

## **BUILDING STUDENTS' LIFE SKILL THROUGH PROJECT-BASED LEARNING**

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### **Abstract**

The academic goal of teaching in university level is to reach certain learning outcomes. Speaking for Informal Communication is one of the subjects which enable students to describe, explain, negotiate, persuade, and influence other speakers using the target language on certain topics. The lecturers not only have to choose an appropriate teaching strategy to reach the goal, but also to select the suitable materials and activities in order to make the students can apply the skills of speaking. One of the strategies is by applying Project Based Learning in which the students must create a project in groups. Through this strategy the students are able to reach the academic goals of teaching speaking and practice to build some qualities in life skill, such as a) awareness of the students' potency and the values found in the local wisdom, b) cooperative working and communication skill, c) critical thinking, d) academic skill, and e) honesty. Those qualities are very important to equip the students to win the global competition. This research describes how life skills were built through Project Based Learning in speaking class and the students' perspective on how the qualities of life skills were built through the experience of creating project. It is a qualitative research which observed the process of teaching and learning in speaking class. Besides, in-depth interview to the students was carried out to collect the data on their perspective of those skills. The results show that through the stages of creating the project, that was "Vlog", the students felt that they got many challenges to create the project. They admitted that the challenges built their life skills.

**Key words:** Life Skill, Project Based Learning, Students' Perspective, Speaking Class

### **INTRODUCTION**

In this globalization era, the development of science and technology changes very fast which has a huge impact for each individual today. Now days, every person is required to have knowledge and skill to face this globalization,

especially for university students. They should master all aspects of teaching. They should be creative in order to face this globalization. English Education Department students have power to create new situation in teaching and learning process.

As the implementation of developing human resource, the government creates the qualification framework that becomes reference for developing good human resource. That is a framework of academic qualification Indonesia (*Kerangka Kualifikasi Akademik Indonesia/KKNI*). This framework relates to National Education System, National Training System, and Assessment of equality of learning achievement (Learning outcomes) because those three aspects are quality achievement that Indonesia has for improving human resource. Learning outcomes is internalization and accumulation of science, knowledge, skill, affection and competence that reach through structural educational process and include a certain field of science or work experience.

This program focuses on higher education because in higher education, the quality of human resource becomes the key of sustainability and achievement of the quality of education. The formulation of learning achievement in graduate competency standard is stated into three elements, they are attitude, knowledge and skills that are divided into special and general skills which are suitable for high education graduates. Framework of academic qualification Indonesia (*Kerangka Kualifikasi Akademik Indonesia/KKNI*) becomes the important aspect in high education to create graduates that have soul of competence and competition so it can create Golden Generation in 2045.

To prepare Golden Generation, the government provides regulation related with the implementation of the teaching-learning process, especially in higher education. According to the regulation of Research and Technology Minister and Higher Education (*Peraturan Menteri Riset Teknologi dan Pendidikan Tinggi/MENRISTEKDIKTI*) number 44 year 2015 about process of standard and management of learning. It describes in article 11 paragraph (1) on the characteristics of learning process as referred to article 10 paragraph (2) letter a) consist of interactive, holistic, integrative, scientific, contextual, thematic, effective, collaborative, and student-center. These standards of learning process encourage students to be able to think critically so we can see

between input and output be able to develop students' cognitive abilities so that learning process becomes more centered on students (Student Center Learning). Learning process that was focused on the teacher (teacher centered) to learner centered learning is expected to encourage students to be actively involved in building their knowledge, attitudes and behaviors.

There are some roles of lecturer in Student Centered Learning (SCL) model. They are as a person who gives inspiration, facilitator, and a model. It hopes that the lecturer can give inspiration to the students that by having interesting experience the students will explore more to apply the knowledge and the skill they learn in the classroom. Furthermore, the lecturer can facilitate students' need in learning process. Finally, the lecturer can play a roles a model that the students can take as examples. In conclusion, a lecturer plays a very central role to the students' future.

Realizing the fact, a lecturer should use scientific approach in teaching and learning process. This approach includes process of digging information through observation, questioning, experiment, then processing data or information, presenting data or information, followed by analyzing, reasoning, then summarizing information so that students be more active in learning process and have good critical thinking skills. Therefore, it is important to review the learning model in the English Speaking class that is used today with a more effective learning model. The learning models are: Problem Based Learning, Project- Based Learning, Discovery Learning and Task-Based Learning.

The lecturer of Speaking Subject in University of Nusantara PGRI Kediri has implemented one of the teaching strategies above. She chose Project Based Learning to reach the goal of teaching. There were some reasons why she chose this strategy (Rofita, 2018). First, the goal of teaching was that the students were able to express certain ideas in Vlog, so they had to record their communication in video form and uploaded the video in YouTube channel. Second, Project based learning gave some advantages the students. Project-Based Learning is suitable with the goal as Larmer, Mergendoller and S. Boss (2013), that it provides opportunities for students to build some qualities (problem solver, responsible, works well with others, can work independently,

critical thinker, confident, manages time and work effectively, and communicates well with a variety of people), as well as more deeply learn traditional academic content and understand how it applies to the real world. In other words, Project Based Learning gives valuable effect for the students.

In line with the above idea, university graduates should have life skills to win the global competition. Life skill is a term used to refer the qualities mentioned above. They include creativity, critical thinking, problem-solving, decision-making, the ability to communicate and collaborate, along with personal and social responsibility that contribute to good citizenship – all essential skills for success in the 21<sup>st</sup> century, both for healthy societies and for successful and employable individual.

Based on the explanation above, the researcher was inspired to have research entitled “**Building Students’ Life Skill through Project-Based Learning in Speaking Class**”. This research aims at answering the following questions:

1. How life skills are built through Project-Based Learning in Speaking for Informal Communication class at Universitas Nusantara PGRI Kediri?
2. How is the students’ perspective on the life skills after they are taught using Project Based Learning in speaking class?

## **RESEARCH METHODS**

This research focuses on teaching speaking using Project-Based Learning to the students of English Education Department at, University of Nusantara PGRI Kediri. Ary et. al (2010) explained that qualitative approach is seek to understand a phenomenon by focusing on the total picture rather than breaking down into variables. It means that qualitative research is a process of observing the natural phenomenon that happened in the fieldwork.

This is a case study, and it was carried out at the English Department, University of Nusantara PGRI Kediri. The subject of the research was a lecturer who taught Speaking for Informal Communication and three students whose speaking ability was better among other students. Observation and in depth interview were employed collect data.

## **FINDINGS AND DISCUSSIONS**

### *1. Findings*

Speaking for Informal Communication is the basic speaking skill subject which is given to the first year students in the first semester in English Education Department, University of Nusantara PGRI Kediri. The learning outcome of this subject are that the students was able to communicate using appropriate verbal Language to express “Introducing Oneself”, “Asking and Giving Information”, “Asking and Giving Direction”, “Asking and Giving Opinion”, “Asking and Giving Suggestion” , and “Describing Objects” in various situation fluently. To prove that they are able to communicate using English well the lecturer assigned them to create a Vlog which was uploaded in “Youtube” channel so that it could be access by others.

The “vlog” was the final product of teaching and learning process of Speaking for Informal Communication class. By creating the “vlog”, the lecturer hoped that the students could explore their speaking ability, especially in communication informally. They had to think their speaking ability based on the topics they chose. The topics were about the local wisdom or the cultures found in the area where they were from.

The students did not only speak using English, but they also they have to think whether what they spoke was suitable with the situation and the target audience. Moreover, they had to think about the content that they wanted to communicate. In their “vlog”, it can be seen how they implemented the language functions written in the lesson plan. The duration of the “vlog” was around 7 minutes.

During the teaching learning process the lecturer applied Project Based Learning which is proposed by Kriwas (1999) in Fragoulis (2009). It has four stages: Speculation, Design Project, Conducting the Project, and Evaluation. The stages can be elaborated as follows:

#### *a. Speculation*

Based on the revised syllabus and lesson plans the model lecturer introduced the plan of Speaking for Informal Communication subject for one semester which was written in the lecture agreement. She discussed with the students the goal of the subject and the project which was going to

be produced in the first meeting. She also informed the references which could be used to support in creating the book. The students were asked to make groups of three or four students. These groups worked together for one semester to create one chapter which would be compiled as a book chapter at the end of the period.

*b. Planning*

It is designing the project activity. Before designing the product, the students were assigned to get the examples of good vlog in Youtube. They have to analyze the content or topic they communicate, how to communicate in the video. After they got the models, they discussed in the classroom about those aspects in order that all of the students have the same perception about the product they made. After they understood the aspects that must be considered, the lecturer informed the rubric of their speaking performance.

*c. Conducting the Project*

There were some steps in conducting the project activities. First, the students practiced how to express certain speaking skills in the classroom, such as how to introduce, to describe, to direct, to explain, etc. They were also provided with suitable contexts. After they had practiced those skills, they had to choose a certain topic which would be used in their “vlog”. They could choose the following topics: traditional foods, tourist attractions/objects in Kediri, and traditional ceremony. The next step was recording the video. They had to take the video recording either indoors or outdoors. The “vlog” that they produced would be presented in the classroom for evaluation.

*d. Evaluation*

Evaluation was given before the students upload their “Vlogs”. The lecturer gave every student a chance to give presentation in the classroom. Their peers and the lecturer gave feedbacks on the content, their language, and their performance. First, the students had to choose a certain topic to be explained. They had to introduce themselves, their interest, the topic they presented, the location where they can accessed, how to make, how to buy, etc. Those things are about the content. The second feedback focused

on language. In this aspect they gave feedback on the choice of words, the sentence structures, their pronunciation, as well as the volume of their voice. The last aspect was the students' performance which includes their body language, their facial expressions, and their posture. After they got the feedback they revised their "vlog" and upload the products.

The life skills which were built through Project Based Learning in this research can be classified into five. They are: a) awareness of the students' potency and awareness of the values found in the local wisdom, b) cooperative working and communication skill, c) critical thinking, d) academic skill, e) honesty. Those characters were built during the process of teaching and learning. Here are the examples of the students' answer when they were interviewed.

Firstly, awareness and students' potency can be seen from the product they created. It can be seen in the content of their "vlog". They had to choose a certain topic based on their interest and ability. Student 1 explored their potency based on his hobby. He likes dancing, and he became dance instructor. He informed through his "vlog" how he trained his students to prepare a dance competition in Malang. Student 2 made a description of favorite high schools in Kediri. She describes the location of the schools, and she explained the achievements of the schools. She also showed the interesting buildings of the school. Student 3 described a tourist object in Kediri: "Selomangleng" Cave. He gave information about the location, the recreation facilities, and other information needed. In other words, by choosing a certain topic, the students have tried to explore their ability and the local potency where they are from.

Second skill which was built through Project Based Learning is cooperative working and communication skill. Speaking subject in the English Education Department does teach how to create "vlog" in term of technical process, such as the technique of taking picture using certain types of camera, editing, etc. To make their "vlog" better the students had to ask to the skillful persons. In order that the persons helped them they had to be able to communicate well. Those two skills were got by the students as they

admitted when they were interviewed. They stated that they asked for help to their friends who study in Technology Information Department.

The next skill is critical thinking which means that the students are able to identify the problems and solve them with minimum risk. The student felt that they got this skill during the production of the “vlog”. The lecturer had already made the schedule of the lesson. However, they found some problems which they never predicted before. For example, Student 1 had already recorded his activities. The activities were carried out in Kediri as well as in Malang. He had a very long duration video. In fact, the duration of the “vlog” had to be around 7 minutes. Therefore, he had to select the most important pictures which were suitable with the narration he made. He edited in such a way so that his video looks good. Another example of the experience in which the student was trained to have this skill was stated by Student 3. He took a event in the street. There were so many vehicles which the sound was very crowded. It influenced the quality of his video. To solve the problem, he retook the record by using a certain mike. From the examples it can be concluded that the students also felt that their critical thinking skill was built.

The fourth is academic skill. It means that the mastery of the materials written in the Lesson Plan. They student are hoped to be able to use the language functions which were written in the learning outcomes. It can be seen from the content of the video made by the students. The language functions are introducing themselves to the viewers. In this case, they had to consider the target viewers because it would influence the way how they address, the style of language they used, and the content they developed. In shorts, they felt that what they communicated in the “vlog” covered the language functions formulated in the lesson plan.

Finally, the students felt that they were also trained to be honest. Most of the students explained that by choosing their own topics based on their own interest, they had to develop the content in their vlog as well as the language used to communicate accordingly. By doing so, they would never develop the content and select the language they used which were different from the other students.



## **DISCUSSION**

The findings of the research show that Project Based Learning is suitable to teach a subject in which the students must create certain products. In this research the speaking lecturer expects that the students to create “vlog”. Besides, the stages of this model provide experience to build life skill of the students. The life skills found here are in line with the ones sated by Bell (2010) who stated that the students become able to make better choices, whether relating to process, environment, or outcome, which enables them to become more independent and responsible for their own learning. Moreover, they realized that by creating “vlog” they become aware with their ability and fond of their local potency. They also felt that they were trained to work cooperatively, have communication skill, master the materials, and have honesty. Those qualities are really needed for the students to face the tight competition in the technology era 4.0. as Larmer, Mergendoller and S. Boss (2013) state that Project Based Learning provides opportunities for students to build some qualities (problem solver, responsible, works well with others, can work independently, critical thinker, confident, manages time and work effectively, and communicates well with a variety of people), as well as more deeply learn traditional academic content and understand how it applies to the real world. To face the open competition among university graduates, they must master technology and have life skills. By following the stages of Project Based Learning, the students of English Education Department, University of Nusantara PGRI Kediri will have the life skills mentioned above.

## **CONCLUSION**

Students of university need experience to build their life skills. Project Based Learning is a teaching model which provides activities in which the students are trained to build their life skills. The activities start from planning, conducting the project, and evaluation. Through those activities their life skills are trained. They involve the awareness of the students’ potency and the values found in the local wisdom, cooperative working and communication skill, critical thinking, academic skill, and honesty. They realize that those characters are built during the process of teaching and learning. Knowing those facts, it is

recommended for teachers and lecturers to apply this teaching model in order that their students have a set of qualities needed to face global competition.

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