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# IMPACT OF PROJECT-BASED LEARNING ON LEARNERS OF ENGLISH AS A SECOND LANGUAGE: THE CLASSROOM BASED STUDY AT WALAILAK UNIVERSITY

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**Abstract-** This study aims to examine the impact of project-based learning (PBL) on English learners as a Second language at Walailak University. The researcher examines the second-year students who took the English for Community Development (ECD) course in the trimester\_ 2/2018 academic year. The total number of students was (N=720). The course consists of 25 sections with an average class size of 35 students, and in each section, the students formed a small group of five to choose a topic of their interest relevant to (ECD). The project commenced in week three and was completed in week 10 through group presentations. Pre and post-test were run to compare the students' improvements by scores and the levels after completing the (PBL) course. Also, Paired T-Test and Regression Analyses were undertaken to answer the question, "Whether the students' role-play performance can predict their performance in the final speaking test." The findings presented a statistically significant difference in the students' final speaking test. Students who participated in the (PBL) course enriched and expanded their knowledge, acquired a higher level of motivation and developed life-long skills such as critical thinking and communication skills. Theoretical foundations for a (PBL) course are presented and applied in the classroom, difficulties and challenges encountered are discussed, as well as benefits. The article purports to be logical in focus, linking theory with practice and providing educators with a tool for effectively utilizing project-based learning in English as second language contexts.

**Keywords:** English as second language, project- based, classroom study, final speaking test, community development, theoretical foundation

## I. INTRODUCTION

Empirical learning refers to the learning process's organization based on the pedagogical principles of "learning by doing," which means that students acquire knowledge after experiencing or doing something unusual (Kotti, 2008:32). Practical learning is defined as the exploitation and processing of experience, aiming to obtain knowledge and reconstruct the way of thinking and developing attitudes and behaviors. (Mezirow, 1991). In observational learning, students participate "in concrete activities that harness them to 'experience' what they are exploring about" and the "opportunity to reflect on those activities" (Silberman, 2007:8), since "learning is the process whereby knowledge acquired through the conversion of experience" (Kolb, 1984). Practical learning is related to the project method. The project method is "a natural continuation of what is already taking place in class" (Stoller, 2002:109), an open learning process, the restrictions and procedures of which are undefined, which progresses concerning the specific teaching context and students' needs and interests. (Frey, 1986; Kriwas, 2007).

The project methods originate from Pragmatism, the philosophical movement which appeared in the middle of the 19th century and promoted action and observational application of knowledge in daily life (Frey, 1986:31). Significant proponents of assumption are W. Kilpatrick (1935) in the U.S.A and H.Gaudig and G. Kerschensteiner in Germany. The project-based learning approach relies on the following pedagogical principles, as explained by many practitioners (Chrysafidis, 2005): a) advance of manual activity instead of memorization and verbalism, b) students' involvement in the learning process, and) the exploitation of facts relating to the immediate reality as a source of learning. The project methods relate to the internal rebuilding of the educational process, primary components of which are the following: 1) opening of school to the various communities, 2) provision of equal opportunities to all learners irrespective of sociocultural background, 3) exploitation of immediate space as the departure for learning,

4) systematic study of problems of daily life at school, 5) socio-curricular path to expertise (Kapsalis and Vrettos, 1997, Papagiannopoulos et al., 2000).

## II. LITERATURE REVIEW

### ***2.1 Advantages of project-based learning in second and foreign language settings***

Several benefits of including project-based learning in second and foreign language settings are suggested. First, the process leading to the final group project presentation provides students opportunities to develop their self-confidence and independence (Fried-Booth, 2002). Besides, students exhibited increased self-esteem and positive attitudes toward learning (Stoller, 2006:27). Students' autonomy learning is enhanced (Skehan, 1998), especially when they actively participate in project planning (e.g., choice of topic). A further frequently mentioned advantage relates to students' increased social, cooperative, and group cohesiveness (Coleman, 1992; Papagiannopoulos et al., 2000: 36-37). Another reported benefit is improved language skills such as speaking and writing (Levine, 2004).

Moreover, students engage in meaningful communication to complete authentic tasks and allow them to use language almost in a natural context (Haines, 1989) and participate in useful functions that require specific language use. Authentic tasks refer to activities designed to develop students' thinking and problem-solving skills, which are essential in out-of-school contexts and foster learners' learning (Brown et al., 1993). Tasks are "Anything students are expected to do, beyond getting input through listening or reading, in order to learn, apply the practice, evaluate, or in any other way respond to curricular contents" (Brophy & Alleman, 1991), authentic tasks are tasks with real-world importance and utility, "that combine across the curriculum, that provides the appropriate levels of complexity, and that allows learners to select appropriate levels of difficulty or engagement" (Jonassen, 1991), as quoted in Herrington et al., 2003). Among other characteristics, authentic tasks have real-world relevance, provide the opportunity for students to scrutinize the work from different perspectives, enhance collaboration and reflection, and allow competing solutions and diversity of outcomes (Reeves et al., 2002). Besides, a project-based learning course provides an opportunity for "the natural integration of language abilities" (Stoller, 2006:33). An additional benefit is that because project work progresses according to the particular context and students' interests (Kriwas, 1999:149), students have enhanced engagement, enjoyment, and motivation (Lee, 2002). From the motivational perspective, projects being authentic tasks are more meaningful to students, increase intent, motivation to participate, and promote learning outcomes (Brophy, 2004). Enjoyment and motivation also branch from the fact that classroom language is not predetermined but depends on the nature and the implementation of the project since they have to work after school hours (Larsen-Freeman, 2000:149). Another bunch of reported benefits pertains to the development of problem-solving and higher-order critical thinking skills (Allen, 2004). These skills are fundamental as they are life-long transferable skills to settings outside the classroom. Positively, according to Dornyei, (2001:100-101), among another potential advantage, project-based learning encourages motivation, foster cohesiveness, increase expectancy of success in the target language, achieves "a rare synthesis of academic and social goals," reduces ambiguity, increases the significance of effort relative to ability, and promotes effort-based attributions.

This study sought to answer the following research questions:

1. *Do project-based learning improvement the students' English communication skill?*
2. *Do students' role play performances predict student performance in the final interview exam?*

## III. METHODS

### ***The research design and hypothesis***

#### ***3.1. Teacher role in the project-based learning course***

Active project-based learning requires the teacher to assume a different purpose (Levy, 1997). The teacher's participation is not dominant, but he/she appears as a guide, coordinator, advisor, (Papandreu,

1994), and facilitator. In implementing the project method, the main point of the learning process progresses from the teacher to the learners, from working alone to group work.

### ***3.2 Project Schedule: Week 3 -10***

Week 3-Submission of a group Project proposal to the assigned lecturer

Week 4 -Resources Initiation

Week 5- Project Planning

Week 6- Project progress report

Week7- Review of the project progress report

Week 8- Project Monitoring & Control

Week 9- Project Closure and preparation for the final presentation

Week10-Final project presentation and Reflective writing

### ***3.3 Stages in a group project***

The stages below can be used for successful project implementation. They constitute practical guidelines for the sequencing of project steps for lecturers who taught English for community development course to the second-year students at University Walailak in trimester 2/2018 Academic, 12weeks classroom teaching. (Kriwas, 1999)

#### ***3.3.1 Stage 1: Project proposal***

This stage includes the choice of project topic and sensitization about it, aiming at arousing interest and relevant to community development conducive to speculation and investigation that will lead smoothly to the research process. The topic is chosen after a dialogue among all students of the group, and the lecturers. The essential stimulus may emerge from the curriculum, or after a discussion about a contemporary local or broader topic of interest, or from reading a newspaper or magazine article (Brinia, 2006: 79).

#### ***3.3.2 Stage 2: Designing the project activities***

This stage includes the formation of groups and assigning of roles, decisions concerning methodology, sources of information, resources of actions that will take place, and places outside the classroom that students will visit. The better formulated and more analytical the structuring of the project, the easier and faster the study will be conducted (Fragoulis,2008).

#### ***3.3.3 Stage 3: Choosing the project location***

At this stage, the groups chose their desired location within walailak university campus based on the topic and the nature of the activities the project covers. Students gathered information and classified them. If deemed essential, there may be intervals of information and feedback, in which students discuss issues related to community development among group members, problems of personal relations, and possible changes in group composition.

The next phase is the synthesis and processing of information gathered. The final products are displayed on the campus or the wider community, and become a stimulus for thought and action for other students, lecturers, and the local community.

#### ***3.3.4. Stage 4: Evaluation***

Evaluation attributes to the assessment of the activities from participants and discussion about whether the initial objective goals have been achieved, implementation of the process, and final presentation (Brinia, 2006:82). The evaluation also entails an assessment of the experience at individual and group level, identification of errors and issues, but also appraisal of the rich cognitive and experiential material gathered. The evaluation includes an evaluation from other lecturers, as well as self-evaluation.

Although many studies are concentrating on the theoretical underpinnings for project-based learning in foreign language teaching and learning, there are almost few empirical studies linking theory with practice, evaluating the impact of the project in the context of foreign language settings. In this context,

this study examines the practical aspects of implementing project work in University settings, reporting challenges encountered, benefits from project work, and pedagogical implications as well.

### **3.3.5 Stage 5: Project presentation**

## **3.4 The classroom-based research project: from theory to practice presentation**

### **3.4.1 Participants- Lecturers (N=15)**

Second-year University students, aged 20-21 years, at Walailak University who took English for Community Development project-based learning course, which was designed purposely to examine the impact on project-based learning in English teaching as a second language. Fifteen of Walailak University Language Institute lecturers participated in the project, University lecturers, who have much experience in the implementation of contemporary teaching methods, and the lecturer of English. The project lasted seven weeks, and students worked on it for two hours per week in the framework of the day-long school. The students presented their final project in classroom to their assigned lecturers via PowerPoint slides group by group and afterward carried out the reflective writing to reflect on the knowledge they have acquired through the group project and the results were positive as shown under result and discussion heading using line graph, bar chart, pie chart, Paired sample T-Test and regression analysis.

### **3.5. Core objectives of the project**

The overarching aims were to implement project work to make students aware of the history of the community in which they live, and use it as a mechanism for the cross-curricular and interdisciplinary task, as well as to make use of new technology tools. The specific aims were:

#### ***Cognitive objectives***

- 1) To help students to learn about the history of their various communities
- 2) To foster students to realize the significance of the historical and natural environment concerning the sustainable development of the city.
- 3) To improve students' writing, reading, speaking, listening, vocabulary skills, and communicative competence.
- 4) ***Emotional aims***
- 5) To sharpen students about the problems connected with community development.
- 6) To advance respect about the collaborative efforts of people who reside in a specific geographical area.
- 7) ***Psychomotor goals:***
- 8) To equip the students with observation and research methods.
- 9) To advance the development of curiosity and observation skills to students.

### **3.6. Sequence of the project activities**

Referring to Stoller (2002), the following six stages were observed. The first step, including choosing the topic of the project related to community development and agreeing on the outcomes. The project topic was "Community development", and it was determined by both the lecturers and the students since it was a one-trimester project (Henry, 1994). The term "Community development" refers to the process whereby community members come together to take collective action and generate solutions to common problems. Community wellbeing (economic, social, environmental, and cultural) often evolves from this type of collective action being taken at a grassroots level.

Choice of a topic for research was based on the following criteria: a) the subject forms parts of the undergraduate students' experiences, b) it is close to their interests, needs and their daily life problems, c) it creates the conditions necessary for investigating, interpreting and critically analyzing the community. Students study local communities, come into contact with the issues of the area and approach them diachronically, make judgments, analyze and compare information, so they gradually acquire historical awareness of their various communities

In the second stage, lecturers and students structured the project work. This included determining the information required, sources of information, how analysis of data will take place, the formation of project groups based on the students' interests and needs, and assigning roles and coordinators for each group. The following principles were applied concerning group formation and function (Brophy, 2008:161): a) tasks were at such level of difficulty level based on the course level which is (CEFR- B1) that students

could complete with reasonable effort by the help of the lecturers, b) each group member was allocated some specific responsibilities for the group project.

#### IV. PARTICIPANTS- STUDENTS (N=720)

This research involves second-year students (N=720; Female=570; and Male=150) who took the English for Community Development course at Walailak University in the trimester\_2/ 2018/19 academic year. The students' majors include 29 undergraduate programs, namely, Animal Science, ASEAN Studies, Accountancy, Biotechnology, Business Administration, Communication Arts, Chinese Language, Computer engineering, Digital Information, Economics, Electrical Engineering, English, Environmental Science, Fisheries, English, Environmental Health, Food Technology, Information Technology, Interior Design, Marine and Coastal Resource Management, Medical Technology, Multimedia, Nursing Science, Occupational Health and Safety, Political Science, Polymer Engineering, Software Engineering, Tourism and Hotel, and Industrial Design.

In terms of English proficiency, most of these students are at the beginner's level, followed by the intermediate and advanced levels, based on the results of the University placement test in 2018(see table 1). The proficiency level of some other remains unidentified.

**4.1 Table 1. The participants' English proficiency levels.**

Score Range	Level	Number of Students (%)
70-100	Advanced	27(3.75%)
56-69	Intermediate	254(35.4 %)
40-55	Beginner	400(55.5%)
	Unidentified	39(5.35%)

**4.2 Table 2. Class schedule**

Week	Material
1	1. Introduction: Lecturer and Students
2	2. Course Introduction: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Assessment Summary</li> <li>• Syllabus</li> <li>• Vocabulary Sets and Tests</li> <li>• Weekly learning materials</li> <li>• Assignments in each unit</li> </ul>
3	3. Creating a Facebook Group for the class.
2	Unit 1: Birth of Civilization
3	Students perform role-play under the theme Community Youth Network
4	Unit 2: Sufficiency Economy
5	In-class case study under the theme Community-based Adaptation to climate change
6	Unit 3: Community Formation
7	Project preliminary under the theme Factors Affecting Community Formation
8	Unit 4: Youth and Community Development
9	Students perform under the theme Youth driven Community Projects
10	Review of Lessons, Final project presentation and in-class reflective writing
11	Final Speaking Test(cont.)
12	Final Speaking Test

### 4.3. Role-play instructions

The phases involved in the role-play implementation followed the frameworks of TBLT suggested by Ellis (2009), Littlewood (2004), Long (1985), Nunan (1991), Skehan (1996) and Willis (1996). The first phase is called 'pre-task.' In this phase, teachers feed the students with the target language features commonly used under each theme in the textbook. The language features consist of grammar and vocabulary, coupled with other supporting materials that facilitate learners' understandings of the discussed theme, for instance, youth-driven community project dialogue, a text that contains the information about factors affecting community formation, pronunciation practice on keywords related to community development, and so forth. This phase provides input for the students before they prepare their role-play under the theme. In addition, students' role play preparations occur in this first phase outside the classroom, where consultation with their lecturers is feasible. Then, the second phase consists of students' role-play performance. One group of students consists of 4–5 students, and each group must submit their scripts before their performance in class. This role-play performance lasts 2 hours, in which one group has up to 10 minutes for its performance. During their performance, students can bring any supporting materials that can enhance their performance. Besides, the classroom is equipped with an Internet connection, projector, computer, and speaker, so that the students may show pictures or play music as part of their performance. After each group's performance, teachers give feedback regarding the target language used by the students during their role-play; the feedback can focus on pronunciation, choice of word, grammar, and so forth. The last phase is named 'post-task,' which comprises discussions of the role-play activities, such as the obstacles that the students face, issues in the student groups, and so forth. Basically, the purpose of this phase is to reflect on what the students have been through and what the students can do to improve their performance in their future endeavor.

**Table 3. Phases of role-play**

Phases of Role-Play	Teacher's role	Details
<b>Pre-Task</b> the target language features commonly used under each theme in the textbook	Feed the students with community, development, experience, project cleaning day	1) Vocabulary and pronunciation, Wh-questions, etc. 2) Grammar: preposition, adjective 3) Listening and reading, e.g. Youth driven community Project interview

#### **Role-Play Performance**

Facilitate students' role-play performances and ensure the availability of required equipment, such as computer, projector and speaker. Students can bring any supporting materials that can enhance their performance.

**Post-task** - Give feedback regarding the target language used by the students during their role-play; the feedback can focus on pronunciation, choice of word, grammar, etc.

- Feedback or corrections are given after each group's performance.

The specific instructions for the role-play activity are available in unit 1 of the student's textbook. The instructions provide students with a list of topics that they can choose, yet the students also have the privilege to choose their topic related to community development. This theme-based role-play activity attempts to engage students with language practice in 'real-world' situations that people will generally encounter under the theme. For instance, one of the suggested topics under the theme of community development was to use modal verbs from the textbook to create rules for community youth association and include what the youth can and cannot do in that community. After



performing a role play in this situation, it was an expectation that the students would be able to communicate by using the target language when they happen to be in such a situation. Also, for the students who view the role-play performance, they would get a visualization of how the situation might occur and how to use the target language.

**Table 4. Example of one of the role-play instructions included in the student's textbook**

**Theme** Community Development

- Topic**
1. Youth Action Network
  2. Youth Group
  3. Youth Link Movement
  4. Youth Association
  5. Youth Climate Change

**Preparation** 1. Select your team leader, who will lead the discussion.

2. Design the performance that you will use in your selected topic.
3. Discuss the roles of each member.
4. Choose your script writer and your director(s).
5. Prepare some tools and customs that fit your selected topic.

**Script** 1. Must be submitted 2 days before the class.

2. Made using MyStoryBook.com, so students just need to share the URL link with teacher on Facebook Group.
3. Along with the script, each group submits 10 multiple-choice questions for audience about their roleplay.

**Presentation** 1. Present your 10-minute role-play in class.

2. Perform your Role-Play using your own original script. Copied or semi-modified script from other sections or groups shall automatically get 0 POINT if proven.
3. On the performing day, the lecturer would randomly call each group. If the group is not ready, that group would get 0 point.
4. If a member in each group has an accident or severe illness on the performing day, other members in the group must be able to perform without the missing person.

### **Final speaking test**

The role-play activities under the five themes in the textbook are designed as a form of speaking practice for the students. The development of students' communicative competence is expected to be visible during the final speaking test. The format of the final speaking test is an individual interview, which involves three parts: 1) personal information (general questions and specific questions on the course materials; 2) reading aloud words, phrases, and sentences which are taken from the course materials; 3) communicating and expressing ideas spontaneously based on one selected item, related to the course materials.

## V. RESEARCH DATA AND ASSESSMENT RUBRICS

Students' role-play performances and the final speaking test are assessed using scoring rubrics. The students' scores obtained through these scoring rubrics are the primary data used in the present study. First, the scoring rubric for role-play consists of five criteria: vocabulary use, fluency, accuracy, interaction, and creativity, preparedness, and prompts. The scorer range includes 5, 1, 1.5, and 2, which means that in total, the lowest score is 2.5 and 10 is the highest score. In the assessment rubric, each point has detailed descriptions. Then, for the final speaking test, the scoring rubric also contains five criteria: content, vocal expression, presentation, fluency and accuracy, and listening skill (in conversational situations). The scorer range also starts from 5, followed by 1, 1.5, and 2. So, the lowest score is also 2.5 and 10 is the highest score. The details of the assessment rubrics are presented in Tables 5 and 6

**Table 5. The assessment rubric of student's role-play performance**

Criteria	0.5	1	1.5	2
<b>Vocabulary Use</b>	Inadequate use of Range of vocabulary of limited number of language expression	The students make use of a wide range of vocabulary and a wide range of language expression	The students make use of a wide range of vocabulary and a wide range of language expression	The students make use of a wide range of vocabulary and a wide range of language expression
<b>Fluency</b>	Hesitation, repletion, and self-correction and frequent and hinder effective communication understandable	Hesitation, repletion, and self-correction are often, but the hesitation, repetition, hesitation, repetition, and self-correction, and self-correction, and self-correction, and self-correction	The student only show occasional hesitation, repetition, hesitation, repetition, and self-correction, and self-correction, and self-correction, and self-correction	The students only show occasional hesitation, repetition, hesitation, repetition, and self-correction, and self-correction, and self-correction, and self-correction
<b>Accuracy</b>	The students make Many grammatical Errors which make The message non-Comprehensible understandable	The students make less frequent grammatical errors and show errors and show errors	The students make a few grammatical errors and show error-free	The students' speech is generally error-free
<b>Interaction</b>	The students cooperate deficiently With each other Communications Happen many times One or two parts.	The students cooperate actively with each other, but mis-communications happen in	The students cooperate actively with each other	The students cooperate actively with each other
<b>Creativity, Preparedness, and Promptness</b>	The students lack of creativity/ predictable acts that disengage the audience; no costumes and supporting materials	The students show one or two creative acts in their role/characters; seems not very well prepared; use more than one costume than two costume pieces and other supporting materials	The students show some level creativity/ unpredictable acts in their role/characters; roles/ characters; seem prepared; use more than one costume than two costume pieces and other supporting materials	The students show high levels of creativity/unpredictable acts in their role/characters; roles/ characters; seem well-prepared; use more than one costume than two costume pieces and other supporting materials

**Table 6. The assessment rubric of the final speaking test**

Criteria	Score			
	0.5 (Fair)	1 (Average)	1.5 (Good)	2 (Excellent)
<b>Content</b> (Able to provide relevant answers to the topic with explanation and/or supported ideas provided)				
<b>Vocal expression</b> (clarity and audibility) (Able to				



pronounce the words, phrases, sentences and paragraphs clearly and correctly)

**Presentation** (Able to show strong self-confidence and uses proper posture, gesture and eye contact)

**Fluency and accuracy** (Able to express himself/herself in English fluently and accurately)

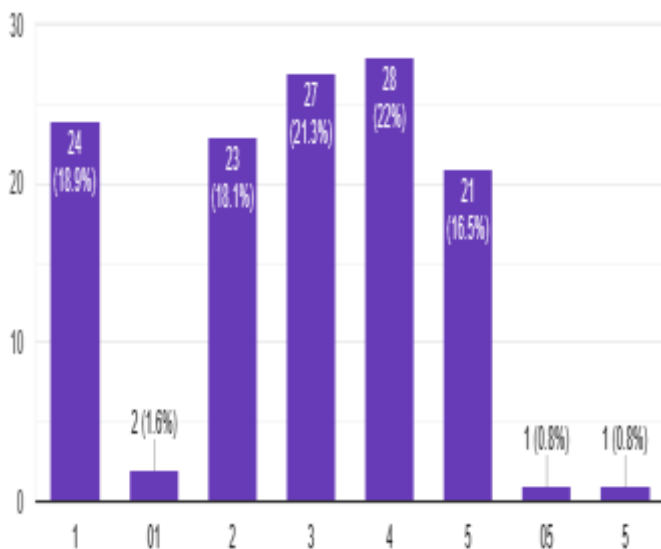
**Listening Skill** (Able to comprehend the given instructions and perform correctly the given tasks)

## VI. RESULTS

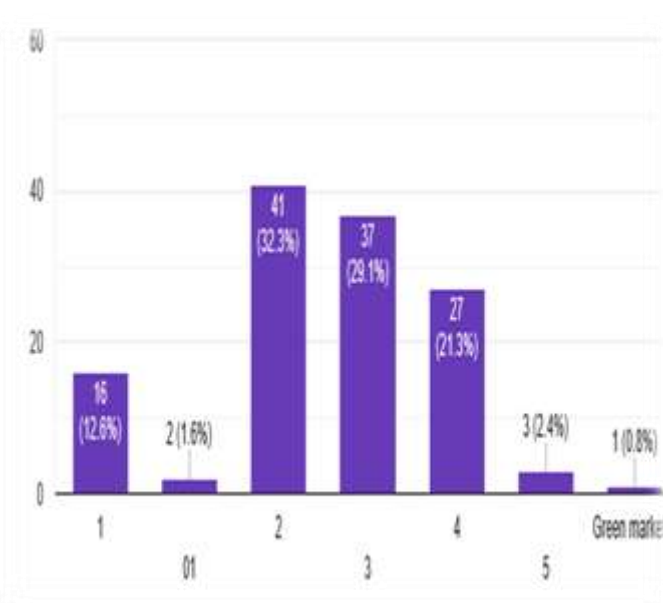
### 6.1 Project Reflective Writing Participants-Bar Chart (N=127, Students)

Chart A is the section participated in the Project Reflective Writing(8 Sections), whereas Chart B is the groups participated in the Project Reflective Writing (7 Groups)  
“Meaning that one section did double submission; however, the data collected is accurate.”  
(That is one of the challenges in teaching learners of English as a second language.)  
The data were collected via Google form and explained in the pie chart below, shows positive result.

**Chart A (8Sections) #127 responses**



**Chart B (7 Groups) #127 responses**



### 6.2. Project reflective writing Result-Pie Chart

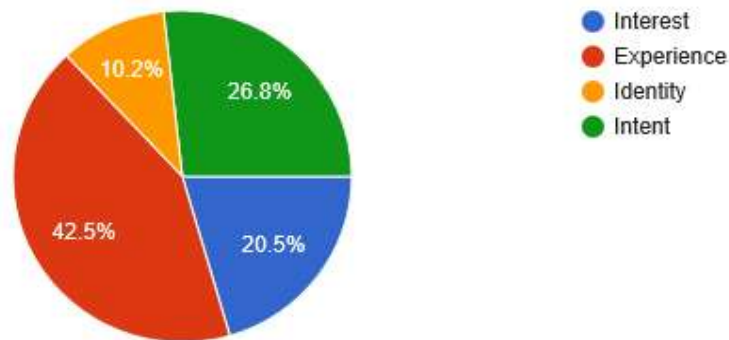
The students were asked to answer the question below in the Google Form and the pie Chart showing their responses. The four factors of Community Formation is the topic of (Unit 3) In the English for Community Development course, as listed in the class schedule heading 4.2 Table 2. The students were taught of this Unit by their various lecturers in week six in trimester 2/2018 academic year at Walailak University Nakhon Si Thammarat-Thailand-Asia. The result showing below indicates that experience is one of the significant factors affecting Community Formation; as a result, Project-based learning can high impact on the learners of English as a second language since it links theory with practice; so, student participation in the project work will give them more experience. It will attribute to high English competency. (Learning by doing approach). Tony Fadell-USA). Therefore, incorporating project-based learning in teaching learners of English as the second language is a plus in University settings. The result indicates.

Survey Question:

“Which of the four factors of community formation influenced your group's project”?

1. Interest 2. Experience 3. Identity 4. Intent

(Group =127 responses) (N=720)



### 6.3 The Pre-test Result (N=720)

The Students' Pre-test Score Statistic for trimester 2/2018 academic year

Pre-test	Vocabulary (20)	Listening (20)	Writing (20)	Reading (20)	Total (80)
Max	17.00	16.00	16.00	17.00	58.00
Min	1.00	1.00	0.00	0.00	15.00
Average	8.61	7.85	8.34	9.74	34.54
SD	2.69	2.35	3.00	2.73	7.53

### 6.4 The Post-test Result (N=720)

The Students' Post -test Score Statistic for trimester 2/2018 academic year

The students' post-test scores indicate that there has been a significant improvement in the students' English competence within three months, 12 teaching weeks one -trimester.

As a result of project-based learning, because the post-test statistics shows that the students' maximum score rises from 58.00 in the pre-test to 62.00 in the post-test, which is a significant improvement.

Post-test	Vocabulary (20)	Listening (20)	Writing (20)	Reading (20)	Total (80)
Max	19.00	17.00	15.00	18.00	62.00
Min	3.00	2.00	1.00	3.00	19.00
Average	10.58	9.37	9.42	10.78	40.15
SD	2.90	2.67	2.61	2.51	8.09

### 6.5 Students' improvement by score statistics

No. of Students' Whose Score Improved by Skill (N=720)

Skill	Post > Pre		Post = Pre		Post < Pre	
	No. of Students	%	No. of Students	%	No. of Students	%
Vocab	491	68	86	12	143	20
Listening	459	64	87	12	174	24
Reading	421	58	73	10	226	31
Writing	401	56	93	13	226	31
Overall	549	76	37	5	134	19

This score analysis helps the course coordinator to know the number of the students whose score improved by skill, as the course consists of four skills, so we use the data of the students' pre and post-test scores to identify which skills they find it difficult to understand then we place more emphasis on that skill and also invite those students to our office during consultation hours to address that weakness. This analysis has been going on each trimester, and the feedback from the students is very positive

### 6.6 Students' improvement by level statistics

No. of Students' Whose Level Improved by Skill (N=720)

Skill	Higher		Same		Lower	
	No. of Students	%	No. of Students	%	No. of Students	%
Vocab	343	48	302	42	75	10
Listening	322	45	304	42	94	13
Reading	273	38	323	45	124	17
Writing	272	38	322	45	126	18
Overall	281	39	392	54	47	7

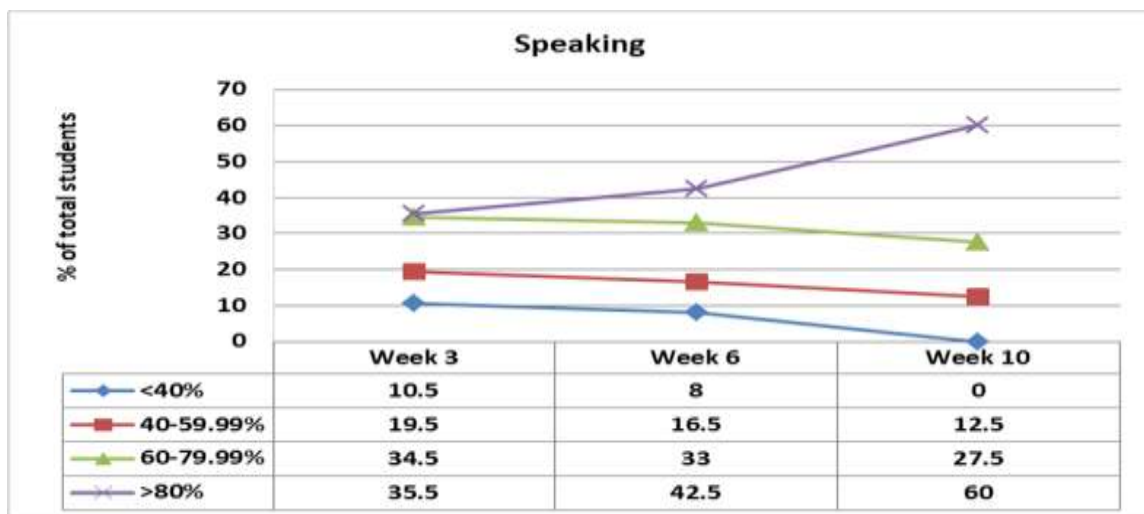
This level analysis also helps the course coordinator to know the number of the students whose score improved by level, in order to group them based on CEFR levels in order to decide which course they should enroll in the following trimester. This students' improvement by level analysis is beneficial to language teachers as it provides factual information on the students' levels to know what kind of treatment the students need.

### 6.7 The Students' speaking improvement based on the course speaking rubric.

The Three in-class speaking tests were conducted to measure the students' speaking improvement according to the project-based learning course objectives. The tasks were Held in weeks 3, 6, and week 10 the final project presentation.

**Speaking activities outline:**

**Week3:** Community Development role-plays performance. **Week 6:** Project proposal presentations. **Week 10:** Final project presentation.



**6.8 Paired Samples T-Test Result (N=720)**

A paired samples of T-test was conducted to compare the means of student’s scores before and after taking Project-based learning course (PBL) English for Community development course at WalailakUniversity in term 2/2018 academic year. There was a significant difference in the students’ scores, as shown in the table below.

Pre-test	Mean	34.54	SD	7.526
Post-test	Mean	40.15	SD	8.094
Pt-Ft	T. value	(719)=19.771		
P. value	19.771	=<.000		

**6.9 Regression Analysis Result (N=720)**

“Do students’ role play performances predict student performance in the final interview exam?” The core objectives for the Regression Analysis was to answer the question above, so the regression analysis was carried out and the result proved that the project-based learning (PBL) through’ role-play and group presentations are the useful tools to enhance the students’ English proficiency as shown in the regression analysis result below.

**Results:**R square= .152, 748. **F(1, 753) = 152.748, p = .000, B = .34**

**Answer: Yes.**

Students’ role play and the group project presentation performances can predict student performance in the final interview exam according to the Regression Analysis Result conducted in this study.

VII. DISCUSSION

Each group had an objective and motivation to work toward the objective, and the lecturer checked the progress of groups' project at regular intervals, and giving corrective feedback on the project. Stage three included the gathering of information from a variety of sources. The process and study of issues related to

community development were attempted through the cross-curricular - interdisciplinary approach. The following activities were implemented:

1. Search in a variety of information sources (Internet, and libraries).
  2. Field trips to various communities to interview individuals who are engaged, either directly or indirectly with the operation of the small groups from each section
  3. Collection of articles, fictional texts, and legends about the community development
- Stage four included analysis of data gathered, that is, selection of appropriate information and discarding of irrelevant material. Stage five was the presentation of the final project, which included:

### **7.1. Creation of a topographic map.**

1. Posting albums with photographs and comments depicting the “positive” and “negative” human interventions in the community.
2. Creation of brochures about the importance of community development.

### **7.2. PowerPoint presentation.**

The students were assigned to present their findings via Google slide and PowerPoint slides, presenting the final group’s projects in the classroom.

The final stage included an evaluation of the project. The evaluation was expressed positively and not negatively because the aim was to reflect on language and content mastered, the effectiveness of stages and activities used (Stoller, 2002; Fragoulis, 2008:54). The concentration is on whether and to what extent experiences, knowledge and skills obtained formed new values and attitudes that changed old negative behavior. These changes constitute the essence of real learning (Mezirow, 1991). Lastly, it is worth mentioning that the above activity implemented in the context of group project doesn’t constitute “ideal” or “correct” classroom practices. English lectures should be aware that what is successful in one teaching situation might not be appropriate in another. I simply wish the group project presented here to become a starting point for teachers to reflect concerning their students’ needs and interests, and motivate them to incorporate new interactive teaching methods to make teaching more enthralling and keep up with the social reality (Fragoulis and Mega, 2009).

### **7.3. Benefits from the group project**

Most cognitive, emotional and psychomotor aims of project were achieved by the majority of students. More specifically, concerning language skills, most learners’ willingness to participate in learning activities increased. They were more eager to carry out a experiment with new language skills since they were less concerned with “sounding silly” (Spada and Lightbown, 1999:31). At the end of the trimester\_2/2018 academic year, most students showed an improvement in all four language skills. Their speaking and writing skills, in particular, had most significant improvement. This was particularly necessary since it is not uncommon for students to have good knowledge of the linguistic system of the target language skills, but little listening comprehension and speaking skills, because they have not been provided with opportunities to participate in real and authentic communication activities. As far as impulse is concerned, findings seem to support the view expressed in many studies that group project results in enjoyment and a sense of self-esteem (Levine, 2004). For some students with low English proficiency, however, increased self-esteem seemed to last only for the duration of the project. It seems, therefore, that group project alone cannot adequately address issues of self-esteem. Most importantly, nonetheless, most students seemed to have acquired intrinsic motivation and interpersonal skills, participating in learning activities for “the instinctive feelings of interest and enjoyment” (Deci and Moller, 2005:582). As what a deficient performing student said: “I liked it (the project) I wish we did it more often”. Also, students gathered a wealth of information about community development from a variety of sources (books, interviews, and the web search), learned a lot about community development, and gained an in-depth understanding of issues related to community development. These findings are particularly to findings suggesting the development of content knowledge through project work (Gu, 2004). Most students’ presentation competence improved, mainly discourse competence, that is, the ability to connect sentences to form a constructive whole, and strategic competence, “the verbal and non-verbal communication strategies that may be called into action to compensate for disintegration in communication due to performance variables or due to insufficient competence” (Canale and Swain, 1980).

Their grammatical capability “knowledge of lexical items, and rules of morphology phonology, sentence-grammar, syntax, and semantics” (ibid), and sociocultural capacity (using language in a community



development context) showed less improvement, though their English skills and interpersonal skills improved dramatically, which is consistent with findings in other studies (Coleman, 1992). After the group project students knew that being a team member entailed certain obligations, most of them acquired skills for solving in-group conflicts and learned to be responsible concerning the roles assigned to them. Most importantly, all second-year students, regardless of language performance, or motivational intensity seemed to have developed their cooperative skills. Besides, their computer skills improved, mainly, the ability to use the internet to search for relevant information.

#### **7.4. Difficulties encountered**

The most crucial problem related to the fact that students were not familiar with group work. In the beginning, although clear roles for group members were assigned, some students dominated the work, while others did little job. Besides, some students did not use the target language for communication, but their mother tongue. The lecturers remedied these problems by providing cognitive modeling, completing a task while thinking aloud, modeling and illustrating effective strategies and procedures for activity completion. Another issue concerned the fact that some students felt that the duration of the project was too long. Some students happened to have lost interest and motivation by the end of the project. It appears that short-term project may have more efficacies for undergraduate students than long-term ones. Finally, some students had difficulty coping with the new role of the lecturer as a facilitator and coordinator, and not as a origin of knowledge and provider of solutions. At the beginning of the group project, some students felt uncomfortable with being given choices (e.g. topic selection, group formation), and were thus apprehensive about group the project. However, most of them eventually realized that the lecturers were there to support and assist them, albeit in a different way.

### VIII. CONCLUSION

It is essential to acknowledge the limitation of this research. Due to the small number of participants (Lecturers) and the fact that we present findings from just one trimester, care should be taken in generalizing the research findings.

The activities conferred in the article are a different way of teaching English as a second language, adopting exploratory learning's pedagogical principles. Students acquire knowledge through a course of "building" it, form groups, cooperate, use authentic, "real" information sources, method and evaluate them, take initiatives, and make decisions. They developed autonomy learning skills because they have choices and create a sense of control and responsibility for their learning by approaching education in a way that suits their "abilities, styles and preferences" (Skehan, 1998: 273).

The lecturers who implemented the project stated that their experience was extremely important. Despite university infrastructure and resources available and lack of experience in the group project, their initial fears and insecurity were finally overcome. They evaluated positively the potential extended by the group project approach and expressed the need for systematic training in the technique.

An implication for further research is exploring the relationship between short-term project work and students' Communicative competence and the project's effect on students' self-esteem with low performance. The pedagogical implications are clear. Education is not extended with impersonal teaching methods and educational tools. The teacher is an indispensable source of inspiration and encouragement, a "living example" to students. Besides, knowledge of modern teaching methods and willingness to experiment with non-traditional teaching practices are powerful tools for achieving teaching goals, such as increased motivation, interest, and performance in the hands of teachers in the context of English as second language instruction.

### IX. DECLARATION

The author declares there is no conflict of interest associated with this research

**Data availability:** On request



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