APPLYING PROJECT BASED LEARNING STRATEGY IN TEACHING SPEAKING AT ENGLISH COMMUNITY COURSE OF AMERICAN CORNER, PATTIMURA UNIVERSITY – AMBON

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Abstract. As a productive skill, speaking plays important role in expressing and negotiating ideas. This research is aimed to know the improvement of students' speaking ability towards utilizing Project Based Learning (PBL) Strategy. The Classroom Action Research was used, and it was procedurally consisted of four main steps. The data were collected through observation checklist and oral test. The criterion was set out in order to see the improvement of students' speaking ability through the application of Project Based Learning Strategy. Thus, the criterion of success in this research was 75% of 25 students (19 students) should at good level (FSI Weighing system). Moreover, 75% of students also should be active involved themselves in teaching-learning process and during doing the project. There were two cycles in this research, and the process of research was stopped in cycle 2 because the students achieved the criteria of success. The results of the research showed that Project Based Learning Strategy has proven improving students' speaking ability and their involvement in the teaching and learning activities. Moreover, this learning strategy also taught students to become more responsible in doing the project and promoted collaborative work with their colleagues. Besides that PBL strategy could motivate and encourage students to think critically in explaining every single activity they did.

Keywords: Speaking Ability, Teaching Strategy, Project Based Learning Strategy

American Corner (AmCor) of Pattimura University is one of American Corners in Indonesia that serves community with some core programs such as English language learning, education USA, alumni activities, culture programs, and information about the US. Among these activities, English language learning has become favourite one for AmCor communities.

The program of learning English through English Community Course motivates the students to use and practice their English. The students are from different faculties with the different background of English capability influence them when they learn English. To engage the students to use English especially

speaking, the staff of AmCor promote the use of English zone in which the students should speak English during their time in AmCor. Besides that the instructors also used to apply games in warming up (pre teaching) activities with the purpose to dig up students' background knowledge as well as to practice their speaking.

Although the students have opportunities to practice their speaking through those activities above, it seems like the expectation has not achieved. The expectation is that the students should speak more rather than just asking or speaking about daily routines. This means that the students do not have chance to explore their ideas critically.

Thus, the researcher observed and found that those activities above could not promote the ability of students to speak English. To become critical thinkers in speaking, personally, the researcher believes that the students should be involved in the authentic atmosphere where the students are experienced and involved themselves in doing the activities.

In general, studying English does not necessarily focus on accuracy use of tenses or competency in grammar usage. The most important thing is giving opportunities to students to use as much English as they can in real life contexts. For Indonesian students especially in Ambon who have limited access not only to be exposed to native English speakers, but also the opportunity to use English in their real life settings. To face this challenge, language teachers need to use an appropriate English teaching and learning strategies that should encourage students to use language with an emphasis on communicative purposes in real world settings, rather than solely focus on accuracy as in conventional teaching environment. In other words, the students should be encouraged to convey messages more than be concerned about grammatical rules when they use English for communicative purposes.

The students in American Corner of Pattimura University also learn how to communicate with other native English speakers from other countries. They sometimes are not confident, shy and are blank what to say.

To come up with the suggested solution, Project Based Learning is considered as a good strategy to overcome the problem. Some scholars agree that project based learning has been advocated as an effective means for promoting purposeful language learning (stoller, 2006).

Introducing Project Based Learning in classroom in order to go beyond from the conventional teaching and learning activities because PBL promotes students to become independent learners since it emphasizes on students as the centre. More importantly, PBL gives opportunities for students to use several skills (e.g., problem-solving, creativity, teamwork, as well as language) at different work stages, so the work and language skills are developed (Brunetti, Petrell, Sawada, 2003; Solomon, 2003). Since PBL is potentially motivating, empowering and challenging to language learners, it usually results in building learners' confidence, self-esteem, and autonomy as well as improving students' language skills, content learning, and cognitive abilities (Fried-Booth, 1997; Simpson, 2011; Solomon, 2003; Srikrai, 2008; Stoller, 1997; Willie, 2001). Learning becomes fruitful for learners because they exhibit their abilities to plan,

manage, and accomplish projects through their content knowledge and language skills (Kloppenborg & Baucus, 2004).

In EFL contexts, Stoller and Sheppard and Stoller in Guo (2006) propose ten important steps for applying PBL in teaching and learning English:

1. The students and the instructor agree on a theme for the project.
2. The students and instructor determine the final outcome of the project.
3. The students and instructor structure the project.
4. The instructor prepares students for the demands of information gathering.
5. The students gather information.
6. The instructor prepares the students for the demands of compiling and analysing data.
7. The students compile and analyse information
8. The instructor prepares the students for the language demands of the culminating activity.
9. The students present the final product.
10. The students evaluate the project.

Method

This study employs action research in which the researcher acted as teacher who collaborated with other instructors that taught English at level 2 of English Community Course at American Corner of Pattimura University.

Classroom action research activities cover repeated cycles, and each cycle consists of planning, action, observation, and reflection (Kemmis and McTaggard, 1997). The cycle stopped if the criteria of success was achieved.

Planning

This stage is important because the researcher shared ideas with other instructors in order to discuss about lesson plan, materials (kinds of project), schedule, and the instruments of observation. The material in the lesson plan was based on the syllabus. The materials that the researcher used were visiting senior citizen (social issue) and cleaning environment (environmental issue). The researcher also used field notes to support the data.

Action

The researcher carried out the lesson plan in the class. He conducted th teaching activities step by step. First the researcher introduced the topic about Visiting Senior Citizen. He led the students about the topic in class discussion. Then the students sit in group, and they chose their mates freely. There were twenty five (25) students and each group consisted of 5 students. Thus, there were five groups. After that the researcher introduced Project Based Learning, what the students were going to do during their field visit and the preparation for classroom presentation. Then, he had a Question and Answer session about what he explained previously.

Observation

In this stage, the collaborator monitored the following activities:

a. Treatment (explanation): The collaborator observed the teaching activities especially when the theories of PBL and its procedure were explained to the students.
b. Field visit: Both the researcher and the collaborator observed the students activities during project implementation
c. Preparation: The observation focused on students' activities in discussing the project including selecting pictures and glue them on manila cartoon. Besides that sharing ideas among group's members also was covered during the observation
d. Presentation: Although presentation was done in group, the assessment of students' speaking ability was assessed individually. Thus, the observation was focused on the way students presented their projects.

Reflection

The reflection was done in order to see whether or not the results of students' speaking performance achieved the criteria of success.

Findings And Discussions

In general, the researcher divided the findings into two aspects. The first is students' participation, since Project Based Learning gives chance for students to interact in groups. The second is students' speaking performance. Students' speaking performance was assessed at the final of each cycle. The criterion of success was 75% from 25 students were active participating during classroom activities like doing the projects and having group discussion. Besides that at least 75% from 25 students should achieve level "Good" for their speaking performance. The product of students' speaking performance was assessed using FSI (Foreign Service Institute) standard that proposed by Oller (1979) as follows:

Table 1. Foreign Service Institute Standard

Description	Aspect of Language
1. Pronunciation frequently unintelligible 2. Frequent gross errors and a very heavy accent made understanding difficult, require frequent repetition. 3. Foreign accent requires concentrated listening and mispronunciation lead to occasional misunderstanding and apparent errors in grammar or vocabulary. 4. Marked foreign accent and occasionally mispronunciation. This did not interfere with understanding.	Accent/Pronunciation

1. Grammar almost entirely inaccurate accepted in stock phrases. 2. Frequent errors showing some major patterns uncontrolled and causing occasional irritation and misunderstanding. 3. Occasional errors showing imperfect control of some patterns but no weakness that causing misunderstanding. 4. Few errors, with no patterns of failure.	Grammar
1. Vocabulary inadequate for even the simplest conversation. 2. Vocabulary limited to basic personal and survival areas. 3. Choice of words sometimes inaccurate, limitation of vocabulary prevented discussion of some common professional and social topics. 4. Professional vocabulary adequate to discussion special interesting; general vocabulary permitted discussion of any non-technical subject with some circumlocutions.	Vocabulary
1. Speech was so halting and fragmentary that conversation was virtually impossible. 2. Speech was very slowly and uneven except for short or routine sentences. 3. Speech was frequently hesitant and jerky; sentences might be left uncompleted. 4. Speech was occasionally hesitant with some unevenness caused by rephrasing and grouping for words.	Fluency
1. Understood too little for the simplest type of conversation. 2. Understood only slow, very simple speech on common social and touristic topic; requires constant repetition and rephrasing.	Comprehension

3. Understand, careful, somewhat simplified speech directed to him/her, with considerable repetition rephrasing 4. Understood quite well normal educated speech to him/her, but requires occasional repetition and rephrasing.	

In order to achieve the criteria of success, the assessment above is categorised according to the levels of achievement as follows:

Table 2: Level of Achievement

Ability	Score	Level
Able to satisfy travel needed and minimum courtesy requirements	1-5	Poor
Able to satisfy routine social demanded and limited work required professional topic.	6-10	Adequate
Able to spoke the language with sufficient structural accuracy and vocabulary to participate effectively in most formal and informal conversation on practical, social, and professional topics.	11-15	Good
Able to use the language fluently and accurately on all levels normally pertinent to professional needs.	16-20	Excellent

Findings in Cycle One

The first cycle was carried out and consisted of three meetings and one field visit in first cycle. The First meeting was done on 6 April 2015. In first meeting, the researcher taught the class with the topic "Honouring Parents". This topic seemed easy, but it was very interesting where the students were active talking and sharing about their experience. After that the researcher introduced the project that the students would participate. He also explained about the steps of doing the project, and what the students did during and after the project. The researcher let the students to choose their mates for the groups. Each group consisted of five students, and there were five groups. The researcher asked students to choose the topic from some possible topics given, and they prefer to choose "Visiting Senior Citizen" in *Inaka*, Passo. Visiting *Inakaka* was done on 11 April 2015.

In second meeting 13 April 2015, the students in each group selected their best pictures and prepared themselves for presentation. In last meeting of first

cycle, 20 April 2015, the students did presentation and both researcher and his collaborator assessed students speaking performance.

Criteria1: Students' Participation

Students' participation was judged by their interaction during activities in classroom and at the field. Based on data from the field notes show that 100% of students were active in field, where they did some social activities helping elderly people like cleaning the bed rooms, arranged the beds, cleaning the environment including cutting grass, and also students expressed their love by giving a gift to each of grandparents. On the other hand, students participation was low (50%) in preparing their presentation. For instance, they did not ask their friends to help them when they did not know or understand certain vocabularies. This influenced them when they did presentation.

Criteria 2: Students' Speaking Performance

The data was tabulated from the two assessors, and it can be seen in the following graphic.

Graphic 1. The Level of Students' Speaking Performance in Cycle 1
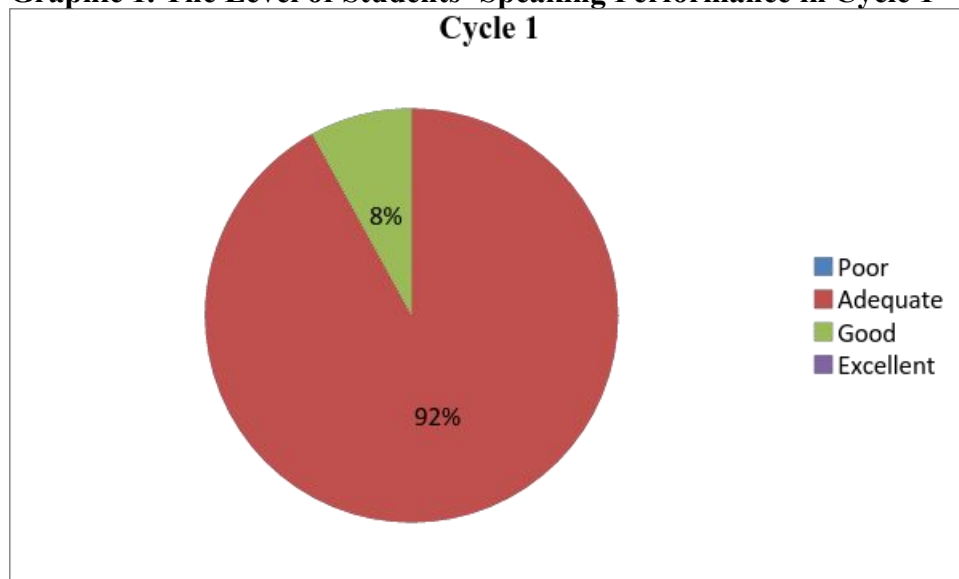
The result of the pie chart shows that there were 23 students (92%) were at adequate level, while 2 students (8%) were at good level. In contrast, there were not students who achieved poor as well as excellent levels.

Reflection of First Cycle

From the analysis of the teaching and learning process, field activities, and the result of students speaking performance in cycle 1, it can be concluded that applying Project Based Learning did not give satisfactory results on the improvement of students speaking ability.

Thus, the researcher and the collaborator discussed some drawbacks that could become obstacles towards the achievement of students' speaking performance. It was noticed that the students were not achieved the criteria of success in speaking because they tend to work individually especially in preparing the presentation. Besides that the students also did not optimally practice presentation in groups. The results of reflection can be meaningful feedback for students in order to prepare themselves for the second project.

Because the criteria of success in students participation and speaking performance were not fulfilled the criteria of success, the researcher decided to continue to the second cycle.

Findings in Cycle Two

Before starting the second cycle, both researcher and collaborator decided to find solution to overcome previous problems like explaining to students that they had to become more active, helped one another in preparing the presentation in group. Another important thing also was about the use of appropriate structures like simple past and past continuous because both tenses are important to use when explaining about past activities. Therefore, the researcher taught again about both tenses especially regular and irregular verbs.

Cycle 2 began on 4 May 2014. The topic was about pollution. Like in first cycle, there was discussion about the topic. After that the researcher let the class to determine possible topic for the second project. The class agree that cleaning environment was their second project. On 9 May 2015, the students visited some places like beaches and mangrove areas. On 11 May 2015, they chose the best pictures and prepared for presentation. At the last meeting, 18 May 2015, the students presented their projects and their speaking performance was assessed.

Criteria 1: Students' Participation

In cycle 2, students' participation has increased. All students participated asking and answered the questions. Moreover, most of them were active in groups. They prepared presentation and practiced in groups. Their friends gave feedback and corrected one another before speaking in front of the class. Sometimes, they also asked helps from the researcher and collaborator.

Criteria 2: Students' Speaking Performance

After assessing students' speaking performance individually in each group, the data are presented in the following graphic.

Graphic 2: The Level of Students' Speaking Performance in Cycle 2
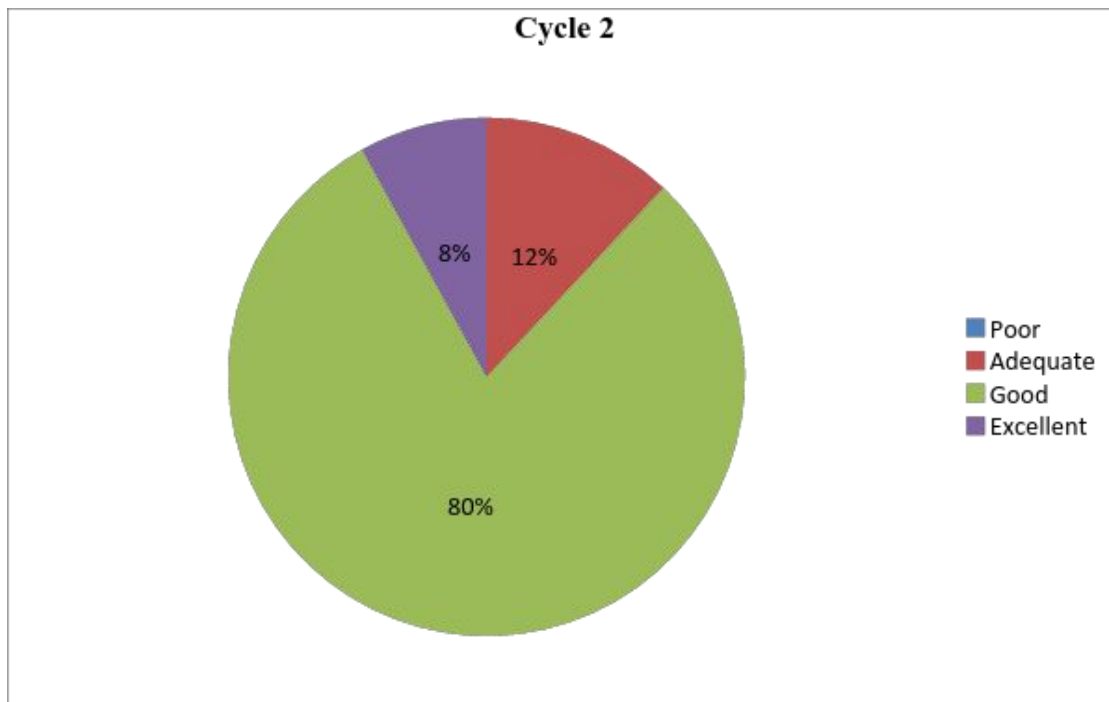
Graphic 2 shows significant results. It can be seen that there were not students at poor level. While in adequate level, there were 12% (3 students) got 6-10. Next, there were 80% (20 students) got 11-15. Significantly, there were 8% (2 students) at level excellent. It means that these students got score between 16-20.

Reflection of Second Cycle

In this cycle, the students were really interested, motivated and enjoyable doing their tasks. The second cycle could be said successful when 75% (19) were active and got good level. The results in both aspects show that most students were active participating and more than 75% students were at good level. Therefore, it can be said that the research activities stopped at second cycle and reported the results.

Discussion

In this discussion, the researcher discusses about two important points, they are students' participation during the implementation of Project Based Learning and the effect of PBL in improving students' speaking performances.

Students' Participation

Students' participation from the meetings in both cycles had increased significantly. In cycle one, for example, most students were active doing the project, although in preparing the presentation they were shy asking help for other friends. Furthermore, in second cycle, students' participation was increased, and this affected their speaking performance. In line with this fact, Stoller (2006) states that project based learning is the intensity of students' motivation, involvement, engagement, participation and enjoyment. Besides that PBL also promotes students to take part as leaders and responsible for their work.

Another point that can be seen that students' self-confidence was enhanced. Some shy students were become talk active because there were groups discussion that could encourage the students to explore and share their ideas. Project Based Learning that was implemented through small group discussion encouraged the students' participation. The students could discuss and practice in small group and in the classroom presentation. By grouping the students in groups, it could improve the students' participation in the class

Another research report from Slavin in Stoller (2006) says that project work is often structured around cooperative-learning activities that capitalize on the strengths of students in learning groups, with ultimate aim of combining efforts to complete the project. The same condition ooccurred in this research because the students finally realised that the project and their presentation would be succeed if they worked cooperatively.

Students' Speaking Performance

Final product of doing Project Based Learning can be written and oral products. In this research, students' speaking (oral) performance was the major goal. From cycle one and cycle two, students' speaking performance had improved. In cycle 1, for example, majority of students speaking results were on Adequate level, whereas in cycle two, it was increased significantly to Good level, even two students were at excellent level. This indicates that Project Based Learning can help the students to develop their speaking abilities. Therefore, Larmer and Mergendoller (2012) say that Project-based learning is the ideal way to build the speaking and presentation skills.

Personally, the researcher believes that Project Based Learning can engage students to speak because they experienced about the project. Thus, students know exactly about what they did. Another reason is that the projects become an authentic meaning that they are real activities and they are based on their daily life. Whatever the improvement of students' speaking is, it always passes the process of thinking and analyzing the ideas. Researcher believes that students' critical thingking can be developed in the process of doing Project.

In the context of English as a foreign language (EFL), it reports that the Chinese professors realized that project based learning is an educational activity that provides students with opportunities for authentic and purposeful communication and developing their listening comprehension and speaking ability (Beckett;Gardener;Stoller in Guo, 2006).

From the results of students' speaking performance we see that Project Based Learning also helps the students to enrich their vocabularies. For instance,

the students could master irregular and regular verbs, they also have new vocabularies that related to social and environmental issues. Besides that the students also studied about certain tenses like simple past tense and past continuous directly. Thus, learning by doing and experiencing can be understood directly and traced in minds for long term.

Conclusion

From the previous data and explanation it can be concluded that students are generally interested toward the implementation of Project Based Learning. They also manage their presentation independently.

Specifically, Project Based Learning encourages the students to become critical thinkers, motivate them to speak and work with other students in groups. In other words, Project Based Learning is appropriate to apply in group work, and it affects students to become more confident when speaking. Students with low speaking performance could improve their speaking ability through Project Based Learning activities because PBL gives them opportuinities to interact in small group and in classroom presentation.

The pedagogical implication can be got from this study where PBL can encourage learners to use other language skills and it can help the students to study other aspect of language like vocabularies and grammar.

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