


Teachers' Perception on the Use of Problem-Based Learning for Teaching Reading Skills at Senior High School

 <https://doi.org/10.31004/jele.v11i4.2493>

*Ni Kadek Siska, Abdul Kamaruddin, Moh Abraham Akbar Eisenring, Rofiqoh 

¹²³⁴Universitas Tadulako, Indonesia

Corresponding Author: nikadeksiska2@gmail.com

A B S T R A C T

This study examined teachers' perceptions of the implementation of Problem-Based Learning (PBL) in teaching reading skills. Many students still struggle to comprehend texts and demonstrate low motivation during reading activities. Problem-Based Learning (PBL) is considered a suitable approach to support student-centered learning within the Merdeka Curriculum. While previous studies have discussed the effectiveness of PBL, research specifically exploring teachers' perceptions of PBL implementation in teaching reading skills at the senior high school level remains limited. This study employed a qualitative research design. Data were collected through classroom observations and semi-structured interviews with three English teachers. The data were analyzed using the Miles, Huberman, and Saldaña model, which includes data condensation, data display, and conclusion drawing. The observation data supported the interview findings and demonstrated consistency between teachers' perceptions and classroom teaching practices. The findings indicated that teachers held positive perceptions of PBL because this method improved students' engagement, reading comprehension, motivation, and critical thinking skills. However, several challenges, such as time constraints and differences in students' abilities, were also identified. Overall, the implementation of PBL was considered an effective and authentic approach to supporting the development of students' reading skills in the context of English as a Foreign Language (EFL) education when accompanied by appropriate instructional guidance in classroom practices.

Keywords: *Problem-Based Learning, Teachers' Perception, Reading Skills, EFL*

Article History:

Received 02nd May 2026

Accepted 09th July 2026

Published 10th July 2026



INTRODUCTION

Reading is one of the most important skills in English as a Foreign Language (EFL) learning, especially at the secondary school level. Students are expected to understand texts, identify main ideas, and interpret meaning effectively. Azzahra & Nurkamto (2024) emphasized that in the context of English as a foreign language (EFL), the development of reading skills is vital because the classroom environment is often the only place for students to gain formal exposure to the language. Based on the learning context commonly found in secondary schools, teachers are required to be able to apply learning models that not only focus on delivering material but also encourage students to be active, independent, and involved in the learning process (Hadiyanto, 2024).

However, in practice, many students still face difficulties in reading comprehension. They often struggle to identify main ideas, understand vocabulary, and connect information within texts. In addition, students' motivation to read tends to be low because reading is often perceived as a difficult and uninteresting activity. These challenges indicate that teachers need to implement learning models that promote active engagement, independence, and meaningful learning in the classroom. This is in line with constructivist learning theory developed by Pass (2004) which emphasizes student-centered learning and active knowledge construction through interaction and experience. It also supports the development of 21st-century skills, particularly critical thinking and problem-solving abilities. The effectiveness of

teaching strategies significantly influences students' reading development, not only in decoding texts but also in constructing meaningful understanding.

Yu & Zin (2023) found that one of the learning models that support these principles is Problem-Based Learning (PBL). PBL is a student-centered approach that uses real-life problems as the starting point of learning, encouraging students to think critically, collaborate, and actively construct knowledge. Silalahi et al., (2023) report that in reading instruction, PBL enables students to engage more deeply with texts because they read not only to answer questions but also to solve problems. This process helps students develop better comprehension, increase motivation, and enhance higher-order thinking skills.

Several previous studies have highlighted the effectiveness of PBL in English language learning. For example, Ayiz, A., & Nugroho (2025) found that PBL improves students' engagement and reading comprehension by promoting higher-order reading strategies. Similarly, Wijaya et al., (2025) reported that students showed positive responses toward PBL as it encouraged active discussion and deeper understanding of texts. In terms of teachers' perspectives, Hadziq et al., (2024) revealed that teachers generally perceive PBL as an effective approach that enhances student engagement and critical thinking, although challenges such as time management and classroom control remain. In addition, Rahayu, (2024) found that teachers viewed PBL as beneficial in improving students' reading comprehension and motivation, despite some difficulties in managing group activities

Previous studies have shown that PBL can improve students' engagement and reading comprehension. However, most studies focus on students' outcomes rather than teachers' perspectives. Teachers' perceptions are important because they influence how learning models are implemented in the classroom. Therefore, this study aims to investigate teachers' perceptions of the use of Problem-Based Learning in teaching reading skills at SMA Utama Widyalaya Wira Dharma Palu. Specifically, this study seeks to answer the following research question: What are teachers' perceptions on the implementation of Problem-Based Learning (PBL) in teaching English reading skills?

METHOD

This study employed a descriptive qualitative research design to explore teachers' perceptions of the implementation of Problem-Based Learning (PBL) in teaching reading skills. A qualitative approach was considered appropriate because it helped the researcher obtain in-depth information regarding participants' experiences, perceptions, and understanding in a natural classroom setting. Therefore, this design was suitable for examining teachers' perceptions and experiences in implementing PBL in reading classes at SMA Utama Widyalaya Wira Dharma Palu.

Respondents

The participants of this study were three English teachers at SMA Utama Widyalaya Wira Dharma Palu. The participants were selected purposively because they had experience implementing Problem-Based Learning (PBL) in teaching reading skills. The researcher selected only three teachers because they were directly involved in applying PBL in classroom learning and were considered capable of providing detailed and relevant information related to the objectives of the study. In qualitative research, a small number of participants is acceptable when the participants can provide rich and in-depth data related to the phenomenon being investigated.

Instruments

The instruments used in this study were collected using two main instruments: classroom observation and semi-structured interviews. The instruments used in this study were classroom observation and semi-structured interviews. A classroom observation was conducted using a checklist based on the stages of Problem-Based Learning (PBL). The checklist consisted of several indicators related to teachers' understanding of PBL, teachers'

Teachers' Perception on the Use of Problem-Based Learning for Teaching Reading Skills at Senior High School

experiences in implementing PBL, and the perceived benefits of PBL for students during reading activities. The observation was conducted as non-participant observation, in which the researcher observed the classroom activities without direct involvement in the teaching process. Brief descriptive notes were also written to support the observation data. Meanwhile, semi-structured interviews were conducted to obtain deeper information regarding teachers' perceptions, experiences, and challenges in implementing PBL in teaching reading skills. The interview guide consisted of several open-ended questions related to teachers' understanding of PBL, classroom implementation, students' responses, benefits of PBL, and challenges encountered during the learning process. The semi-structured format allowed participants to explain their answers freely and provide more detailed information.

Observation

Classroom observation was used to collect data on how Problem-Based Learning (PBL) was implemented in teaching reading skills. The observation was conducted as a non-participant observation, where the researcher observed the teaching and learning process without direct involvement. The instrument used was an observation checklist in the form of a table, consisting of identifying the implementation of Problem-Based Learning (PBL) during the teaching and learning process in the classroom. The observation began with the teacher orienting students to the problem by explaining the learning objectives and presenting a problem related to the reading text. Each indicator was marked "Yes" or "No" based on the observed classroom activities.

Table 1. The Result of Observation

No	Observation aspect	Description of classroom activity	Yes	No
1	Teachers' Understanding of PBL	The teacher explains learning objectives clearly at the beginning of the lesson	✓	
2	The steps of Teaching Reading Skills using PBL	The teacher presents a problem related to the reading text	✓	
		The teacher applies steps of Teaching Reading Skills using PBL stages.	✓	
		Orienting Students to the Problem. Teacher introduces a real-life problem related to the reading text.	✓	
		Organizing student for learning The teacher organizes students into collaborative groups. The teacher explains the procedures of problem-solving activities	✓	
		3. Guiding Investigation in Reading. Students identify the main ideas of the text.	✓	
3	Teachers' Experiences in Using PBL for Teaching Reading Skills	4. Developing and presenting solutions. Each group presents its findings clearly.	✓	
		5. Analyzing and evaluating the learning Process. The teacher guides students to reflect on the problem-solving process. Students summarize the main points of the reading text.	✓	
		The teacher guides students to read texts to solve a given problem	✓	
4	Benefits Experienced by Teachers for Students	The teacher encourages group discussion during reading activities	✓	
		The teacher provides guidance when students face difficulties in understanding the text	✓	
		The teacher manages classroom activities effectively during PBL implementation	✓	
4	Benefits Experienced by Teachers for Students	Students actively participate in reading and discussion activities	✓	
		Students show engagement in analyzing the reading text	✓	

Using PBL in Teaching Reading Skills	Students demonstrate improved understanding of the text during discussion ✓
	Students demonstrate critical thinking when analyzing the text. ✓
	Students collaborate effectively during group discussions. ✓

The observation was carried out during reading lessons to examine the implementation of PBL, including how the teacher introduced problems, organized students, guided discussions, and facilitated presentations. The results were recorded in checklist form and supported by brief descriptive notes to provide a clearer picture of classroom activities.

Interview

The interview guide was designed to obtain in-depth information regarding teachers' perceptions of the implementation of Problem-Based Learning (PBL) in teaching reading skills. The interview questions were developed based on the objectives of the study and focused on several main aspects, including teachers' understanding of PBL, their experiences in implementing PBL in the classroom, the perceived benefits of PBL for students, and the challenges encountered during the implementation process. The interview guide consisted of open-ended questions to allow participants to express their opinions, experiences, and perspectives freely and in detail. In addition, several probing questions were used during the interview to clarify participants' responses and obtain richer information related to the research topic.

Data Analysis

The data were analysed using the interactive model proposed by (Miles, M. B., Huberman, A. M., & Saldaña, 2024) which consists of three steps: data condensation, data display, and conclusion drawing. First, data condensation was carried out by selecting, simplifying, classifying, and organizing the data obtained from observation checklists and interview transcripts. Second, the data were displayed in a descriptive format to make the findings easier to understand and interpret. Finally, conclusions were drawn by identifying patterns, similarities, and differences in teachers' perceptions regarding the implementation of PBL in teaching reading skills. To ensure the validity and credibility of the data, triangulation was applied by comparing the results obtained from classroom observations and interviews. The researcher also conducted participant verification by confirming several interview responses with the participants to ensure that the interpretations accurately reflected their perceptions and experiences. This process helped increase the trustworthiness and consistency of the research findings.

FINDING AND DISCUSSION

The observation focused on several aspects, including how the teacher introduced the problem, organized students into groups, guided discussions, and facilitated student presentations. Base on observation the teacher implemented several important steps of Problem-Based Learning during the reading lesson. At the beginning of the lesson, the teacher introduced a problem related to the reading text.

Teachers' Understanding of PBL

The findings showed that teachers had positive perceptions of Problem-Based Learning (PBL) as a student-centered approach in teaching reading skills. Based on the interview results, the teachers understood PBL as a learning method that encourages students to solve problems, participate actively, and collaborate with their peers during the learning process. They explained that "*students were not only required to read the text, but also to analyze information, discuss ideas, and propose solutions to the given problems*".

The observation data supported these findings. During the reading lesson, the teacher introduced a problem related to the reading text, organized students into groups, guided

classroom discussions, and facilitated student presentations. These activities indicated that the teacher implemented several important stages of PBL in the classroom. The findings are consistent with the concept of PBL as a student-centered learning approach that promotes active learning and knowledge construction.

Teachers' Experiences in Using PBL

Teachers reported positive experiences in implementing PBL in reading classes. They stated that *"students became more active and motivated during the learning process"*. Instead of passively reading texts, students actively analyzed information and discussed ideas with their peers. This finding supports the theory that reading is an interactive process between the reader and the text. Through PBL, students engage more deeply with reading materials as they are required to understand the text to solve problems.

Benefits of PBL in Teaching Reading

The study identified several benefits of implementing PBL in teaching reading skills. First, teachers stated that *"PBL increased students' motivation and engagement during reading activities. Students became more active in participating in discussions and classroom activities compared to traditional learning methods"*.

Second, *"PBL improved students' reading comprehension because students were encouraged to read the text carefully in order to understand the information needed to solve problems"*. Teachers reported that students interacted more deeply with the reading materials through discussion and collaborative learning activities.

Third, *"PBL enhanced students' critical thinking and problem-solving skills. Students were encouraged to analyze problems, share ideas, and propose possible solutions based on the information they obtained from the reading text"*. In addition, PBL also improved students' collaboration and communication skills because they worked together in groups and presented the results of their discussions in front of the class.

Challenges in Implementing PBL

Despite the positive perceptions and benefits of PBL, the teachers also experienced several challenges during its implementation. One of the main challenges was limited classroom time. Teachers explained that *"implementing all stages of PBL required more time, especially for group discussions and presentations"*.

Another challenge was the differences in students' abilities. *"Some students were more active and capable of understanding the reading materials, while others needed more guidance and support from the teacher"*. In addition, unequal participation during group work was also identified as a challenge because several students tended to depend on more active group members during discussions.

These findings indicate that effective classroom management, careful lesson planning, and appropriate teacher guidance are important to support the successful implementation of PBL in teaching reading skills. These challenges suggest that effective classroom management and careful planning are required when using PBL (Hmelo-Silver, 2004).

Triangulation Between the Result of Observation and the Result of Interview

The triangulation results indicate a strong consistency between the data obtained from interviews and classroom observation. The interview data revealed that teachers perceived Problem-Based Learning (PBL) as a student-centered approach that emphasizes problem-solving, discussion, and active participation.

Table 2. The Result of Observation and the Result of Interview

Observation Aspect	Description (OBS)	Triangulation Support
--------------------	-------------------	-----------------------

Teachers' Perception on the Use of Problem-Based Learning for Teaching Reading Skills at Senior High School

Problem Orientation	The teacher presented a problem related to the reading text at the beginning of the lesson	Supported by TC2 (teacher presented real-world problems)
Organizing students	The teacher divided students into groups for discussion.	Supported by TC3 (students worked collaboratively)
The teacher guided	Students read the text and identified important information to solve the problem.	Supported by TC1 (students analyzed the text)
Group discussion	Students discussed ideas and exchanged opinions in groups.	Supported by TC2 (students discussed problems)
Teacher facilitation	The teacher monitored and guided students during discussion.	From observational data (OBS)
Problem analysis	Students analyzed the problem and proposed solutions.	Supported by TC3 (students thought critically)
Presentation	Students presented their discussion results in front of the class.	From observational data (OBS)
Reflection and Interaction	Students responded to other groups' ideas.	Supported by TC1 (Teachers stated that PBL developed students' critical thinking skills).

The findings of the study based on three main aspects: teachers' understanding of Problem-Based Learning (PBL), teachers' experiences in implementing PBL in teaching reading skills, and the perceived benefits of PBL for both teachers and students. The discussion is also connected with relevant theories and previous studies to strengthen the interpretation of the findings.

First, the findings revealed that teachers had a clear understanding of Problem-Based Learning (PBL) as a student-centered learning approach that emphasizes problem-solving, collaboration, and active student participation. Based on the interview results, all teachers described PBL as a method that requires students to analyze problems, discuss ideas, and work collaboratively to find solutions. This indicates that teachers not only understood PBL theoretically but also recognized its core principles in practice. These findings are consistent with Barrows and Tamblyn (1980) and Hmelo-Silver (2004), who define PBL as a learning approach that begins with real-world problems and promotes active knowledge construction through collaboration and inquiry. Furthermore, the observation data confirmed that teachers implemented key stages of PBL in the classroom, such as problem orientation, group discussion, and presentation, showing alignment between teachers' understanding and their actual teaching practices.

Second, in terms of teachers' experiences, the findings showed that teachers had positive experiences in implementing PBL in teaching reading skills. Teachers reported that students became more active, engaged, and motivated during the learning process. Instead of passively reading texts, students actively interacted with the text to find information needed to solve the given problems. This finding indicates that PBL transformed reading activities into more meaningful and interactive learning experiences. These results are in line with Nunan (2003), who states that reading is an interactive process between the reader and the text. In this study, students demonstrated deeper engagement with the text because they were required to analyze, interpret, and apply information in problem-solving situations. In addition, the observation findings showed that teachers played an important role as facilitators by guiding discussions, supporting students' understanding, and ensuring active participation during group work.

Third, the findings highlighted several important benefits of using PBL in teaching reading skills. Teachers reported that PBL improved students' reading comprehension, increased participation, and developed critical thinking skills. Students were more motivated to read because they needed to understand the text in order to solve problems. In addition, PBL encouraged collaboration and communication among students, as they worked together in groups to discuss and present their ideas. These findings are supported by Hmelo-Silver (2004), who argues that PBL promotes deeper understanding, critical thinking, and

collaborative learning. The observation data also supported these findings, showing that students actively participated in discussions, shared ideas, and confidently presented their group work.

Moreover, the triangulation of observation and interview data demonstrated consistency between teachers' perceptions and classroom practices. This indicates that teachers' positive perceptions of PBL were reflected in how they implemented the model in teaching reading skills. Therefore, it can be concluded that PBL is an effective approach for teaching reading, as it creates an interactive, student-centered, and meaningful learning environment. This approach not only enhances students' reading comprehension but also supports the development of essential skills such as critical thinking, collaboration, and active participation in the learning process.

CONCLUSIONS

This study concludes that Problem-Based Learning (PBL) provides valuable contributions to the teaching of reading skills by encouraging more active, collaborative, and meaningful learning experiences. The teachers perceived PBL as a student-centered approach that helps students become more engaged in reading activities and supports the development of comprehension and critical thinking skills. The findings also indicate that the successful implementation of PBL requires good classroom management, sufficient time, and appropriate teacher guidance to address differences in students' abilities. Overall, PBL can be considered an effective approach for supporting interactive reading instruction in the context of English as a Foreign Language (EFL) learning.

REFERENCES

- Ayiz, A., & Nugroho, K. Y. (2025). *Enhancing Efl Reading Comprehension Skills Through Problem-Based Learning: Evidence From Student Engagement And Strategy Use*.
- Azzahra, N. R., & Nurkamto, J. (2024). How Do EFL Teachers Navigate Problem-Based Learning in Indonesian Classrooms? *Voices of English Language Education Society*, 8(3), 727–738. <https://doi.org/10.29408/veles.v8i3.27956>
- Creswell, J. W., & Poth, C. N. (2018). *Qualitative inquiry and research design (Fourth edition)*.
- Hadiyanto, H. (2024). Application of Student-Centered Learning in Improving Teaching English as a Foreign Language Students' 21st-Century Skills Performance. *Education Sciences*, 14(9). <https://doi.org/10.3390/educsci14090938>
- Hadziq, M. B., Sahuddin, Nurtaat, L., Nawawi, N., & Amrullah. (2024). Teachers' Perceptions on Problem-Based Learning Model in Teaching English: A Case Study at SMAN 2 Mataram in Academic Year 2023/2024. *Journal of English Education Forum (JEEF)*, 4(3), 148–152. <https://doi.org/10.29303/jeeef.v4i3.692>
- Hmelo-Silver, C. E. (2004). Problem-based learning: What and how do students learn? *Educational Psychology Review*, 16(3), 235–266. <https://doi.org/10.1023/B:EDPR.0000034022.16470.f3>
- Miles, M. B., Huberman, A. M., & Saldaña, J. (2024). *Qualitative data analysis: a methods sourcebook* (Edition 3). Sage.
- Pass, S. (2004). Parallel Paths to Constructivism. *Parallel Paths to Constructivism*. <https://doi.org/10.1108/978-1-60752-928-6>
- Rahayu, S. (2024). Descriptive Analysis in Teachers' Perception in Teaching Reading With Problem-Based Learning. *Jurnal Pendidikan Bahasa Inggris Undiksha*, 11(3), 316–324. <https://doi.org/10.23887/jpbi.v11i3.49251>
- Silalahi, T. F., Purba, A., & Septi, R. D. (2023). The Use Of Problem Based Learning (PBL) To Increase Students' Achievement In Reading Comprehension At The Eight Grade Of Smp Swasta Prama Artha. *Bilingual: Jurnal Pendidikan Bahasa Inggris*, 5(2), 107–111. <https://doi.org/10.36985/2pf27y20>
- Wijaya, M. G., Syahid, A., & Qalyubi, I. (2025). *Students' Perceptions Of Using Problem-Based Learning In Reading Class At Indonesian Islamic University*. 17(2).

Teachers' Perception on the Use of Problem-Based Learning for Teaching Reading Skills at Senior High School

Yu, L., & Zin, Z. M. (2023). The critical thinking-oriented adaptations of problem-based learning models: a systematic review. *Frontiers in Education*, 8. <https://doi.org/10.3389/feduc.2023.1139987>