

IMPROVING STUDENTS' READING SKILL USING SELF AND PEER ASSESSMENT TECHNIQUE

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Abstract: During the process of learning English as a foreign language, students often get difficulty in the classroom. It, then, strives the teacher to find an appropriate teaching method for better learning result. One of the skills which is considered to be difficult by the students of the second grade of MTs Nurul Huda Ngadirejo Blitar is reading. One teaching technique known as Self- and Peer- Assessment as part of the authentic assessment is considered to be effective to be applied in teaching reading in order to improve the students' reading skill. The study aimed at knowing how Self- and Peer Assessment Technique can improve the students' reading skill and how the students' response toward the implementation of the technique is. The research design of the study was classroom action research with two cycles. The subject of this study was all of the second grade students of MTs Nurul Huda Ngadirejo. The instruments used to collect the data were test, observation sheet, field note, and questionnaire. In analyzing the data, the writer used descriptive qualitative and simple quantitative measurement to find out the result.

Keywords: reading skill, self and peer assessment technique

Language is an arbitrary system of articulated sounds made use by a group of human as a means of carrying on the affairs of their society. The main functions of language are to communicate and expose the human existence (Martinet, 1987). Generally, language is always connected to a spoken production produced by human organ in order to show ideas, get attention, and so forth.

Up to know, there are at least 3000 invented and identified languages in the world. Among of them are Indonesian, English, Arabic, etc. However, English is the only one which is accepted as the international language. It is used to link people around the world. When there are two persons whose language is different, they will use English as a means of communication.

In accordance with the acknowledgement of English as international language, non-spoken English countries are forced to study and learn English unless they will be left by other countries. In Indonesia, English is determined as a foreign language and it is being taught from the early stage of the school; grade one of elementary school, up to the highest stage of senior high school. Even, it

also considered as a compulsory subject to be taken in a university (Suyanto, 2007:2).

Teaching English as a foreign language in Indonesia covers the teaching of language skill such as listening, speaking, reading and writing, and the teaching of language components such as grammar, pronunciation, and vocabulary.

One of the skills which is compulsory for being trained and taught in a school is reading. Reading is useful for language acquisition. Provided that students more or less understand what they read, the more they read the better they get at it. Reading also has positive effect on students' vocabulary mastery, students' spelling, and pronunciation. Harmer (2007:99) on his book also says that reading provides a good model for writing. Teacher can show how to construct a sentence, paragraph and whole text by using reading text. From these idea, we know how important to improve reading skill is.

Looking at the importance of reading, what is happening in the classroom today is different. A case researcher found in class VIII of MTs Nurul Huda Ngadirejo is the example. From the preliminary study that the researcher has conducted in this class, the researcher found; the students seemed have no motivation in reading. When was being asked to do a certain reading text, male students preferred to have a chat with their friend in discussing something else. While, female students seemed motivated but have some difficulties in understanding the content of the reading text. This condition is compounded by a fact that the teacher still used a traditional method to teach reading. She just asked the students to read the text and answer the question without any effort to ask the students whether they knew the content of the text or not. As a consequence, the student's achievement on reading is still low. There are just 40% of the students who have a good reading skill.

In such case above, the teacher has to find a creative way to solve the problem. In this study, the researcher would like to suggest the use of a kind of authentic or performance assessment which is called self- and peer- assessment as a developed technique to teach reading. This assessment technique is basically student-centered and has the aim to help the students to enhance their learning. Authentic assessment, especially self- and peer- assessment is different from traditional assessment in a case that it is conducted during teaching and learning process.

Self- and peer- assessment, as stated by Brown (2004:270), has the main aims to increase students' responsibility and autonomy, strive for deeper understanding of the subject matters, involve students to critical reflection, and develop students' better understanding of their own subjectivity and judgment.

By those reasons, the researcher is interested to conduct a study on improving reading skill of the students of class XIII of MTs Nurul Huda Ngadirejo Blitar by using Self- and Peer- Assessment technique.

METHOD

This study was conducted in a classroom action research design. In this study, the researcher was directly involved in the process of research with the help from collaborator teacher who was the English teacher of class VIII in MTs Nurul Huda Ngadirejo and one of researcher's colleague. Researcher has a function as research mastermind and research practitioner. Collaborator teacher has function as an advisor during the study. While, the researcher's colleague has a function to observe the students' motivation in the classroom.

The subject of the study was the second grade of MTs Nurul Huda Ngadirejo which consists of 13 students. This class is chosen due to the teacher's information that the class still has low reading skill and that the technique proposed by the researcher had not been used in teaching reading.

The procedures of the study consist of preliminary observation which covers the activity of observing, identifying the students' reading skill, and interviewing the English teacher to gain needed data. The next was planning the lesson plan, preparing teaching material and determining the criteria of success. The third procedure was implementing Self- and Peer-Assessment technique in teaching reading. During the process of implementing, researcher also conducted an observation to observe the students' progress and motivation. The last procedure was reflecting. It is the activity of analyzing the change of the students as the result of the applied technique and comparing the result with the criteria of success. The criteria of success of this study were; a) if 85% of the students get the score ≥ 65 in the test which is administered in every end of a cycle, b) if the students' motivation being taught by the applied strategy is $\geq 80\%$. When the result is still far from the criteria of success, researchers has to revise the plan based on the drawbacks found in previous implementation. However, if the result has met the criteria of success, researcher can stop the research.

The data in this research were the students' score and the result of the questionnaire toward the students' motivation in the classroom being taught by using Self- and Peer-Assessment technique. To obtain the students' score on reading, researcher used test that were preliminary test and test given in the end of the cycle. Then, to gain the data related to the students' motivation, researcher made a list of questions to be answered by the students.

Preliminary test was given on Wednesday 28th March 2012. The test consisted of 20 items in the form of multiple choices which have five choices A, B, C, D, and E. Besides, there were also tests which were administered in the end of cycle I and cycle II. Test cycle I was administered on April 9 2012 which consisted of 10 questions; 5 open-ended questions and 5 true-false questions. Test cycle II was administered on April 17 2012. The test consisted on 10 questions in the form of open-ended questions.

In the end of the research, researcher distributed the questionnaire in the form of closed questionnaire consisted of seven questions. The students only needed to choose yes or no answer.

To analyze those data, researcher used simple quantification to analyze quantitatively the students' score and the students' motivation. In analyzing the data, researcher took the formula as stated by Kurniawati (2011:64) that is:

1. $\% X = \frac{x}{N} \times 100\%$, to analyze the students' score
2. $\% X = \frac{x}{N} \times 100\%$, to analyze the students' motivation.

FINDINGS

As stated earlier, the criteria of success of this study covered two aspects that were; the students' reading score and the students' motivation in the classroom. In this subheading, researcher will present the findings of the research.

Cycle I

Cycle I consisted of four meetings. Meeting 1, 2, and 3 were teaching and learning process, while fourth meeting was used for administering the test. It is found that in the first cycle, the students were still had low awareness to participate actively in the process of teaching and learning. They were also did not maximize their time to do the task given. The percentage of the students' motivation in the classroom was only 74%. While, in the first test on cycle I which was administered on fourth meeting, it found that there were only 8 students who could reach the score equal to or more than 65. It means that there were only 61% of the students could meet the criteria of success. As a result, the researcher needs to move to the next cycle because in this cycle the study has not met the criteria success.

Some strength and weaknesses of the first cycle are elaborated in the table below:

Weaknesses	Strengths
1. Students' were still not used to the technique applied by teacher	1. The students were enthusiast to follow classroom activities.
2. Some smart students preferred to have a smart student to be a peer, while student with lower intelligence had no chance to study with the highest one.	2. Students' curiosity toward the topic was good; they often raised questions.
3. There were some students from class VII who disturbed teaching and learning process.	3. Teacher could build the students' readiness before teaching and learning was started.
	4. Teacher could make a warm atmosphere in which she often made a joke.

From the process of reflection in the first cycle, researcher with observers decided to go to the next cycle with some improvements as follow:

1. Gave much more motivations so that students could adapt with the new technique applied.

2. Decided the member of the peer in order to reach the heterogeneity with the hope that smart student could help the lower one more effectively.
3. Gave students more chance to maximize their ability by asking them to create questions and answers independently.
4. Teacher actively moved from one student or peer to others in order to give more feedback and help.
5. Teacher changed the students' seating arrangement in order to separate the students who were very fond to have a chat.

Cycle II

As previous cycle, Cycle II also consisted of four meetings. It found that the students were used to self- and peer-assessment. Their awareness to improve their reading was improved. They participated actively in the classroom. They also often raised some questions related to the topic. The different seating arrangement seemed effective. They were rarely to have chat with other in discussing something else. Besides, they used their time in doing the task given maximally. The percentage of the students' motivation in the classroom was 83%. While, in the second test on cycle II which was administered on fourth meeting, it found that there were 11 students who could reach the score equal to or more than 65. It means that there were 85% of the students who could meet with the criteria of success.

Among of the positive findings in the second cycle were:

1. The students were very active in asking some questions which had relation with the topic
2. There were some students who asked the teacher for helping them to improve their pronunciation and intonation in reading English. They had a will to spend their break time to learn together with teacher.
3. There was shy student who seemed had more passion to speak in the classroom.
4. The heterogeneity of students in a peer seemed very effective. Smart student could help teacher in explaining the topic to his friends.
5. Time allotment in doing the task was very effective. Students used their time maximally to do the task given.

Below is the list of the students' reading score on both test cycle I and test cycle II.

Code of the Student	Preliminary Test	Cycle I	Cycle II
A-1	40	58	60
A-2	45	70	84
A-3	40	56	74
A-4	60	70	84
A-5	75	100	98
A-6	45	55	70
A-7	65	86	100
A-8	50	65	88
A-9	65	63	88

A-10	40	65	74
A-11	40	65	74
A-12	50	65	84
A-13	45	60	64
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% of students get score \geq 65	31%	61 %	85%

DISCUSSION

In this study, there were some findings in the first and second cycle which will be discussed by the researcher in the following section:

Using Self And Peer Assessment Technique

Grouping The Students Into Peer

When the students were being asked to work collaboratively in a peer, it was needed to group them into a peer. It was also needed when the student work independently but in peer-correction. The grouping was very important in the case that working collaboratively through doing the task together or through checking their own and other works could indirectly force the students to think more deeply about the topic. It, then, could help them for getting deeper understanding.

Giving A Task

The next step was giving the students a problem in the form of some questions. The problem was needed because there would be no any learning process if there were no any problems. Questions or problems which were given for students must be well-prepared before being given to students.

Discussing on The students' Work

After giving the students some problems, it was needed to discuss the problems together with the students. The students were given a chance to check theirs and others work before teacher did this. Teacher must also motivate students to give comment on theirs or others work. In the process of discussing the reading text, teacher had to be able to stimulate the students to show on which part they found the relevance information in the text.

Giving Feedback

Giving feedback was very important during the process of teaching and learning. Teacher's feedback could be in the form of giving encouragement or motivation, suggestion, and solution to solve the students' problem.

Students' Progress on Reading

The result of the students' score from preliminary test until second test in the second cycle improved significantly. The table below shows the improvement of students' reading skill being taught by using self- and peer-assessment technique:

Table 4.3 Result of the Implementation of Self- and Peer-Assessment

No	Criteria Success	Target	Cycle I	Cycle II
1	Students' score on reading test	85%	61%	85%
2	Students' motivation in the classroom	80%	74%	83%

Students Response to The Applied Strategy

The students response toward the applied strategy was vary. Most of the students liked to check their own work, check their friend work, create their own questions and answers, assess themselves by filling self-assessment checklist, and do the test which taken from students' created test. However, they did not like if they were being asked to do the task given by their friends because, sometimes, their friends' hand writing was not readable.

CONCLUSION

Reviewing at the result of the study, researcher concluded that the increase of the students' reading skill had happened after being taught by using self- and per-assessment technique. It was proven by the comparison between the result of preliminary test and the last test on cycle II in which the result test in the second cycle (85%) was higher than the result in the preliminary test (31%). It shows us, the use of self- and peer-assessment technique could improve the students' reading skill. Moreover, the students' response toward the applied strategy was also good. They liked to check their own and their friend's work. They liked to create their own questions and answers and to assess themselves by filling self-assessment checklist. Moreover, they liked to do the test in which taken from students' created test.

Based on the above conclusion, the English teachers are suggested to give variations on their teaching technique so that the students always have an interest to come to the next meeting, always give direct feedback to give motivation, suggestion, or solution toward the students' problem, give variations on the problems given in order to widen the students' horizon and in order to prepare them to be able to be skillful in solving a various problems, know the characteristics each of the students in order to help them to solve their learning problem, and maximize the students' capability by using teaching technique which provides them with a lot of activities in which directly involve the students during the process of teaching and learning.

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