

Introducing Life Skills Through Project-Based Learning in Speaking for Informal Communication Course

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Abstract:

In industrial revolution era 4.0, students should be equipped with life skills. The skills must be introduced to students in all level, including higher education level. There are many strategies to train those skills to students, one of which is through Project-Based Learning (PjBL). The students will get various experiences through the steps of the teaching model. The aims of this research were to describe the steps of PjBL in Speaking for Informal Communication and to explain the process of acquiring life skills experienced by the students in Speaking for Informal Communication. This research used descriptive qualitative design. The subjects of the research were a lecturer who taught the subject and two students who took the subject. The techniques of data collection were observation, interviews and document analysis. The results of this research showed that the life skills obtained by the students were (1) self-awareness and personal life skills, (2) social skills, (3) thinking skills, (4) academic skills, (5) vocational skills.

Keywords: Project Based Learning, Life Skills, Speaking for Informal Communication, Vlog



By Authors

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Introduction

The development of science and technology is so powerful which affects the demands of the quality of human resources. Moreover, the development of technology in the era of industrial revolution 4.0 is very influential on the characteristics of work in the future rapidly. The use of technology and the internet is very massive which will affect the behavior of society in general, including students who are currently studying. Therefore, they must be equipped with a number of skills and competencies to be able to survive the tight work competition.

Facing this condition, the government seeks to prepare steps in developing quality human resources that are able to compete at the international level. On one occasion, the Indonesian Minister of Research, Technology and Higher Education Nasir (2019) said that the challenge of industrial revolution must be responded quickly and precisely by all stakeholders, especially higher education, in order to be able to increase the competition of the Indonesian nation to face global competition. As a result, education is the key in this matter because through education it is able to create individuals who are creative, innovative, independent, and have a critical mindset.

One of the important competencies to equip the younger generation to face the 4.0 industrial revolution is life skills. WHO ¹ states that life skill is the ability to adapt and behave positively which enables a person to be able to face challenges and demands every day. The life skills include: (1) self-awareness skills and personal skills, (2) social skills, (3) thinking skills, (4) academic skills, (5) honesty skills (vocational skills). They need those skills to survive the high competition in their real life. With the provision of life skills, they will have a strong character, and they are able to make a decision independently.

Teachers must train the life skills to their students, including English lecturers. The lecturers must be able to choose the appropriate teaching model for the students based on standar process in higher education which the learning process must be in student-centered (student center), not the lecturers (teacher center). Nurhajati and Kencanawati ² said that the learning activities should engage the students to develop their skills and practice communication using English based on contextual situations by selecting topics which are suitable to their interest to stimulate their critical thinking. The students are actively involved in building their knowledge, attitudes and behavior. Thus, the learning process is able to develop student life skills.

This research was based on some conditions in the classes. First, the writer found that many of their classmates did not realize the importance of life skills. It could be seen that they were lack of confidence and had difficulties in communicating with others. Even though the lecturers had facilitated them to practice those skills, they did not give good response. Another example, they were afraid to make mistake when they had to answer their lecturer's questions. In fact, they knew the answer. It means that they did not know their personal skill. For this reason, it is needed a breakthrough to build students' life skills.

One of the ways to train the students' life skills is by applying the Project-Based Learning (PjBL) learning model. Bell ³ explains, "Project-Based Learning (PjBL) is an innovative approach to learning that teaches multitude of strategies critical for success in the twenty-first century. Students drive their own learning through inquiry, as well as work collaboratively to research and create projects that reflect their knowledge". PjBL is an innovative learning model through an inquiry process and collaborating in solving problems to create products based on the knowledge they have. In other words, PjBL is designed to be used on complex problems needed by students so that later the life skills of students will develop during the learning process.

There are several advantages of the PjBL learning model. Bell ⁴ states, "They are able to make better choices, whether they are related to process, environment, or outcome, which enables them to become more independent and responsible for their own learning." Through PjBL students are able to solve various situations during the process learning so that they are trained to be independent and responsible in the problem solving process. Thus, students are trained to be more active and successful in solving complex problems to increase students' motivation during learning process.

¹ WHO, "Partners in Life Skills Education. Conclusions From A United Nations Inter-Agency Meeting," 1999, n.d., Who/Mnh/Mhp/99.2.

² Diani Nurhajati, Dewi Kencanawati, and Rika Riwayatiningasih, "Enhancing Critical Thinking in Speaking Skill through Sekawan-P," *Journal of English Teaching and Research* 5, no. 1 (2020): 92–102.

³ Stephanie Bell, "Project-Based Learning for the 21st Century: Skills for the Future," *The Clearing House: A Journal of Educational Strategies, Issues and Ideas* 83, no. 2 (2010): 39–43, <http://dx.doi.org/10.1080/00098650903505415>.

⁴ Ibid.

Some researches prove that using PjBL teachers cannot only transfer knowledge to students, but also train other skills. First, based on the research by Nurhajati ⁵, she found that by providing various learning experiences, the lecturer could stimulate the students to practice critical thinking, to be open, establish communication with others, take initiative, be creative, and have confidence. Those conditions are in line with Kavlu's ideas ⁶ who states that teachers not only could enhance the students' language skills, but the teacher also could enhance their social communicative skills. Aghayani ⁷ found PjBL had a significant effect to the learners' writing. The students are able to enhance and promote their writing ability in a collaborative skill by the environment. In other words, there are many advantages of PjBL in teaching.

In this research, the researcher focuses on the learning process of Speaking for Informal Communication courses by using Project Based Learning to inculcate the students' life skill. It describes the process how the students got life skills. Therefore, the objectives of the research can be formulated as follows: (1) What were the steps of PjBL in Speaking for Informal Communication that train students' life skills? (2) How did the students acquire life skills?

Methods

This case study employed descriptive qualitative approach. As Creswell ⁸ said that case study research is a qualitative approach in which the investigator explores a bounded system (a *case*) or multiple bounded systems (cases) over time, through detailed, in-depth data collection involving *multiple sources of information* (e.g., observations, interviews, audiovisual material, and documents and reports), and reports a case *description* and case-based themes. It means that case study aims to improve the knowledge of the real communication events in its context. The single case of the study was the subject in which the lecturer applied PjBL and she assigned the students to create a vlog. The subjects of the research were the lecturer who taught Speaking for Informal Communication Course and two students who took the subject.

The characteristic of a qualitative research is that the researcher is the instrument. It is in line with Moleong ⁹ who said researcher has the main role as an instruments that become planner, executor, data collector, analyst, interpreter, and reporter at the same time. This study employed three techniques to collect the data, they were observation, interviews and documentation. In observation, the researchers observed the teaching and learning activities in the class. In addition, they took some documents as sources of information, such as the lesson plan, the materials from the lecturer, and the students' vlog. In order to get the deep information they interviewed both the lecturer and the students.

⁵ Diana Nurhajati, "Creating English Student Book Through Project Based Learning in TEYL Subject," *Proceedings of the International Conference on English Language Teaching (ICONELT 2017)* (Atlantis Press, 2018), <http://dx.doi.org/10.2991/iconelt-17.2018.16>.

⁶ Aziza Kavlu, "Implementation of Project Based Learning (PBL) in EFL (English as a Foreign Language) Classrooms in Fezalar Educational Institutions (Iraq)," *International Journal of Social Sciences & Educational Studies* 4, no. 2 (2017), <http://dx.doi.org/10.23918/ijsses.v4i2sip67>.

⁷ Behnam Aghayani and Elmira Hajmohammadi, "Project-Based Learning: Promoting EFL Learners' Writing Skills," *LLT Journal: A Journal on Language and Language Teaching* 22, no. 1 (2019): 78–85.

⁸ John W. Creswell, *Educational Research: Planning, Conducting, and Evaluating Quantitative* (Prentice Hall Upper Saddle River, NJ, 2002).

⁹ Lexy J. Moleong, "Metodologi Penelitian Kualitatif (Edisi Revisi)," in *PT. Remaja Rosda Karya*, 2017, 424.

To analyze the data, the technique proposed by Creswell¹⁰ was used. It consists of processing data, reviewing all data, analyzing data by coding, applying the coding process and interpreting data.

Result and Discussion

Speaking for Informal Communication is a subject in the English Department of University of Nusantara PGRI Kediri. The objective of this subject is that the students are able to communicate to express the following language functions “Introducing Oneself”, “Asking and Giving Information”, “Asking and Giving Direction”, “Asking and Giving Opinion”, “Asking and Giving Suggestion”, and “Describing Objects” in various situations in English fluently and properly. The lecturer of the subject assigned the students to create a video blog (vlog) in which they could express the language functions they learned. The lecturer applied PjBL to realize the project.

The findings of the research show that she applied PjBL proposed by Fragoulis¹¹. There are four steps in the PjBL, namely: 1) Speculation, 2) Designing Project, 3) Conducting project, and 4) Evaluation.

Speculation

Based on the revised syllabus and lesson plan, the lecturer introduced the objective of the course, the learning materials for one semester, and the course contract. The lecturer explained that the objective of the course was that students could reveal various information from recorded videos or vlog. To assess their final performance they had to make a project in the form of a vlog at the end of the semester. Vlog means a short video, which informed the viewers about certain topics. The students had to communicate the information using English properly. She displayed some good vlog examples in accordance with the learning objectives as models for their vlogs. In addition, she provided an overview of topics that could be used to create vlogs. From this process of this stage, the students are trained to think critically and creatively because students must look for ideas about topics or concepts in the vlogs that they would create.

Designing Project

At this stage the students must determine topic, the concepts of the vlogs, and content in the vlog that would be made in accordance with the learning objectives. They were also required to be able to create vlogs that had interesting and creative content in accordance with the learning objectives. This could encourage students to think more critically about the phenomenon that was happening that they would pack in the vlog content. The ability to think critically, creatively, and recognizing their potential ability and the environment within students arose when they arranged topics, concepts, and content in the vlogs they would create. In this step, the lecturer also provided material about how to communicate informally in contextual situation. For example, the lecturer gave how to greet with peers, to greet in front of the class and to greet in the vlog.

¹⁰ John W Creswell and Cheryl N Poth, *Qualitative Inquiry and Research Design: Choosing among Five Approaches* (Sage publications, 2016).

¹¹ Iakovos Tsiplakides and Iosif Fragoulis, “Project-Based Learning in the Teaching of English as a Foreign Language in Greek Primary Schools: From Theory to Practice,” *English Language Teaching* 2, no. 3 (2009), <http://dx.doi.org/10.5539/elt.v2n3p113>.

Conducting project

At this stage, the lecturer gave an example of a vlog in accordance with the learning objectives for students to become a reference source for making a vlog. Then, the students were asked to analyze the ways of their speaking in their vlog starting from the theme, opening, content, body language, language style and closing. It aimed to make them know what they had to do in their vlog. In other words, they were required to be able to synthesize the information and the ways to communicate with audience through the vlogs using proper language.

Then, they started to do discussion about topics, content, taking videos, and editing videos that they made. In the process of taking videos, some students were not equipped with the ability to capture and process video that was qualified. Thus, the spirit of independence of students arose when they were looking for various references and learning resources on the internet or YouTube for the process of making and processing videos independently. It could be seen from the students' vlog who used thumbnail to attract the viewer. He said that he saw the tutorials on YouTube about the way to attract the viewer. Then, he decided to make good thumbnail as a tool to attract the viewer.

Another example comes from a student whose vlog entitled "My Activity in Malang." The student did editing video with his crew. He asked his friends to be an editor video also recorder. Moreover, he wanted to show a good vlog by collaborating with his friends who had ability in editing and recording video.

At this stage, the ability to collaborate students appeared because they can collaborate with other friends in making their vlogs. Furthermore, the students also consulted with the lecturers about the problems they faced during the process of making a vlog.

Evaluation

In the evaluation stage, the students displayed their temporary Vlog in front of the class. This activity was intended to get feedback from the classmates and the. The lecturer gave feedback for evaluation focusing on their speaking: the choice of words, the sentence structure, the expressions when they spoke, the body language, and the tone of the voice. Here, the students' open minded skills could be trained. Students could be opened to each other in receiving suggestions, criticisms, and evaluations from lecturers and other students. Then, they were asked to fix their vlog after getting feedback.

During the video screening process, the student's confidence could be seen because the students must be able to speak and express their ideas and opinions in English according to the theme of the content they had chosen in accordance with the learning objectives. In this step also, the student's sense of responsibility was honed because the students must submit the Vlogs and upload them to YouTube on a predetermined time. The deadline for collecting Vlogs was the final exam of the Speaking for Informal Communication course. After going through the evaluation process, the students collected the Vlog to the lecturer and uploaded it to YouTube as the final product of the PjBL learning model.

The second finding is the kind of life skills and the process of acquiring life skills by the students. It was found that the skills obtained by the students can be presented as follows:

Self-awareness and Personal life skills

To determine future job choices, each student must have different skills and they must be able to explore their potential. Then, this skill is the ability to recognize the potential possessed

by students. In addition, they are expected to be able to recognize and understand the potential of the surrounding environment. For example, what are the uniqueness of the area of origin, what culture is interesting to reveal, and the history of their area.

This subject required the students to choose one of the topics related to the potential of their home region. After that, they had to communicate the topic in their vlog they created. It could be seen from some students who had a tourism vlog theme that introduced the potential of their area. Examples of topics chosen by students were 'Pare English Village', and 'Banana Getuk'. Another example came from a student who made a vlog about the Selomangleng cave. He revealed that he wanted to bring in and to give an information about the local wisdom in his region through his vlog. Furthermore, he hoped that many people know about tourism place in Kediri. Personal life skills and self-awareness also can be found in the vlog "My Activity in Malang". In the vlog, the student showed his talent: perform modern dance. He wanted to share about his experience when he trained his student to take dance competition in Malang.

In addition, through their vlog the students could explored their talents that cannot be expressed when in the classroom in the log. As a result, creating vlog could accommodate the students to explore their skill and ability.

Social skills

Social skills are the key to individual success in socializing and adapting to the environment. In the education at the college level, social skills are needed. It aims to make students able to communicate and deal with and overcome issues related to social sensitivity. For example, at the stage of the process of creating a vlog, some students had difficulties in the editing process, so they asked for help from other students to teach how to do a good editing process their vlog. It could be seen from a student who asked the help for collaborating in his vlog to an editor and recorder his Vlog. In this process, the students were trained to have ability to collaborate with others. Furthermore, they were also able to get a new knowledge in editing video.

Thinking skill

To deal with the rapid development of science and technology, university students must have thinking skill. Anjarsari (2014) said that thinking skill is needed to stimulate the cognitive abilities of the students in gaining knowledge. Beside, students are able to develop ideas for thinking about the problems contained in learning. They must be able to analyze their own thought to ensure that they had made decisions and made a conclusion correctly. Then, it provides opportunities for them to think openly and flexibly.

Thinking skill trains students to have High Order Thinking Skills (HOTs), so that they are able to become a decision maker and problem solver. The students could choose one of the topics provided by the lecturer, e.g. the uniqueness at Kediri (traditional foods, dance, and people behaviors) or they may choose their own topic as long as it relates with local wisdom. One of the students chose a topic about local tourism place in the vlog "Kediri 1000 Stairs Up". After he took a long consideration, he chose the topic. He admitted the reason that as a young generation, he wanted to support the local tourism place in Kediri through his vlog. Besides, he found other people from outside Kediri usually introduce the local wisdom at the area. Therefore, he decided to create a vlog which content was about Kediri.

Academic skill

Academic skill is the ability and skills of a person in the academic field. The field covers all the sciences in formal education. It train students to think more critically and understand problems that occur in an environment. Students are expected to have sensitivity to environmental problems by identifying problems and explaining their relationship in certain phenomena.

Speaking for Informal Communication course aims at enabling the students communicate orally to express some language functions: "Introducing Yourself", "Asking and Giving Information", "Asking and Giving Directions", "Asking and Giving Opinion", "Asking and Giving Suggestions", and "Describing Objects". The students had to express those language functions in their vlogs. At the same time, they gave information about certain topics in the content of their vlogs.

It was found out that the students were encouraged to apply their academic skill that they have got from the subject. The students' academic abilities emerged when they were able to be sensitive to phenomena that were happening in the environment and raise them in the topics and content of the vlogs they create. The language functions, such as "Asking and Giving opinion" and "Describing Objects", were applied in vlogs. This can be seen in the vlog entitled "Kediri 1000 Stairs Up" that the student introduced himself, described the object and gave directions to the Klotok Tourism. He also gave his opinion about that place to encourage people to come to that place using English. It could be seen how the students did the opening and closing in their Vlogs.

Vocational skill

Vocational skill is a skill related with a particular field of work found in society. The skill emphasizes the psychomotor skill of students rather than thinking skill. It trains students' ability to make or produce a work. Vocational proficiency can determine the expertise of students to choose jobs in accordance with their interests and talents. Not only understanding about cognitive aspects, students are also required to be skilled in psychomotor aspects. This can affect the world work. In Speaking for Informal Communication courses, the students were required to make a vlog as the final project of the learning process. During the process of making and processing the vlogs, the ability of the students' vocational skill in video editing arose. It was proven by how the students did editing videos in terms of graphics, sound, layout, animation, etc. Some of them who had not yet understood how to process videos to be interesting and neat also did good editing in the vlog. They ac apply the competency in the world work. Thus, they were also given new experiences during the vlog editing process.

From the findings, it was found that the stages of PjBL were able to train the students' life skills. The intended life skills include (1) self-awareness skills and personal skills, (2) social skills, (3) thinking skills, (4) academic skills, (5) vocational skills. While all of those life skills was covered by the step of PjBL namely Speculation, Design Project, Organizing Project , and Evaluation. Furthermore, PjBL could be used as a learning model which is able to train and to build the student's life skill through the project that should be created.

Discussion

This section presents the discussion based on the findings of the study. It is concerned about the process of acquiring life skills during the learning process in Speaking for Informal

Communication using Project Based Learning and the life skills which students have got in the Speaking for Informal Communication courses.

It is found out that PjBL provides a variety of learning experiences for students. Through the steps in PjBL, student life skills embedded. Life skills acquired by students were self-awareness and personal life, social skills, thinking skills, academic skills, and vocational skills. PjBL is a surefire solution for instilling student life skills. It is line with Ribe and Vidal¹² who state PjBL is a systematic instruction method that develops student's language skills, cognitive domain and global personality skills through valuable projects. Thus, PjBL is a method that is suitable to develop the students' knowledge and skills in the 21st century.

In a previous study conducted by Rochmawati¹³ found that using PjBL the students actively participated in every step of the implementation of making projects in the form of staging role play and storytelling. The research finding shows a significant positive attitude towards the implementation of learning. Nurhajati¹⁴ found that PjBL is an appropriate learning model to be used in teaching writing skills where Project-Based Learning helps students develop their ideas in written form. Furthermore, Nurhajati (2017) indicates that during the process of learning the character of students will be formed through the steps of PjBL where the final result students must be able to make English books. Finally, Zakiyah¹⁵ finds that PjBL can increase students' creativity in writing poetry. In addition, the students' self-reliance on the skills of writing poetry after implementation of PjBL is a teaching models that has the high category. The previous researches focused on the learning process and outcomes by using Project-Based Learning, but they did not discussed about how the process of training and acquiring life skills using Project-Based Learning model. This research focuses on how life skills are trained using the Project-Based Learning.

Conclusion

PjBL can be used to train the students' life skills through the process of creating the project. The steps in creating the projects are speculation, designing project, conducting project, and evaluation. Through those activities the students are trained their life skills. The life skills are (1) self-awareness skills and personal skills, (2) social skills, (3) thinking skills, (4) academic skills, (5) vocational skills. The life skills that students were acquired were networking, open minded, self-confidence, communication skills, and responsibility. The most important thing is that the teachers or the lecturers who teach using PjBL must consider the project or product that they students will create. It should be in line with what the students find in real life. It will be better if the students can make use of technology as technology is a part of people's lives. Finally, it can be concluded that PjBL is a learning model, which provides a variety of learning experiences to students as well as a new breakthrough in inculcating and training the students' life skills.

¹² Ramon Ribé and Nuria Vidal, *Project Work:[Step by Step]* (Heinemann, 1993).

¹³ Pryla Rohmahwati, "PROJECT-BASED LEARNING TO RAISE STUDENTS' SPEAKING ABILITY: ITS' EFFECT AND IMPLEMENTATION (A MIX METHOD RESEARCH IN SPEAKING II SUBJECT AT STAIN PONOROGO)," *Kodifikasia* 9, no. 1 (2016): 199, <http://dx.doi.org/10.21154/kodifikasia.v9i1.466>.

¹⁴ Nurhajati, "Creating English Student Book Through Project Based Learning in TEYL Subject."

¹⁵ Zakiyah Ismuwardani, Agus Nuryatin, and Mukh Doyin, "Implementation of Project Based Learning Model to Increased Creativity and Self-Reliance of Students on Poetry Writing Skills," *Journal of Primary Education* 8, no. 1 (2019): 51–58.

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