An Exploration On Project Assessment Of Students’ Oral Productive Skills: A Study Of Access Microscholarship Students

1Nuradin Noni, 2Baso Jabu, 3Samtidar
Universitas Negeri Makassar
nuradinonii@unm.ac.id

Abstract – This research aims at finding out how the teacher manages the project assessment and what the students’ perception towards the project work as a part of project assessment. Descriptive qualitative research design is applied to explore the two objectives. In terms of subject, the researchers focus on observing class B of the English Access Microscholarship students, provided by Bureau of Educational and Cultural Affairs of USA at UNM. They are chosen purposively among 3 classes in total. The researchers take one class as the subject, which consists of 20 students. The other subject is the English teacher of this class. The researchers attended the class to do direct observation and interviewed 20 students. In doing the observation, the researchers used observation checklist to identify the activities in classroom interaction. Interview was conducted by using audio recorder to obtain data concerning the students’ perception toward the project work. The result of the study reveals the way teacher assessed the project assessment, assessing four aspects namely planning, collecting data, processing data and report. Teacher broke them down in managing the assessment. In this study, the teacher managed the assessment by dividing those aspects into some parts. Planning consisted of preparation and title, and collecting data covered information gathering. Following this, processing data consists of writing, analyzing data and concluding. Finally, project report consists of presenting, retelling, telling experience and performing. Regarding students’ perception, students perceived that project work in project assessment is helping, interesting, motivating, exciting and different from other forms of assessment.

Key words: Project Assessment, Oral Productive Skills

I. INTRODUCTION

Learning process is a process which consists of planning, teaching, activities of learning and evaluation. Learning can be defined as an interaction between learners and teachers. This process is begun by the planning of learning. There should be a planning before conducting the activities of teaching and learning. In this first step, the objectives of learning and the activities are prepared or designed by the teachers. After planning the objectives and the activities, the process moves to teaching and learning activities to acquire knowledge. The last step is evaluation. It is important to determine the success or failure to achieve the goal.

Tyler cited in Arikunto (2002) states that evaluation is a process of determining the extent to which the educational objectives are actually being achieved. In contrast, Davis (2010) explains that evaluation answers the question “How?”. It answers the questions about how well the project or learning is working, how the person knows that value is being or has added, how valid the assessment measures are and how effective the intervention strategies are.

The other term usually related to evaluation, is assessment. Assessment is an activity to assess or measure the students’ achievement. It includes collecting information as well. Davis (2010) says that assessment answers the question “What?”. It answers the questions about what is being learned by the students, the impact being made by instruction, what is working, what is not working, what can students do and what is the faculty accomplishing.

There are many kinds of assessments used in learning process such as paper and pencil assessment, product assessment, self-assessment, performance assessment, attitude assessment, portfolio assessment, performance assessment and project assessment. Those kinds of assessment use a particular technique in collecting information. The technique based on learning standards and basic competencies. Basic competency is assessed based on achievement indicators of learning outcomes that consists of three aspects, namely cognitive, affective, and psychomotor. An effective assessment is an assessment which can cover three aspects of learning namely cognitive, affective and psychomotor. It should be considered since most of the teachers assess students only on cognitive aspects like students’ ability to memorize. The students are not taught to learn, but tend to practice in answering questions. As a result, students cannot experience and use their knowledge in their daily life. Mostly, the schools apply assessment only for the cognitive aspect. The teachers always give the students an assignment in written form, for example filling in blanks and rearranging sentences. In the competency-based Indonesian curriculum, students are provided with students’ worksheets or lembar kerja siswa (LKS), a book which is full of questions. Each student has to complete those questions in one semester and he/she can work on it as homework. Those assignments potentially make the students cheat other students’ assignment.

Harris and McCann (1994) state that one of the fundamental reasons for assessment that often does not feed back into the learning and teaching process is the kind of feedback that is expressed only by a grade or mark. The grade classifies students, but does not give real help. It does not tell students what their specific problems are and therefore it cannot make suggestion to overcome the problem. On the other hand, Harris and McCann (1994) state that assessment has got to a continuous process going on at a different level.

Related to what Harris and McCain (1994) explain, the researchers found one interesting assessment called project assessment. Syamsudduha (2012) states that project
assessments are assessment of assignment that must be completed by students in a particular period of time. The assignment is an investigation form beginning from collecting, organizing, evaluating, until presenting data. On the other point of view, based on the Ministerial Decree No.53/4/2001 on guidelines for the implementation of minimum service standards on schooling at elementary and secondary education, it is stated that project assessment is an accumulation of tasks which involves some competencies and should be accomplished by the learners. Through this assessment, the researcher predicts that project assessment can cover the feedback that the students need.

Moreover, this project really fits with the students’ need of Access Microscholarship Students because this program will benefit the participants to get better jobs and educational prospects. Since this program focuses on team work, such as discussion, it will also provide the ability to compete for and participate in future exchanges and study in the United States.

Prior to this, the researchers observed the program and the observation confirmed that this program always assigns students for community project. It refers to the project in which the students should complete the assignment in a period of time. The researchers conclude that this so-called community project is a bit similar to project work that is related to project assessment.

In order to investigate other assessment of language learning, the researcher believes that a research is worth conducted to observe how the other assessment applied and what the students’ perception are about the project work that they work on in this assessment. The researchers are interested in investigating and exploring this assessment in the aforementioned program under the title An Exploration On Project Assessment Of Students' Productive Skills: A Study of Access Microscholarship Students.

II. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

This research is applied by using qualitative design, called as an exploratory method. It means that the qualitative study comes first and is typically as an exploratory study (Gay, et.al., 2006). The qualitative method employed descriptive method, is applied to find out how the project assessment runs and functions and find out the students' perception on project assessment.

The research was taken place at the English Access Microscholarship program provided by Bureau of Educational and Cultural Affairs of USA at UNM. The researchers chose this program because it applied project assessment which is normally not conducted at public and school in this city did not apply it. The students and the teacher of this school are the subjects of this research. Purposive sampling technique is applied in this research. It has only one class as a sample of research out of three classes. Purposive sampling was applied because only one teacher assigns the students to do project work. The researchers directly determine the sample to the class in which project assessment is applied. The total number of students in this class is 30 students. The other subject is the English teacher of this class. The researchers observe the teacher while she is applying project assessment to the students.

This research applies two research instruments. They are direct observation and interview. The direct observation is employed to find out how the application, process and functions of project assessment. The second instrument is interview which is intended to find the students’ perception of project work.

In collecting data, the researchers carried out a direct observation and interview. In this direct observation, the researchers made a to-do list for the students’ project. In general, the researchers focused on how the students plan the data, collect the data, process the data and report the data. In this observation, the researchers acted as external observers. In this regard, the researchers did not involve in the students’ project work and only observed the kinds of activity that the students had performed. However, in the interview section, he researcher interviewed the students in term of their perceptions of project work. The combination of semi-structured, unstructured and structured interview was conducted as it was suggested by Gay et. al (2006). In conducting the interview, the researchers spoke in English and/or Indonesian depending on the respondent being interviewed.

III. FINDING AND DISCUSSION

1. Teacher’s Management of Assessment

Based on the obtained data, the researchers found that the teacher managed the assessment starting on the students’ preparation to the report of project. Regarding the students’ assignment, there were three aspects that the teacher assessed namely planning, process and report. The teacher managed the assessment of preparation into two parts called preparation and deciding the title. Aspects of process consisted of getting information, writing, analyzing data and concluding. The teacher assessed only three parts of this aspect. She did not assess the writing part. The last assessed aspect was report of project. It consisted of presentation, retelling, telling experience and performance.

This assignment took a week to finish. The teacher assessed the students since the first day until the last day. Teacher managed it systematically. She told the students what they should do with the assignment which was in the form of project. The given project was to find out the question in the movie. The teacher considered that the movie was interesting because the movie would excite the students to think while watching. They needed to watch the movie with their own group. In the presentation, the students should retell the movie, explain the question that all characters in the movie tried to figure out, tell the class what their favorite scene and the last part is tell the class about the moral message of the movie.

The researchers observed the teacher during the assessment process of students’ project. She used observation checklist to identify the activities of the teacher in assessing students based on the theory of project assessment.

At the first meeting, the teacher explained what the students need to do with the project. The project was about community services. The teacher explained that ideally the students had to write a review about them but she did not tell the students to do so because the teacher wanted to focus on the speaking ability. Before giving a project, the teacher
grouped the students into 4 groups based on the students’ seat.

The researcher noticed that the given project resulted concrete product. It is a poster of their documentation of the community services. The way of assessing the students is starting on the planning at the first meeting to the report of project at the fifth meeting. The assessment was conducted twice in the classroom and three times out of the classroom.

The first meeting, after grouping and explaining, the teacher let the students prepare the project and decide the title. She directly assessed the preparation and title. The criteria in assessing planning aspect is based on what Syamsudduha (2012) suggests.

The next meeting, students did their project out of class. The teacher still ran the class, giving material to the students while out of class the students had an assignment called a project. The project took two weeks before presentation. The teacher could assess the students even out of class because they chose to work on the project while hanging out. In this second meeting, the teacher assessed the two aspects called getting information and analyzing the data.

The process of assessing and analyzing the data can be seen when the students were doing community service. They should speak English in analyzing the data together.

The next aspect assessed was concluding. It was still conducted out of class. The teacher assessed how the students took the conclusion. The teacher followed the students’ discussion in the small group and noticed the argumentation of students about why they concluded so.

In the last meeting, the students should present their result of their activities during the process in the class. The teacher assessed the students’ presentation, retelling, telling experience and performance. As mentioned above, the students were divided into four groups. Each group consists of five students. The teacher assessed the whole performance of presentation both individually and in a group. The member’s performance could affect the group score from the teacher.

All members of one group came together at the same time in front of the class. They spoke one by one based on their job in their group. Five of them had to speak in front of the class because they had responsibility to do so. They were assessed while presenting the presentations.

Based on the assessment sheet, teacher did not assess one aspect which was writing aspect in this project. As mentioned in the previous discussion, it was because the teacher wanted to focus on the speaking ability. The teacher would probably give them another project which would focus on the writing ability.

2. Students Perception of Project Work

Project assessment is identical with project work. The teacher should give the assignment in the form of project work to assess the students. This part discusses about students’ perception of project work as their assignment. As mentioned in the problem statement, this study tried to find out the students’ perception of project work. The perception refers to what students think about project work and the effect of project work for them.

Based on the result of interview, the researcher finds that project work is helping, interesting, exciting, fun and different than other assignments. Some students thought that project work wasted their time because they should work on the project for many days but most of the students thought it does not waste time at all.

Most students perceived that project work was interesting, different from other assignments and time-saving. Other perceptions were motivating and exciting. One group of students stated that project work was motivating and two groups stated that project work was different from other assignments.

a. The Project Work is Helpful

The appearing opinion is project work can help the students. Students assumed that project work helps them to know how to compete and take responsibility. The students were serious to work on the assignment because they realized that it helped them to take responsibility of it. The students realized as well that they competed with other groups in a good way.

b. Project Work is Interesting

Students perceive that project work is interesting. The results of interview prove that it is interesting. The students perceive it so because project work does not make the students bored and mostly the students like it.

The motivation rises after given a project because they compete each other to do their best on the project. They should present their result in front of the class and nobody wants to embarrass her or himself.

c. Project Work is Exciting

Project work is an exciting assignment. Students perceive that it is exciting, fun and relaxing.

d. Project Work is Time-saving

Before conducting this research, the researcher predicted that students would think that project work would waste their time. It could be burdening and make them hard about the assignment. Some students perceived that project work took time to do but they had no problem with it because they compared to their other activities which took more time.

Regarding to the students’ perception, this research as well tried to find out what students think about they think that project work is helping, interesting, exciting, motivating and different than other assignments. The researcher interviewed six groups of students in different level of achievement. Each group consisted of five students. The six mentioned perceptions above appeared intensively in interview.

According to Haryati (2013) stated that project work gives an opportunity for the learners to express completely their competence and it produces a value of competence which they can take responsibility of it. One of the findings supported this theory (See Interview of group 5 number 6). During the process of project, the students were serious to work on their project. This assignment is different from others because they have no time to cheat because they
worked with their own group and they had their own responsibility individually.

Two of six findings, related to the students’ perception, are same as the theory. Those are project work is helping and different from others. In the other point of view, four other findings namely project work is motivating, interesting, exciting and does not waste the time. Haryati (2013) does not mention these four findings. Those three perceptions are supported by some statements of students on extracts in findings. The other supporting statements are interview of group 3.13, interview of group 2. 10, interview of group 4.10, interview of group 5.8 and interview of group 6.11. These interviews indicate that project work is really interesting, exciting and motivating. The researcher let them imagine if they have a chance to choose their assignment, they preferred to have project work because it was not boring. They could think and discuss without cheating because they had different responsibility in their group.

The statement “Project work is not boring” implicitly tells that students liked doing project. They experienced of working on the assignment without hoping the other students’ help except their own members. They can work with their own friends and figure out all the things which may appear in their project. This assignment stimulates the students as well to do their best because at the end of the assessment, they should present their report in front of the class. They did not want to embarrass themselves in front of other groups.

As performed in findings section, the students stated that they have more time to speak English with this assignment. They could speak more English as well. (See Interview of group 6 number 1 and group 3 number 15). This proves that they had a chance to practice their English. This chance can be one of motivations for them to have more practice. The students can be motivated as well when they seriously did their project because they wanted to be better than other groups.

Stoller in Richards & Renandya (2002) stated that project work is potentially motivating, stimulating, empowering and challenging. It usually results in building students’ confidence, self-esteem and autonomy as well as improving students’ language skill, content learning and cognitive abilities. This theory supported the finding of this research. Students orally stated the project work as motivating assignment which actually has been stated by Stoller in Richards & Renandya (2002).

Students did not mention directly that project work is stimulating, empowering and challenging assignment as Stoller in Richards & Renandya (2002) explained in his theory but the researcher assumes that actually students implicitly agree with Stoller’ theory (Richards & Renandya: 2002) unfortunately they did not state it orally. Based on the interview, the students always said that some activities in project work made them speak. It indicates that project work actually stimulated them to speak.

IV. CONCLUSION

Based on the preceding findings and discussion, the researchers conclude the following.

1. Project assessment assesses four aspects namely planning, collecting data, processing data and report. The teacher can break them down in managing an assessment. In this study, the teachers manage the assessment by dividing those aspects into some parts. Planning consists of preparation and title, collecting data is getting information, processing data consists of writing, analyzing data and concluding, and report of project consists of presentation, retelling, telling experience and performance.

2. In managing the assessment, the teacher does not totally follow one theory. She adopted some theories and mixed them in applying this assessment.

3. Considering the process of project assessment and the definition of project-based learning, the students who learn through PBL approach can be assessed by applying project assessment.

Students perceive that project work in project assessment is helping, interesting, motivating, exciting, different than others and time-saving.

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