions were constructed based on the Revised Bloom’s Taxonomy at cognitive levels C2–C5 and were validated by experts in elementary-level Indonesian language instruction.

Data Analysis Techniques

The data were analyzed quantitatively using descriptive and inferential statistics. Descriptive statistics included the calculation of mean, median, standard deviation, and the distribution of pretest and posttest scores. Prerequisite tests were conducted first, namely the normality test (Shapiro-Wilk) to ensure the data distribution was normal. Then, a paired sample t-test was performed to determine the significance of the improvement in students’ analytical thinking skills after learning based on the PBL model. Data processing was carried out using the Jamovi or SPSS statistical software. In addition, the researcher documented the learning process and students’ discussion outcomes to strengthen the qualitative interpretation of the results.

3. Result and Discussion

Results

Based on the descriptive statistical results, the average pretest score was 61.75, while the average posttest score increased significantly to 86.50. This indicates a substantial improvement in posttest results compared to the pretest. These findings suggest that the intervention or learning approach applied had a positive impact on students’ cognitive abilities (performance). The distribution of pretest scores was

more spread out and showed greater variability, with a variance of 100.72, while the posttest score distribution was more concentrated and consistent, with a lower variance of 73.95. Although skewness and interquartile range (IQR) data were not explicitly presented, the higher minimum and maximum scores in the posttest, along with the decrease in variance, indicate that students' learning outcomes became more consistent and centered around higher scores after the intervention. These descriptive results are presented in Table 1 below:

Table 1. Summary of Pretest and Posttest Results

No	Nama	Prettest	posttest
1	Aisyah	60	85
2	Asiyah	55	80
3	Alfa	50	80
4	Airin	65	85
5	Asraf	50	75
6	Dadox	55	80
7	Dila	75	90
8	Irawan	55	80
9	Ikbai	70	90
10	Konata	50	75
11	Keisya	70	95
12	Kaila	50	75
13	Restu	60	85
14	Salsabila	75	100
15	Sahid	50	80
16	Tias	80	100
17	Tiara	75	100
18	Ujlatus soleha	70	95
19	Umul	60	85
20	Wahdania	60	95
	Mean	61,75	86,5
	Maksimum	80	100
	Minimum	50	75
	Stdev	10,03611898	8,599265575
	Varians	100,7236842	73,94736842

The data show an average increase of 24.75 points. Improvement was observed evenly across all indicators of analytical thinking skills, especially in the ability to identify main ideas, construct arguments, and draw conclusions based on the reading texts.

The image below presents a comparison of the average pretest and posttest scores of students. This graph visually illustrates a significant improvement in learning outcomes following the implementation of a learning intervention. It can be observed that the average pretest score of 61.75 increased to 86.5 in the posttest. This increase reflects the success of the applied approach or learning model in enhancing students' cognitive abilities. This visualization reinforces the previously described descriptive and inferential statistical analysis. The descriptive results are presented in Figure 2 below:

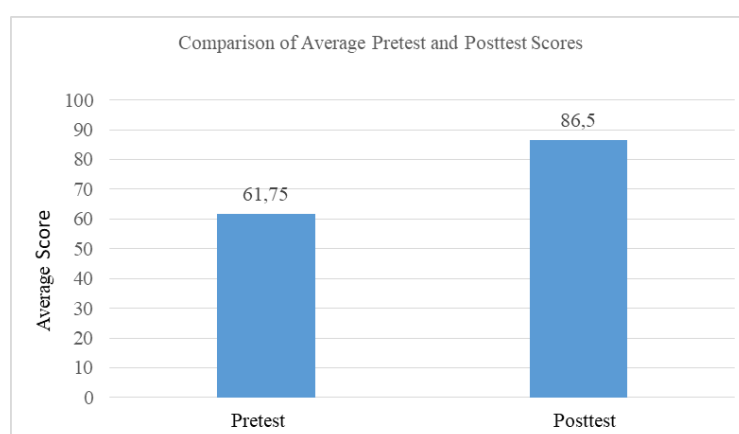


Figure 2. Comparison of Average Pretest and Posttest Scores

The figure above presents a comparison of the average pretest and posttest scores of 20 fourth-grade students at SDN O'o, Donggo District, in the Indonesian language learning theme "The Uniqueness of My Local Area" after the implementation of the Problem-Based Learning (PBL) model.

1. Pretest Score: An average of 61.75 points indicates the students' initial level of analytical thinking skills before the learning intervention.
2. Posttest Score: The average increased to 86.5 points, demonstrating a significant improvement in analytical thinking skills after learning using the PBL model.
3. The increase of 24.75 points shows that the implementation of the PBL model is very effective in enhancing students' analytical thinking skills. This model helps students understand texts deeply, construct logical arguments, draw conclusions, and relate information to real-life contexts, especially regarding the cultural diversity of their local area.

Based on the results of the paired t-test, the Pearson correlation between the pretest and posttest scores was 0.91, indicating a very strong relationship between the two scores. The calculated t-value was -26.81 with 19 degrees of freedom (df) and a two-tailed significance value (p-value) of 1.46×10^{-16} , which is much smaller than 0.05. This indicates that the difference in mean scores between the pretest and posttest is highly significant. These findings confirm that the intervention or learning method applied had a positive and significant effect on improving students' learning outcomes.

The results indicate a significant difference between the pretest and posttest scores. Thus, the alternative hypothesis is accepted, meaning that the Problem-Based Learning model has a significant effect on students' analytical thinking skills. Further data analysis was conducted by examining the average score improvements of students on each indicator of analytical thinking skills. The pretest and posttest scores for these indicators can be seen in the previous bar chart. The average pretest score for students was 63.00, which increased to 88.00 in the posttest. This shows that after applying the Problem-Based Learning (PBL) model, students became more capable of identifying relevant and important information from the reading

texts related to the theme “The Uniqueness of My Local Area.” The average pretest score for this indicator was 60.25 and increased to 85.25 after the treatment. The complete statistical test results are presented in Table 2 below:

Table 2. Results of Paired Sample T-Test

Mean	61,75	86,5
Variance	100,7236842	73,94736842
Observations	20	20
Pearson Correlation	0,913242401	
Hypothesized Mean Difference	0	
Df	19	
t Stat	-26,81403136	
P(T<=t) one-tail	7,28798E-17	
t Critical one-tail	1,729132812	
P(T<=t) two-tail	1,4576E-16	
t Critical two-tail	2,093024054	

This improvement reflects students’ ability to develop logical ideas based on information obtained from reading and their real-life experiences. A significant increase was also observed in this indicator, from 61.00 in the pretest to 86.00 in the posttest. Students showed improvement in critical thinking skills to draw conclusions from the text based on explicit and implicit information. This indicator increased from an average pretest score of 62.75 to 86.75 in the posttest. This demonstrates that the PBL model was able to encourage students to connect the content of the reading with personal experiences, local contexts, and daily life in their environment.

Discussion

This study aimed to determine the effect of the Problem-Based Learning (PBL) model on the analytical thinking skills of elementary school students. Based on the data analysis results, there was a significant increase in all indicators of analytical thinking skills after the implementation of the PBL model. This indicates that the research objective was achieved, as the PBL model proved effective in enhancing students’ analytical thinking abilities, particularly in Indonesian language learning with the theme "The Uniqueness of My Local Area." These findings align with those of Halimah et al. (2023), which showed that PBL improves students’ critical and analytical thinking skills through contextual learning experiences.

The study by Hamdani et al. (2022) also supports these results, demonstrating that students who learned using the PBL approach had deeper understanding and better analytical skills compared to those taught with conventional methods. Therefore, this study confirms the consistent effectiveness of the PBL model in the context of elementary education. Theoretically, the PBL model is rooted in social constructivism (Vygotsky), which emphasizes the importance of social interaction and contextual environment in knowledge construction. Through PBL, students engage in solving real-life problems relevant to their daily lives, thereby encouraging higher-order thinking processes such as analyzing, concluding, and connecting information. This process strongly supports the development of

analytical thinking skills as described by Syarifuddin et al. (2022), who state that analytical thinking involves skills in identifying arguments, evaluating information, and drawing logical conclusions.

The implication of this study is the importance for elementary school teachers to apply active and contextual learning approaches like PBL. Teachers can design learning scenarios relevant to students' lives, thereby not only developing cognitive skills but also social values such as recognizing regional potential, appreciating diversity, and fostering awareness of local culture. The theme "The Uniqueness of My Local Area" is particularly suitable for PBL because it allows students to explore the culture, traditions, and local wisdom they experience daily. The limitations of this study include the small number of participants, involving only 20 students from one class without a control comparison group. Although the one-group pretest-posttest design is effective for observing changes, it cannot fully isolate the influence of external variables. Furthermore, the implementation of PBL heavily depends on teacher readiness and facility support, which may not be optimally available in all elementary school contexts.

4. Conclusion

Based on the results of the study, it can be concluded that the Problem-Based Learning (PBL) model is proven to be effective in improving the analytical thinking skills of fourth-grade students at SDN O'o, Donggo District, in Indonesian language learning under the theme "The Uniqueness of My Local Area." The students' abilities showed a significant improvement following the implementation of this model, both overall and across all indicators of analytical thinking, such as identifying important information, constructing arguments from texts, drawing conclusions, and connecting the content to real-life situations. The PBL model not only helps students understand the literal meaning of texts but also encourages them to think critically, logically, and contextually. The use of local themes within the PBL approach makes learning more meaningful and relevant to students' personal experiences. Therefore, the PBL model is highly recommended as an effective teaching strategy, particularly for enhancing higher-order thinking skills (HOTS) and strengthening students' character and independent learning in elementary education.

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