STUDENTS' PERCEPTION ON EFFECTIVENESS OF USING PROJECT BASED LEARNING TO IMPROVE SPEAKING SKILL

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ABSTRACT

Speaking is one of the four necessary skills in learning English because it helps people express their thoughts or ideas. However, teaching speaking requires a lot of time and efforts because it is a productive skill which needs a long time to master. The study aimed to find out the students' perception on the effectiveness of using Project Based Learning on improving speaking skill at Thai Nguyen University of Medicine and Pharmacy by using a mixed method of the survey, consisting of quantitative and qualitative method. The respondents of the research consisted of 30 students from the first and second year students learning general English program. The close-ended questions of the questionnaires were used to get the results of data using a five point Likert scale analyzed by SPSS, version 17 and some open-ended questions were also utilized to get further detail. The results of the study revealed the effectiveness of using Project Based Learning in speaking skill and posed some implications while integrating Project Based Learning in the classroom. Therefore, the research suggested that this communicative approach should be implemented in teaching English, especially in teaching speaking.

Keyword: *speaking skill, Project Based Learning (PBL), perception, effectiveness*

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1. Introduction

Nowadays, English has become international language which is used in many countries in the world and learning English are more and more necessary because people use English to communicate with each other in written or spoken form. In learning English there are four important skills in the English language; reading, listening writing, and speaking. Each skill has a different function in English. According to Kayi (2006), speaking is the productive skill in the oral mode and it is useful for students because speaking as a verbal communication to communicate with others. However, the critical problem that is faced by many students is how to be able to speak English well. There are still many students that cannot speak English even they had studied English since they were at schools till to university. In reality, at Thainguyen university of Medicine and Pharmacy, many students confessed that many students have difficulties in learning speaking because they have little vocabulary or ideas to express. Moreover, they did not know to use grammatical structures to make utterance correctly, thereby they feel not confident in speaking. Besides, there are some techniques which can be used to increase English speaking skill. As stated by Patton (2012), Project Based can help students not only study about the language but they also learn how to use that language in their daily life. Accordingly, they become an active learning, and the class will also be fun and dynamic because the students can make project based on their own creativity and usually it will be easier to explain and to present our own creation to other people. Therefore, the researcher hypothesized that PBL will benefit the students in learning speaking process. In order to facilitate the study, the following research question is conducted:

- How effectively can PBL group help students in the speaking process?

2. LITERATURE REVIEW
2.1. Speaking skill and its components
Brown (2004) says that speaking is a productive skill that can be directly and empirically observed, those observations are invariably colored by the accuracy and effectiveness of the test-takers listening skill, which

necessarily compromises the reliability and validity of an oral production test. Moreover, he divides speaking skill into two, namely: micro and macro skills of speaking. The micro-skills refer to producing the smaller chunk so languages such as phonemes, morphemes, words, collocations, and phrasal units. The macro skill simply the speaker's focuses on the larger elements: fluency, discourse, function, style, cohesion, nonverbal communication, and strategic options.

Abdullaeva U.N. (2018) reviewed some criteria for assessment of speaking skill consisting of fluency, accuracy, grammar, vocabulary and pronunciation. Furthermore, Fulcher and Davidson (2006: 94) reviewed that there are 5 levels of proficiency in assessing student performance, namely accent, grammar, vocabulary, fluency and understanding.

From these finding, some criteria including fluency which is the ability to speak or write naturally and easily but not necessarily as accurately as native speakers (Broughton, 2003: 219); pronunciation which is for or diverting one's attention to stress, rhythm and intonation; vocabulary which is the basic building block of language learning (Pollard, 2008: 13); and grammar which is a description of how words can change shape and can be combined into sentences in the language (Harmer, 2001: 12). These criteria are also based upon in the assessment of the oral skill in this study to suit the teaching context.

2.2. Project Based Learning and its implementation in teaching and learning English

Barrows (2001) defined that PBL is a student-centered pedagogy in which students learn about a subject through the experience of problem solving. Therefore, PBL is to help students develop knowledge, problem solving skills, autonomous learning and enhance collaboration and motivation in class.

There have been a lot of studies about the benefits of applying PBL in teaching and learning that PBL technique can be implemented in any kind of curriculum, field of study and in any class situation.

Nassir (2014) verified significant difference on Iraqi students' English achievement before and after being taught by using PBL. In addition, Rochmahwati (2016) specifically found a positive impact on Indonesian students' English speaking skill before and after being taught by using PBL. The finding came along with the positive improvement on students' attitudes on language learning. Moreover, Imtiaz and Asif (2012) proved that PBL played an important role in improving students' language skills and promoting students' autonomous learning skill in Pakistan. According to Fragoulis (2009:92), there are many benefits of implementing the PBL technique in teaching speaking, such as: creating contextual and meaningful learning for students; bringing an optimal environment for practicing speaking English; making students actively engage in project learning; enhancing students' interests, motivation, engagement, and enjoyment; promoting social learning that can enhance collaborative skills and giving an optimal opportunity to improve students' language skills.

3. SUBJECT AND METHODOLOGY

The study was conducted at Thai Nguyen University of Medicine and Pharmacy with thirty students. These were chosen in the group which was taught by using PBL to learn speaking skill. All of them are the first year students studying English New Headway. They were chosen randomly from the researcher's class and all of them wanted to improve their speaking skill. After six weeks of learning speaking by using PBL, they were each required to take a speaking test to explore how PBL improve their speaking skill.

For the analysis of the data of the questionnaire, mean and standard deviation were employed to describe the students' views on PBL as a means for teaching and improving speaking, shown in the following form of range which was according to Likert scale: 3.5-5.0: high degree; 2.5-3.4: medium degree; 1.0-2.4: low degree. As for the 2 open-ended items, the students' views were categorized into emerging themes and analyzed accordingly.

4. FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

How can PBL group help students in learning speaking?

To answer this question, the students' views were presented and categorized in Table 1:

Table 1: Students' perceptions of the effectiveness of PBL group on improving speaking

No.	Items	Mean	SD
1	PBL offers me the opportunity to work autonomously and involve in interaction and cooperation in group.	3.97	0.122
2	PBL helps me speak English with good pronunciation.	4.06	0.135
3	PBL helps the students to speak English with good ranges of vocabulary based on the topic.	4.01	0.083
4	PBL encourages me to arrange every sentence with good grammatical structure.	3.60	0.123
5	PBL helps me know how to deal with hesitation in speaking by using hesitation words in speaking.	3.81	0.108
6	By doing projects, it helps me reduce the anxiety in speaking and help	3.93	0.126

	me believe that I am able and bravery to speak English.		
7	PBL helps me develop their creativity to make an attractive project.	3.90	0.110
8	Presentations and discussions help me increase my confidence in answering questions from the teacher after the presentation or during the discussion	3.67	0.547
9	I feel interested with activities of PBL for experiencing pleasure and satisfaction without worrying about making mistakes.	4.01	0.126
10	I feel encouraged because the tasks in PBL help me to practice expressing ideas or opinion well and making friends and teachers understand what I was talking about.	3.80	0.111
Student's responses as a whole		3.88	0.260

As can be seen from Table 1, the total average mean score was 3.88 with the items ranging from 3.60 to 4.06. First of all, items from1 to 8 were used to explore the effectiveness of PBL in the process of speaking skill. After that, items 9 and 10 were to discover the students' feelings when using PBL in learning speaking.

For further details, the two open-ended questions were used to elicit the effectiveness of using PBL in learning speaking skill, including: (11) In what way does PBL help you in the speaking process the most? How?; (12) Do PBL help you motivate or encourage after learning speaking through PBL? If yes, how?"

From question 11, some comments emerged including: PBL helps students in *"getting tips on the format of presentation", "correcting pronunciation and mistakes by themselves and their friends", "getting ideas or vocabulary from friends for speaking",* and *"not feeling shy in speaking anymore"*...From question 12, many of them stated that they feel *"motivated when getting their teacher or friends' comments or feedbacks",* especially *"encouraged when producing English speaking in class and the teacher and other friends can understand".* They also expressed that they feel encouraged because they can "*learn at home*" or "*interact with friends even when they are not in class*".

Based on the findings from Table 1, it can be inferred that students' perception on the use of PBL on learning speaking skill was mostly at high degree. With regard to items 1 to 7 to discover the effectiveness of PBL in the process of writing skill, the highest result of item 2 (M=4.01; SD=0.083) revealed that the PBL helped students speak English with good pronunciation. This finding explained why the students made a lot of progress in pronunciation in the post-test of the experimental group. Besides, they highly agreed that PBL helped them speak English with good ranges of vocabulary based on the topic, with the values at mean of 4.55 and the standard deviation of 0.884, which took the second rank. Knowing the range of the vocabulary is one of important ways to express ideas in speaking. It can be said that students knew how to improve their speaking by using appropriate words in their speaking with the help of the teacher and friends in the group. Following that was the mean value at 3.97 in high agreement of item 1 expressing that PBL offered students the opportunity to work autonomously and involve in interaction and cooperation in group.

In addition, the students shared the same view in the rate of agreement in item 6 (M=3.93; SD=0.126) showing that by doing projects, it helped them reduce the anxiety in speaking and had a belief that they were able and bravery to speak English in class; and item 7(M=3.90; SD=0.110) displaying that PBL helped them develop their creativity to make an attractive project. Besides, the rests of the items including 4, 5 and 8 had the mean values ranging from 3.60 to 3.81 which were in high agreement. In detail, they highly agreed that PBL helped them know how to deal with hesitation in speaking by using hesitation words in speaking. Additionally, the students also highly agreed that presentations and discussions help them increase my confidence in answering questions from the teacher after the presentation or during the discussion, by the mean value at 3.67 and the standard deviation at 0.547; and PBL encouraged them to arrange every sentence with good grammatical structure in learning speaking. It means that using PBL can help them speak more effectively when they are confident and able to use good grammar structures to express their ideas.

The category of items 9 and 10 was to find out the students' feelings when using PBL in learning speaking skill, the mean scores collected were also in high degree which ranged from 3.80 to 4.01. Item 9 (M=4.01,SD=0.126) showed that they felt interested with activities of PBL for experiencing pleasure and satisfaction without worrying about making mistakes. Item 10 (M=3.80, SD=0.111) asserted that they felt encouraged because the tasks in PBL help them to practice expressing ideas or opinion well and making friends and teachers understand what they were talking about. In short, it can be said that the students appreciated the implementation of PBL and accepted the usefulness of PBL in terms of speaking and using PBL can motivate and encourage the learners in their writing performance.

Based on some emerged comments in questions 11 and 12, it can be understood from all the comments that

there is a form of acknowledgment from the respondents that PBL really helped in their speaking process, especially in the stage which includes the process of getting vocabulary or ideas, as well as pronunciation checks from peers or teachers. Using PBL can motivate and encourage them a lot in speaking process by their teacher and friends' comments and feedbacks. They also feel encouraged when learning speaking through PBL because they can learn right at home instead of attending in the four walls of the class.

5. CONCLUSION

The conducted study investigated the students' perceptions on effectiveness of PBL in speaking skills. The survey showed that most of the students showed high agreement on implementing this communicative approach to learn speaking and they could get improvement in terms of fluency, grammar, pronunciation and vocabulary. Besides, they could reduce stress in speaking, developed creativity when doing the project and enhance motivation and encouragement in class when learning speaking through PBL activities.

The results of the study shed some light on concerning issues using PBL technique in the academic field of teaching languages, especially in teaching speaking skill. Therefore, some suggestions are highly recommended to improve students in learning writing by using PBL, including: (1) spending time for using PBL in English learning class; (2) explaining to the students the criteria which are using for assessing their speaking; (3) giving the deadline so that students can concentrate and spend time to complete the task; (4) choosing suitable and interesting topics for students to motivate them in learning speaking.

It is unavoidable that there exist some limitations of the research due to the limited scope, the time constraint and other objective factors. The limitation found in the number of participants of this study is only the limited subjects and the research focused on a survey on students' perception. Therefore, further research should include testing subjects on two groups to compare the improvements of using this communicative approach.

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