PROBLEM-BASED LEARNING TECHNIQUE IN DEVELOPINGTHE INITIAL FLIGHT ATTENDANT STUDENTS' SPEAKING SKILLS

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Abstract

The objectives of this study were (1) To identify the most common communication problems found by the flight attendants in the real-life working situation, (2) To investigate how problem-based learning technique can be used to develop the students' speaking skills, and (3) To analyze what the development of the students' speaking skills is. The subjects were 24initial flight attendant students who attended the initial English class in Garuda Indonesia Training Center on February, 2015. The instruments employed in this study were interviews, observations and support by the documentation

Key Words: Problem based Learning, Speaking

1. INTRODUCTION

Many qualifications are required to be a flight attendant and one of the most is to have a strong communication and problem solving skills, especially in English. However, in reality communication problems often arise when between the flight attendant and the passenger are not able to synchronize their ideas. In addition, inability to understand others' needs and misinterpret others' ideas or questions may lead to a conflict. For example: when the flight attendant fails to convince the elderly passenger who sit next to the emergency window to move or when the flight attendant fails to provide a clear and short safety briefing to the blind passenger.

After completing the recruitment process, candidates of Garuda Indonesia's flight attendant are transferred to the Garuda Indonesia Training Center (GITC) for further training processes. The training generally lasts approximately 3 months and it will divide into two major parts, namely safety and service training. The major emphasis of the overall training is the safety training which is become the main concern of all airlines. It required by all trainees to be completed first in order to obtain the flight crew license and to continue to service training. In addition there are many subjects to be trained during the service training, and English is one of the important subjects which takes the about 40 hours and emphasizes on pronunciation and speaking skills related to in-flight service and how to manage problems.

However, as proposed byChuanchaisit & Prappal, cited in Nguyet[18]that after learning English for many years, students cannot communicate confidently or succeed to meet the demand to use English for their carrier,. This problem also becomesone of the common problems for flight attendant students in Garuda Indonesia training center. After being trained, their speaking skill is still under the expectation. Thanh Ha, cited in Nguyet[19] explained that some possible reasons for learners' inefficiency in communication are, the low levels of language proficiency, lack of vocabulary to express their ideas, shyness or lack of confidence, lack of environment for practicing and using English or simply lack of some necessary strategies to maintain a conversation.

In answering the problems mentioned above and dealing with time constrain therefore an innovative and accurate technique to prepare students for spontaneous communication is one of the biggest challenges for English instructors in Garuda training

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[18] Nguyen Thi Nguyet. 2012. *Teaching Conversational Strategies Through Video Clips.* Chan Tho University, Vietnam.p.32

[19] Ibid. p. 33

center. Unfortunately, for many years this training center occupies the teachers-centered and subject-focused with less giving the students the real conversation problemsin performing their duties. They also do not give the opportunity to develop their own creative conversational models to face problems because all the models are taken from the books that are given by the English instructors. This condition leads to the situations where students only passively read dialogues, drill the expressions and perform them in role plays or simulations. Moreover, the teaching-learning becomes less challenging due to the use only one text book focused.

Based on this reason, this research has developed a technique in teaching that can be used in developing the Garuda Indonesia initial flight attendant students' speaking skills in Garuda Indonesia Training Center. Thereforethe researcher introduced problems-based learning technique (PBL) to apply in the classroom.

PBL focuses the learning to student-center which is supported by Bighell[20]: "Problems-based learning shift the focus of learning from the tutor to the student with the student in control of his/her own learning under the guidance of the tutor". By controlling their own learning the students can actively practice the conservation without any hesitation to create their own models but still under the tutor control. The learning process in PBL class starts with problems as Fogarty[21] explains that "Problems as the basis for depth learning where collected from real-life problems that ill-structured which are sometimes complex and with a number of interrelated concerns. Problems and how to handle them are very crucial matters in PBL. The problems chose have to be related to the area of learning, in this case in-flight problems, how to handle the passengers before take-off, during flight and after landing.

In line withBighell and Fogarty, the researcher assumes that implementing PBL technique will be able to encourage students in learning and because of all of the students are adult learners, so they are responsible with their own learning; the pleasant class condition will also support them to be more active to speak. Moreover the students can practice their own dialogues despite focus only those from the book. By several examples of problems, they learn how to handle them so that their creative thinking emerge to create they own dialogue models. Learning process in PBL class will start with exposing the students with problems which are collected by interviewing the senior flight attendants to get the real-life problems. Then, in a small group consists of four students, the problems will be analyzed, after the brainstorming and reviewing other related knowledge, the students start to create the dialogue models and practice regularly.

2. METHOD

This researchwas conducted at the Initial Flight Attendant students' English class, in Garuda Indonesia Training Center, DuriKosambi, Cengkareng, west Jakarta. The participants are the initial flight attendant studentswith age around 19 to 25 years. They have a wider range of live experiences and knowledge to drawn on. Most of them have been exposed by English language for nine years in the formal education where the emphasis is not on communication. All of them are high- motivated, discipline and have a clear understanding of why they have to learn and able to sustain their motivation. This research was conducted on the first week of February 2015. It conducted based on the following time schedule which has been conditioned with the training schedule in Garuda Indonesia Training Center.

This research applies qualitative approach where the topic needs to be explored and the research questions start with 'what' and 'how' as two of the qualitative research characteristics purposed by Creswell, cited in Suparman[22].Class Action Research (CAR) was conducted for three cycles which implemented Barrow's seven steps, as follows:

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[20] BighellSimon. 2010. *Best Practices in Virtual Words Teaching: A Guide to Use Problem Based Learning*. University of Derby, UK. p. 4

[21]RobinFogharty. 2010*. Problem- Based Learning: Other Curriculum Models for the Multiple Intelligences Classroom*. Hawker Brownlow Education. p. 4

[22]UjangSuparman. 2009. *Qualitative Research for Language Teaching and Learning.* Arfindo Raya. Bandung. p.24.

1. In this first step the researcher did the interview part I. The researcher will interview 20 flight attendants who have more than 4 year experience. The aim is to get the real communication problems when interacting with the passengers in the real working condition.
2. While the other instructor, Mr.Uton was teaching, the researcher did the class observation to assess the students speaking skills as the initial assessment. The aim is to get the starting data of the students' speaking skills based on conceptual or ideas, lexical or vocabulary, syntactical or grammatical and phonological or pronunciation point of views before implementing the PBL. The data will also be used for initialgrouping purposes.
3. The researcher conducted as the tutor in PBL class based on Barrow's steps in implementing the PBL. She did the PBL class in three cycles where each cycle took ninety minutes. She applied the Barrow's steps as follows:defining the problems;then dividing the class in to small groups consist of four; analyzing the problem; doingthe brain storming and discuss;learning and practising independently; and the last step is one group has to simulate the dialogue in front of the class and the other students are listening and giving suggestion or making correction if necessary.
4. While conducting the PBL class in cycle one, two and three, the researcher did the observations when the students are performing the dialogue with partners. Recording and video-tapping is conducted to get the data. Then, transcribed, analyzed and categorized based on the students' errors in conceptual, lexical, syntactical and phonological point of views. Further, the students' errors in cycle one, two and three are compared to see the development. If the errors decreased meant that the students' speaking skills developed.
5. After cycle three of the PBL class has been done, the researcher did the interview part II. The researcher interviewed all the students to investigate how PBL can be used todevelop their speaking skills. The interview is based on the interview guide, which then recorded to get the authentic data.

3. FINDING AND DISCUSSION

What are the common communication problems encountered by the flight attendant when interacting with passengers in the real working situation?

This first research question is answered by conduction interview part I which have done before the training schedule begun**.**The data obtained from the interview part I was shown in the following table.

Table1**.** The common communication problems encountered by the flight attendant when interacting with passengers in the real working situation

Participants	ID number	Years working experience	Common Communication problems When interacting with passengers
P 1	521458	7	Double sitting problem Mobile phone using problem Large baggage managing problem Sales on board problem
P2	525856	5	Seat changing Double sitting Asking/giving information Large baggage problem Mobile phone using problem
P3	525438	5	Double sitting problem Mobile phone using problem Large baggage managing problem Sales on board problem

P4	520541	8	Sales on board problem Mobile phone using Double sitting Large baggage managing
P5	525874	5	Double sitting problem Mobile phone using problem Large baggage managing problem Sales on board problem
P6	525842	5	Mobile phone using problem Large baggage managing problem Double sitting problem Sales on board problem
P7	525758	5	Sales on board problem Double sitting problem Mobile phone using problem Large baggage managing problem
P8	525876	5	During meals serving Large baggage managing problem Mobile phone using
P9	524321	6	Double sitting problem Sales on board problem Mobile phone using problem Large baggage managing problem During meals serving
P10	522742	6	Mobile phone using problem Double sitting problem Large baggage managing problem Sales on board problem

Table 1. shows that all of the participants are senior flight attendants who have more than 5 year experiences working as Garuda Indonesia flight attendants. The reason why she chose the senior flight attendants is to have various descriptions of communication problems that they have ever facedwhen interacting with the passengers.

The data of the common communication problems faced by the flight attendants, then divided the into three categories, namely,communication problems occurring before taking-off, during flight and after landing, which are described as follows:
1. Communication problems occurred before taking-off
2. Communication problems occurred during flight
3. Communication problems occurred after landing

How problem-based learning can be used to develop   the learners' speaking ability?

This second research question is answered by conducted interview part II and proved by documentation. The researcher did the interview on the last day of the English training after all students are treated by problem-based learning. . It was then analyzed and presented in the following table:

Table2. How Problem-based Learning can be used to develop The students' speaking skills

N0	How PBL can develop students' speaking skills	Participants	Description
1	Practices	24	All students said that doing many practices can develop their speaking skills
2.	Spontaneous reaction	5	Five students said that spontaneous reaction in facing the real problem make them more fluent in English
	Small group discussion	20	Twenty students said that learning in

3.	(4 students in group)		small group consisted of four students made them to be more active in speaking and avoid shyness
4.	Real-life problems	12	Twelve students said that real-life problems can descript the real working situation to prepare their readiness in interacting with the passengers
5.	Enjoyable class environment	17	Seventeen students said that enjoyable class environment can help them to be more relax and comfortable that will make them to be more active and brave to speak
6.	Express some expression	10	Ten students said that they can learn to express how to say some expression more often, such as greeting, offering, problem solving, and thanking
7.	Critical thinking in solving problems	15	Fifteen students said that they can learn how to solve the problem quickly, example: how they can handle double sitting problem, how they can offers the SOB items and how they can solve thepassenger with a large baggage
8.	Confidence and motivation	20	Twenty students said that PBL class can make them to be more confidence in speaking because they have practice the dialogue many times and motivate them to practice more often
9.	Related to other knowledge	9	Nine students said that problems sometimes related with other knowledge, such as cabin practice, food and beverage, and product knowledge. So, they have to prepare their selves with other knowledge to be able to speak confidently
10.	The tutor	8	Eight students said that the tutor playedvery important roles in choosing the challenging problems, grouping the students in a small group, directing and monitoring the students in order to make the teaching learning process run actively and smoothly.

Table3. shows that problem-based learning can be used to develop students' speaking skills because of the opportunityto do many practices that make them to be more confidence in speaking;learning in a small group consists of four students makes them to be more active in speaking, avoid shyness and also motivate them to practice dialogue more often; learning in enjoyable class environment can help them to be more relax and comfortable that will make them to be more active and brave to speak; having spontaneous reaction in facing the real problem make them more fluent in speaking; exposing by real-life problems can descript the real working situation to prepare their readiness in interacting with the passengers; having critical thinking and problem solving skills can help them to solve the problem in a quick way; relating with other knowledge can help them to prepare their selves to be able to speak confidently; and the tutor existing to direct and guide them and also to choose the challenging problems, divide the class in a small group, is very important in order to make the teaching learning process runs actively and smoothly.

How does the development of the students' speaking skills to overcome the communication problems when interacting with the passenger?

This research question is answered by conducting four class observations.The data

obtained from the four class observationsare in the form of short duration of video clips and audio recording. The data then, transcribed and analyzed based on the students' speaking errors in some point of views, namely: conceptualerror involves an unclear idea or message stated by the speaker; lexical errorinvolves inappropriate choosing words, syntactical errorinvolves inappropriate grammatical rules, such as word order, subject verb agreement; and the phonological errorinvolves inappropriate in pronouncing words.

However, in the second, third and fourth observation the researcher also observedthe politeness errors because politeness became one of the important things in a formal dialogue when interacting with the passengers. Thus, in the third and fourth observation, the body language errors also observed as the teaching and learning conducted in the cabin mock-up or like-real situation where body language needed to be applied when interacting with the passengers.

First Observation
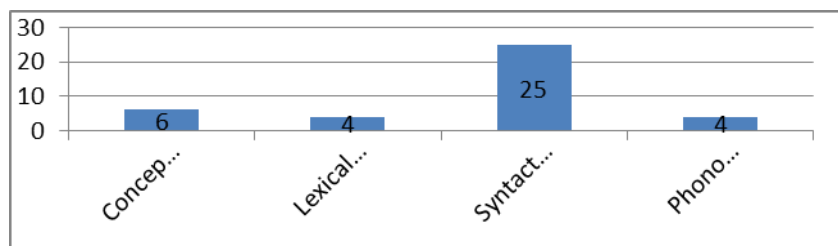
Figure1 Observation I Classification of Participants' Errors in Speaking

Figure1. shows that in the first observation the researher found six conceptualerrors, four lexical errors, twenty five sytactical errors and four phonological errors.

Second Observation

She conducted the obsevationwhileimplementing the PBL in cycle one. She acted as the tutor which had to direct and guide the PBL process. She implemented the Barrow's steps after being modify based on the needs, as follows:finding the problem, organizing small group discussion, analyzing and brainstorming,performing the dialogue, doing many practices.

The data obtained from this second observation was in the form of short duration video which then trnscribed, analyzed and catagoriesed the errors. Furher the finding presented in the data presentation below:
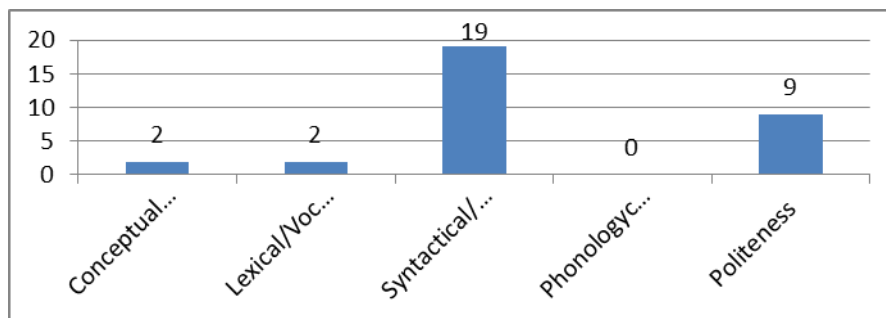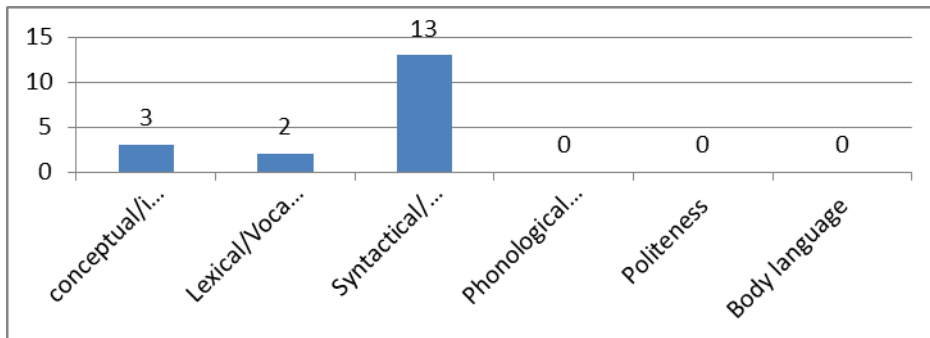

Figure.2. Observation II Classification of Participants' Errors in Speaking

Figure 2 shows that in the second obeservation thereseacher found two conceptual errors, two lexical errors, nineteen grammatical errors and zero phonological errors and nine politenss errors.

Third Observation

The third observation conducted the in the cabin mock- up to expose the students to the real working condition. The researcher conducted the obsevationwhile implementing the PBL

in cycle two.   She acted as the tutor which has to direct and guide the PBL process. She also implemented the Barrow's idea, as follows: finding the problem, organizing small group discussion, analyzing and brainstorming,performing the dialogue, doing many practices. The data obtained from this third observation was in the form of short duration videos which then to be trnscribed, analyzed and catagoriesed the errors.   The findings, presented in the data presentation below:

Figure3. Observation III Classification of Participants' Error in Speaking

   Figure3. shows that in the third obeservation the reseacher found three conceptual errors, two lexical errors, 13 grammatical errors and 0 phonological errors and 0 politenss errors and 0 body language eorror

Fourth Observation

      In accordance with the third observation, thisobservation conducted the in the cabin mock- up to present like-real working condition. She conducted the obsevation while in same time acted as the tutor which has to direct, guide the learning process. Barrow's idea was the based of the PBL process, as follows: finding the problem, organizing small group discussion, analyzing and brainstorming,performing the dialogue, doing many practices. The data obtained from this fourth observation was in the form of short duration videos which then to be trnscribed, analyzed and catagoriesed the students' errors. The finding presented in the data presentation below.
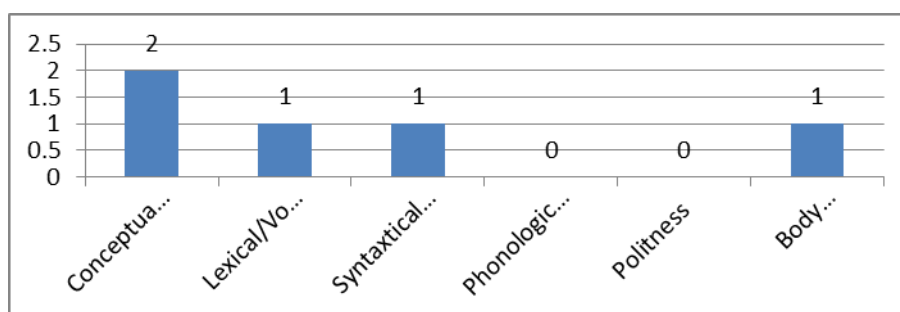

Figure 4. Observation IV Classification of Participants' Error in Speaking

   Figure4. shows that in the fourth obeservation the reseacher found two conceptual errors, one lexical errors, one grammatical errors and zero phonological error and zero politenss error and one body language eorror. Based on the four observations data above, the development of the students'speaking ability to solve the common problems when interacting with the passengers can be identified as follows:
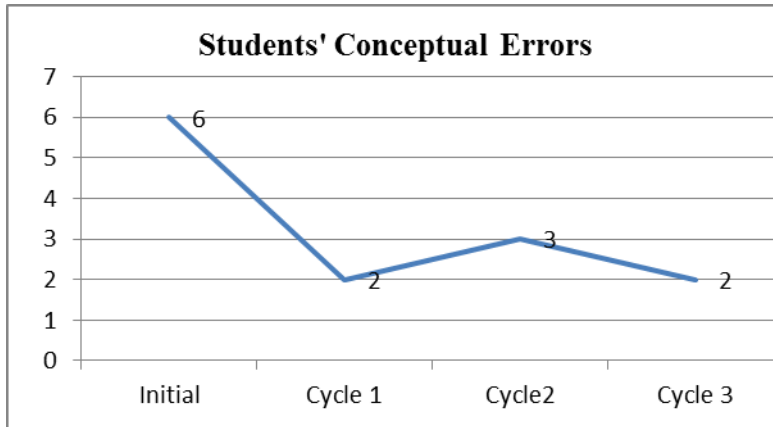
Figure 5 Student's Conceptual Development

Figure 4.5 shows that the student's conceptual errors in speaking decreased, from six to two errors. Therefore it can be said that the initial flight attendant students' speaking skills in the term conceptual point of view has developed.
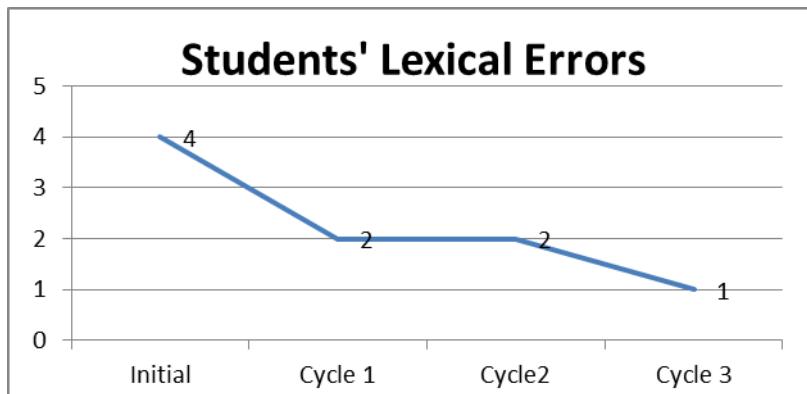

Figure 6. Student's Lexical Development

Figure 6 shows that the students errors in lexical point of view decreased, form four to one. This, indicated that the students'speaking skills in the term of lexical point of view has developed. In line with the second research question this development might be caused by many factors, such as intensive exposure of the real situation and students motivation to practice as often as possible and tutor guidance in correcting the lexical errors .
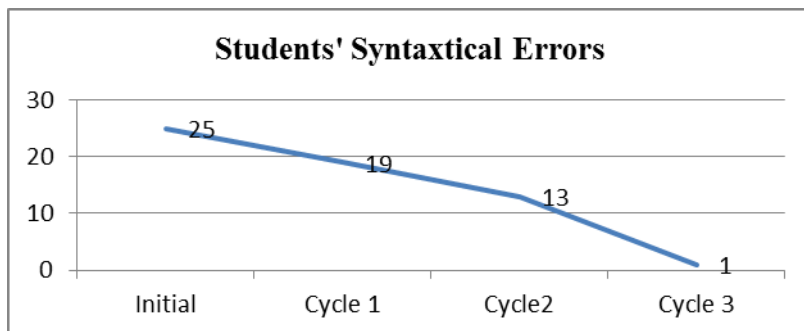

Figure 7 Students' Syntactical Development

Figure 7. shows sharply decrease in students' syntaxtical errors. Strating with twenty-five errors in the initail observation to only one error in the last observation. It indicated that the students' speaking skills in the term ofsyntactical point of view has developed. The development might be caused by the students' self awarness of grammar increased sharply.
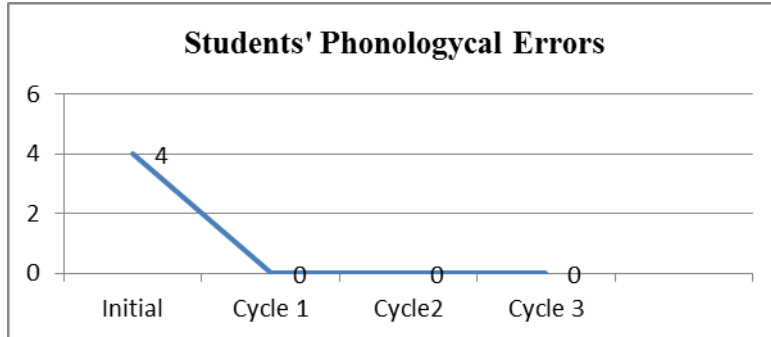

Figure8. Students' Phonological Development

Figure8 shows that the phonological errorsdecreased. This situation indicated that the students' speaking skills in therm of phonological point of view has developed. It can be seen that from the three cycles the phonological errors remained in zero point.
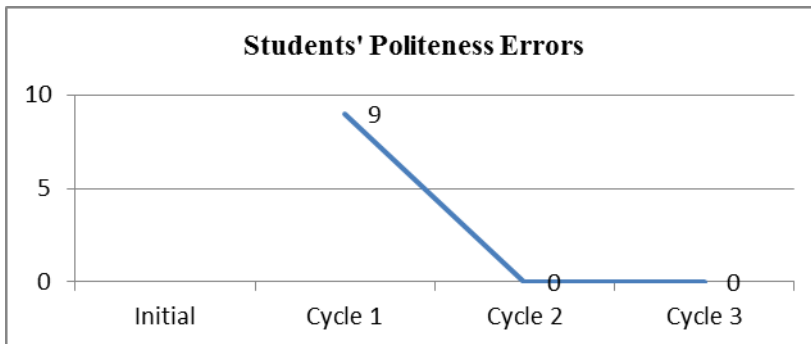

Figure9. Students' Politeness Development

Figure 9. shows that politeness errors decreased. It indicated that the students made progress in the term of politeness such as using the word "ok" or others impolite expression. This, might happened due to the intensive pratice and experiencing the real situation.
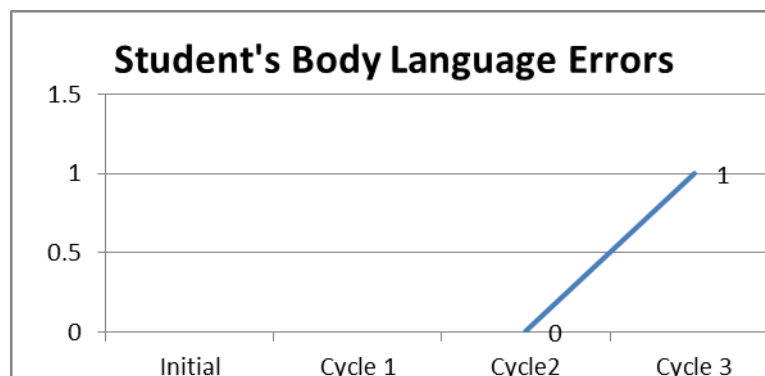

Figure10. Student's body language development

The application of body language when interacting with the passengers are to be observed in the cycle 2 and cycle 3 when the classes were conducted in the cabin mock-up with like-real situation. Body language involves the eye contact, kneeling posisition, and charming face.   Figure10 shows that students errors in term of body language applied increased. However, after being deeply analized this condition caused by individual errors. The student who did not apply the body language properly was catagorised as aslow- student. It also found that this student is shy and not too active in learning.

Discussion

After conducting the first inetrview, It was found that there are some communicating problems that commonly occurred in the situation of before take-off, in-flight and after take-off, that should be faced by the flight attendant in the real working situation. In line with the previuos research it found that speaking and listening were the most important language skills for the flight attendants in real-life working condition when communicating with the passengers.   Harmonious communication between sender and speaker does not occur automatically where speaking and listening skills played an important role.

Regarding problems, the finding of previous research by Varkaris explained that problems as the basis of PBL learning process must be in relation with the areas of learning. Therefore, to obtain the real-life problems the researcher had conducted this interview part I. In addition after defining the real-life problems, other previous researchers used those problem to develop the subject in-dept knowledge but in the other hand, in this research the researcher used those problems as basis for all the students to create and practice their own dialogue where it was never been done by other researchers before.

After being observed in four class observations PBL can be used not only to develop their speaking skills but alsoproblem solving skills,critical thinking and self-confidance. Therefore how PBL can be used to develop the students' speaking skills described as follows:because of the opportunityto do many practices that make them to be more confidence in speaking;learning in a small group consists of four students makes them to be more active in speaking, avoid shyness and also motivate them to practice dialogue more often; learning in enjoyable class environment can help them to be more relax and comfortable that will make them to be more active and brave to speak; having spontaneous reaction in facing the real problem make them more fluent in speaking; exposing by real-life problems can descript the real working situation to prepare their readiness in interacting with the passengers; having critical thinking and problem solving skills can help them to solve the problem in a quick way; relating with other knowledge can help them to prepare their selves to be able to speak confidently; and the tutor existing to direct and guide them and also to choose the challenging problems, divide the class in a small group, is very important in order to make the teaching learning process runs actively and smoothly.

The four observations conducted in this research are aimed to observe the day by day students' progress in speaking. The first observation started on the first day of the training where the focus was on the students' speaking errors in the therm of conceptual, lexical, syntaxtical and phonogical.   The finding showed that syntaxtical or grammars errors occupied the highest point. This might be caused by lack of exposure of English as the facts showed that all of the students exposed by English only on their formal school where most of the participants graduated from the Senior High School. Besides they thought that accuracy is not in their priority or they unaware of the grammar.

In the second observation, grammar errors still occupied the highest point althoughit decreased slightly.Politeness became one of the consideration in this and the following observations because to build an in-flight dialogue, between flight attendant and passenger, polite language is nedded. The third observation conducted in the cabin mock-up where the situation is like-real condition.Body language, such as performing eye contact, kneeling position and charming face, added in this third observation because the situation on the cabin mock-up was like-real condition where body language needed to perform when interacting with the passengers.The findings showed that althoughdecreased, grammar errors stills occupied the

highest point, 13 eorrors. It meant that the students' speaking skills in the term of grammar developed slightly. In term of body language, students made zero errors.

The findings of the forth observations showed a highly decreased in grammar errors. This conditions indicated that the sudents' speaking skills in the term of syntaxtical had developed. Not only the syntaxtical term but also lexical, phonological, conceptual and politness terms increased slightly. In the other hand the body language errors had increased one point. It found one students who did not apply eye contact, kneeling position or charming face, when interacting with the passengers. After being examined deeply, it was found that this student was a slow-learner and she was not active in the class.

4. CONCLUSION

In accordance with the research findings of the data analysisthe students' speaking skills in the term of contactual, lexical, snytactical, phonologycal, politeness and body langguage point of views have showed a good progress or development. Thus, it can be said that problem-based learning technique can be applied to develop the initial flight attendants students' speaking skills.

Therefore the following suggestions are recommended for the other researchers or instructorto apply problem-based learning technique in teaching the initial flight attendant students to develop their speaking skills; the learners as the subject and the institution to practice some related expressions more often in order to be more fluent as well as encouraging self learning awareness to develop speaking skills; the institution Garuda Indonesia Training Center to givegood contribution for the developing of teaching English for initial flight attendants students to be more effective and efficient to prepare them to be ready to work.