

BUZZ GROUP-BASED STRATEGY IN EFL READING CLASSROOM

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Abstract

The intention of this study is to describe the effectiveness of buzz group in EFL reading classroom of English Department students of PGRI University. The comprehension analysis is intended by comparing the answer of EFL reading classroom students in reading exercises. In order to sequence the reading comprehension of the EFL reading classroom the pre-test and post-test of reading exercises are measured. The experiment of reading comprehension includes the recruitment of 40 students of EFL reading classroom, the training, and exercising of reading text in reading exercises. These students are all first-year female teacher training students at PBI-UPY and aged between 17 and 23. The measurement is compare with pre-test and post-test of reading exercises. Standard measurement is comparison of students answer in pre-test and post-test of reading exercises.

Keywords: *buzz group based, EFL, non-native reading comprehension*

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

A. Background of the Study

Students in Indonesia are brought up by families who live in a country where various forms of social and political inequality are experienced, a reality that is not different in any other country. In such a sociopolitical environment, a world view is always attached to the values or knowledge pieces given to these students. Marx (1968: 183) states that “it is not the consciousness of men that determines their being, but, on the contrary, their social being that determines their consciousness.

The combination of the aforementioned reality with Marx’ statement leads us to the conclusion that the social being constructed in families and through schooling feeds the consciousness of the student, thus, real change towards creating a just society is becoming more and more difficult since the formation of the mind of the youth by family and schooling happens between what we may call through the famous pendulum effect. In short, the writer argue that the harmful effects of TV shows, newspapers, political agenda of various neo-liberal conservative political parties on family and social values is constantly supported by course books, leaving almost no place to experience and examine alternative ways of re-structuring the social environment.

This situation is most tense when the recent increase in nationalist spirit pumped into teenagers is examined. As a teacher educator, the writer note that although it is more difficult now to set up critical education in classrooms, the need for such an activity is even more pressing. As such, the writer start my work with the course books with which we teach, to examine what kind of a world is tailored for my students. This resistant activity is first pedagogically important because the pre-service teachers with whom the writer study gain a lot of insight through such activity which as Kincheloe (2004) claims to “resist dominant power by exposing and subverting it within schools.”

Similar to many teachers of English as a foreign or second language, I have used numerous course books not only to follow administrative decisions, but also because of my belief grounded in my experiences with course books as valuable instructional materials. As my experiences suggest, course books present a smooth-running curricular program for the teaching of the essential and necessary items of the language taught with which one cannot lose his or her way as a teacher. Course books still continue to be the single most important resource in the language classroom throughout the world. Hence, the importance of course books in the professional lives of the ELT practitioners is obvious. In many classrooms, course books and their components make up the only instructional material used in the classroom.

The on-line voting system opened by BBC collects ELT practitioners views on the frequency of ELT teachers' use of course books and shows that about only 6% of the 310 voters claim that they never use course books in their classrooms although those claim that they use course books more than half of the classroom time makes up 79% of the teachers.

(See: http://www.teachingenglish.org.uk/talk/vote/vote4_coursebooks.shtml).

It was long after the writer started teaching and using course books the writer noticed and verbalized that teaching with course books had another advantage which was that course books expanded our general knowledge more than any material or activity with which we were engaged within or outside our classrooms. As teachers of English, we are able to talk about tourism, foods, habits, culture and history, and psychology-especially with the knowledge we get from our course books. It can also be said that as foreign language teachers, we have a unique chance of facing multiplicity of topics on our daily activities since the course books we use are full of a variety of topics of reading passages. The help we get from our course books is beneficial, simply because we are aware that, as can be seen in the words of Stubbs (1982:138), English teachers have always been 'responsible not only for the linguistic development of their pupils, but also for their psychological, moral and interpersonal development-and to expect them also to provide a world view and philosophy of life.' In short, course books are not instructional materials only, but they are sources of knowledge and information on various aspects of individual and societal phenomena.

B. Formulation of the Problem

This study will explore reading comprehension of EFL students and to try to answer two questions:

1. Does buzz group-based enhance the reading ability of EFL college students?
2. How is the effectiveness of reading strategy training related to the reading proficiency of the students?

C. Research Outputs

The experimental research has following outputs:

1. This model of measurement can be applied in teaching reading.
2. This study offers variety of teaching learning process in reading classroom.
3. Describe the difficulty and also the solution in EFL reading classroom.

D. Objectives of the Study

The objectives of the study are mentioned as follows:

1. To describe the improvement of reading proficiency.
2. To figure out the effectiveness of buzz group-based in EFL reading class.

E. Significances of the Study

The significances of this study are:

1. Teachers are able to measure the level of students' proficiency in reading comprehension.
2. Students are able to improve their ability and skill in reading comprehension.

CHAPTER II

PREVIOUS STUDIES AND THEORETICAL REVIEW

A. Previous Studies

Previous works related to the English reading comprehension more specifically in reading strategy in many countries in which English is still considered as a second or foreign language. Many scholars have described the strategy to improve reading comprehension for EFL students. Nonetheless, Studies about reading strategy in improving reading comprehension have rarely been conducted by Javanese or Indonesian teacher. In Indonesia, studies about reading strategy are focus on the same strategy with different subjects. There are only few researches related to the study.

Alfiyani (2012) writes about the use of metacognitive strategy in teaching reading for the eleventh grade students of SMAN 2 Kudus. She finds that the reading ability of the eleventh grade students of SMA N 2 Kudus in the academic year 2011/2012 after being taught by using Metacognitive Strategy is better than the reading ability of the eleventh grade students of SMA N 2 Kudus in the academic year 2011/2012 before being taught by using Metacognitive Strategy. Another Indonesian researcher, Galih (2010) writes about SQ3R reading strategy helps tenth graders of SMA Negeri 1 Srengat, Blitar, and East Java to solve their problems in reading descriptive texts. He finds that SQ3R reading strategy could help improve the students' ability in reading descriptive texts by providing a structured approach for reading activities.

According to the previous explanation, in Indonesia, researches related to reading strategy in improving reading comprehension of English as a second language have rarely been done. English reading strategy of Indonesian learners is an interesting topic to study for researchers. Thus, it can be concluded that this research is relatively new and needs to be conducted. This research will give novel contribution to ELT and other second language learning in Indonesia.

B. Theoretical Framework

1. Basic Concept of Reading

Teaching EFL reading is a bit different than the way native speakers are taught to read. While vocabulary is an important part of reading, teaching the reading skills of surveying, skimming, scanning, inference, predicting and guessing are just as important. Research tends to indicate that a student's reading comprehension can be improved by focusing on teaching students skills in the following areas:

a. Vocabulary

Many languages do not have the word building concepts that English does. In teaching vocabulary, the idea of “root” words and prefixes and suffixes helps students build a larger vocabulary quickly. Affixes (prefixes and suffixes) help us create a variety of words from one base word. Many EFL students won’t recognize that *contain* is the root word of *container* and *containment* or that *desire* is the root word of *undesirable* and *desirability*. When teaching new vocabulary, it is important to point out these connections and we can quickly help students expand their vocabulary with the base words they already know. Teaching affixes is only one of several strategies for teaching vocabulary. See the links below for more.

b. **Surveying, Scanning, Skimming**

In an academic setting, we rarely read an entire text word for word. More typical is that we look at the contents of a book, the chapters, headings, subheadings, sidebars, pictures, illustrations, words in italics and bold type and dive in to find the information we need. These are the concepts of surveying, scanning and skimming, moving from the big ideas of a text down to the specific details. These are skills that EFL students don’t usually have and must be taught. The linked readings for teaching EFL reading below will give you more specifics on these skills.

c. **Guessing and Predicting from Context**

Students also need to be taught to guess the meanings of words based on the context of the reading and to draw from the reading an ability to predict what might happen in the next paragraph. Links below will lead to more information on these skills.

2. Teaching Reading

For the right focus in the teaching of reading, it is important to define it and closely examine what problems students face while reading something in English. It is difficult to define reading in a word. Many thinkers have defined and analyzed it in many different ways. The perspective of reading differs from person to person depending on the person’s individual attitude and aims towards printed words, from language to language considering the cause of reading and the content of the text. So, the definition and meaning of reading depend, largely, on the purpose of the reader, on the text and textual contents, on the attitude of the readers towards the text, on the reading materials and on the experience and schemata of the reader. However, experts have tried to define it differently, in their own way of observation and thought.

Some argue that reading is a conceptual and thinking process through print, and the process is interpretative (Emerald et al.: 1982). Widdowson (1979) is of the same opinion that reading is the “process of getting linguistic information via print.” Ransom

(1978: 14-15) defines reading as 'a conversation' between the writer and the reader. He states that like someone who is talking, "the writer is trying to convey some message to another person." Shaw (1959: viii) also states that reading is the communication of thoughts, moods, and emotions through which one receives 'from others their ideas and feelings'. Nuttall (1996: 4) regards reading as the process of "getting out of the text as nearly as possible the message the writer put into it." Williams (1996: 2) states reading as 'a process' through which one looks at and understands a written text. Goodman (1967) defines reading as a 'psychological guessing game', and Patricia Carrel et al (1988) define reading as an 'interactive process' where readers employ their background knowledge and past experience to make sense of the text. Reading, according to Moynihan (1969: 267), "frequently uses chronology, comparison-contrast, causality, and analogy."

This process is precisely active (Doff, 1997: 67; and Rauch et al. 1968) and cognitive (Urquhart and Weir, 1998: 17), and the reader in a contact with the text carries it out (op. cit.). Grellet (1996: 8) defines reading as 'an active skill'. Rauch and Weinstein (1968) terms reading as an active, alert thinking process "where the reader matches the writer thought for thought." According to Shaw (1959: viii) reading is "thinking with the author, absorbing his ideas." Urquhart and Weir (1998: 22) have tried to give a precise, shortcut and acceptable definition of reading after observing and analyzing the definition of others. According to them, reading "is the process of receiving and interpreting information encoded in language form via the medium of print."

3. Buzz group

A buzz Group is a small group assembled to work on a problem and report solutions. They are frequently used in classroom training. They may also be used in simple problem-solving (Rothwell and Kazam 421:2003). It is used to engage learners and re-energize the group. To initiate the buzz group, pose a question and ask learner to discuss their responses in pairs or group no longer than four learners (Jeffries and Huggett 2010:35). It can be concluded that the buzz group technique is small groups of students find solutions and report back to entire class.

According to Brewer, E. W. (1997) there are some advantages of using Buzz Group, such as: (1) It allows everyone's ideas to be expressed, (2) participants learn to work in real-life situations where others' opinion are considered, (3) it sets the

groundwork to get discussion started, (4) because members are expressing opinions, it is good for dealing with controversial subjects.

To sum up, the buzz group technique is very effective to be implemented in reading activity because the teacher can divide a large group into smaller groups. It means all students can deliver their own opinion to their friends without being ashamed. This technique is beneficial because it gives all students the freedom to express themselves equally, so every student gets a chance to contribute to the discussion to solving the problem in question. Moreover, Buzz Group also overcome student's difficulties in reading comprehension obstacles such as having not enough background knowledge, having lack of vocabulary and the teacher-centered technique implementation at class.

There were many creative techniques which the teacher can use. One of the best techniques to encourage passion of learning reading for Junior High School students is Buzz Group. It is best used to enhance discussion, especially when the overall group is large. It also depends on the teacher who takes role in a classroom. The teacher should be creative. A creative teacher will help the students to master the materials that they have already learned. Reading is not an easy part to learn, because it needs suitable techniques to make reading easier to understand. And not only technique but also some English aspects should include in it, such as understanding to grammatical and vocabulary. Good teaching enables students to learn to read and read to learn (Pang at all 2003:21).

Before implementing Buzz Group technique, there are some preparation should be done by the teacher. First, the teacher should prepare the appropriate yet interesting materials for the level of the students. The material can be taken from package book, internet or the other source. Second preparation is providing the media. The media can be pictures, texts, things, etc., which are suitable with the material that the teacher will teach

CHAPTER III

METHOD

A. Subjects

This experimental research involves forty subjects who are native speakers of many regions in Indonesia (EFL) aged 17-23. They use mainly their mother tongue in daily communication and live in Yogyakarta. In addition, they have never been to English speaking countries. The subjects are all students of English Department of University of PGRI Yogyakarta (PBI-UPY) and all subjects have been studying English for at least half years. To ease the training process, the subjects will be informed that the pre-test and post-test will be used for educational and experimental purposes.

B. Materials

The subjects had the reading exercises, which had been provided by the lecturer; however, lecturer was allowed to use any textbooks and materials and to develop their own tests. Therefore, the researcher selected twelve reading passages which would be covered during the semester from a variety of sources. Five reading passages were drawn from the subjects' textbook, and seven reading passages from popular writings or ESL reading materials. The reading passages were chosen on the basis of subjects' presumed interest and for their readability.

The strategy training procedure used in this study is buzz group-based. All of the reading lessons given in this study were conducted in Indonesian. Prior to the training, the researcher and the class had general discussion about strategic learning and strategic reading. In the discussion, reading strategies and strategic reading were defined. The writer explained and the class discussed why learning and practicing effective is important. Through this discussion, the subjects were informed of the following points: first, strategies help to improve reading comprehension; second, strategies also help enhance efficiency in reading; third, students will be reading in the way that expert readers do; finally, strategies help students to process the text

actively, to monitor their comprehension. The writer used this type of discussion not just in initial class periods, but also on a recurring basis to make sure that students were aware of the importance and value of what they were doing.

C. Reading Test Procedure

In addition, the writer clearly and explicitly explained the specific procedure of the training method and its benefit. Next, the writer conducted buzz group-based activities in order to activate students' background knowledge related to the topic and content of the reading passage. After that, the writer asked the students to read silently the assigned section of the passage. In the beginning, the students were given enough time to read an assigned section of a passage; however, as time went by, they were gradually given less reading time.

When the students finished this task, the writer modeled the following reading strategies: first, the writer summarized the section of the passage; second, the writer composed a couple of questions on the content of the section; third, the writer predicted the content of the following sections; finally, the writer critically evaluated the content for internal consistency and compatibility with prior knowledge and common sense, discussing the points that needed to be clarified. Although most lessons were focused on the four activities, the writer sometimes modeled other strategies, which are also important in comprehending a text, when they were relevant to the passage: understanding rhetorical structures, guessing the meaning of unfamiliar words from context, skimming, etc. In modeling the strategies, the writer read aloud the portion of the passage, and when she did so, she used the "think aloud" technique. The writer always tried to provide concrete examples in order to show the students clearly which strategies are useful, how they are used, and why they are helpful.

From the very beginning, students were encouraged to participate at whatever level they could thought he writer expected that familiarity with this process would take time. In the initial phase of the training, therefore, students were relatively passive observers. However, when the writer felt that the students were capable of performing the four activities, she encouraged the students to participate in the four activities more actively. Some students successfully summarized a portion of the passage with or without the writer's help; some students predicted the general content of the following paragraphs. From time to time, the writer divided the

students into groups of three or four and had each student in the groups alternately lead the activities. When the class finished reading one text, the writer sometimes gave a summary writing assignment to students. The writer also encouraged students to use the strategies outside the classroom so that the training could be transferred to other reading tasks. The remaining eleven reading texts were taught following the same procedure.

D. Analysis

The experimental data were subjected to two-way analysis of variance (ANOVA). One day prior to the onset of the training, all subjects were given a reading comprehension pre-test. Fourteen weeks later, when the subjects finished the 42-hour-long training, all subjects were given the same reading comprehension test as a post-test. The rationale for using exactly the same test for both pre- and post-testing was to assure an exactly comparable test, thus avoiding the problem of equating different forms of pre-test and post-test.

The fourteen-week interval between administration was deemed long enough to control for any short-term memory effect; since subjects were not provided with the correct answers after the pre-test, even were they to remember how they had answered a question the first time, they had no way of knowing whether that answer was correct. Moreover, any effects due to experience with the test would be comparable for each of the three groups. And, finally, one of the most common types of test reliability in psychometrics consists of such test-retest reliability.

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