

Utilizing The Read-Arounds Strategy in Junior High School Students' Dialogic Reading Activities

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ABSTRACT

Reading is a requirement for almost all academic pursuits, it is a crucial component of language learning, especially for students. When learning English, this is especially important. Students must be able to read comprehension in order to absorb the material they are taught. Readability issues with fluency are often seen in students who have trouble understanding a foreign language. There have been several studies on Dialogic Reading activities, but few have utilized group reading strategies during these activities. Therefore, this research aims to investigate students' responses to the use of read-arounds strategy in dialogic reading activities for junior high school students at one of the junior high schools in Karawang. Micro-ethnography method is employed in this study. To collect the necessary data, observation and interviews are conducted. Reflective journaling is also used to enhance data accuracy. The results reveal that using the read-arounds technique improves students' understanding and reading interest. based on their comments, which show that using the read-arounds method can benefit children in three points: (1) increasing their self-confidence; (2) motivating them to read in English; and (3) improving their vocabulary and pronunciation. It can be concluded that using enjoyable reading strategies can help students become more confident and reduce their reading anxiety.

Key words: Read-arounds Strategy; Dialogic Reading; Motivation

INTRODUCTION

Since reading is a requirement for almost all academic pursuits, it is a crucial component of language learning, especially for students. It is crucial for students to increase their knowledge to obtain deeper understanding. There are many places one can find knowledge, including books. For students to assimilate the knowledge they receive, reading comprehension is a prerequisite. For Indonesian secondary school pupils to complete their coursework, reading in both Bahasa Indonesia and English is necessary (Amrullah et al., 2018). But reading is regarded as a boring pastime in certain schools. When learning English, this is especially important.

Readability issues with fluency are often seen in students who have trouble understanding a foreign language. Their motivation to read is at an all-time low, in addition to their difficulties understanding language. Language teachers face a dual challenge since students lack the incentive to engage with written content.

The author discovered that students were afraid to read materials written in English and experienced anxiety when given the task of reading aloud in front of their peers. When they finally decide not to read the book aloud as directed, they will cast an unsure glance at the teacher. A few of them also requested assistance so that they could read it after the teacher had finished. As defined by (Gok et al., 2023), anxiety is a crucial affective component that affects learning a foreign language (FL); it may have the greatest negative effects on language acquisition, academic performance, and learner self-esteem. Reaching one's full potential is impeded by anxiety. Apart from causing worry, it can seriously damage students' confidence and sense of self, which keeps them from developing into proficient language learners.

Teachers are crucial in helping students navigate this problem, and one strategy to do so is to increase their self-confidence. To return to the perspective of students who often find it difficult to acquire confidence, teachers have an obligation to help students get past their fears and discover motivation to read English texts without worrying about making mistakes. This can be achieved by devising ways to make reading more engaging and by fostering an atmosphere where students recognize the importance of this critical skill. Naturally motivated students are more likely than unmotivated students to read, comprehend, and thrive academically (Permatasari & Wienanda, 2023). Teachers can provide learning resources, especially in reading, or they can prepare a more sophisticated approach with interesting and diverse learning approaches. The solution to this issue lies in piquing students' enthusiasm in reading. Students need to be more motivated to read, though.

The purpose of reading is to help students overcome their concerns and gain confidence, thus the researcher decided to use engaging teaching techniques to help students become motivated readers. The teacher can assist students in learning how to read by providing guidance. The teacher will participate in the activity as a guide; it's called Dialogic Reading. Apart from adroit decoding, proficient reading comprehension requires spoken language skills and the application of prior information to understand and recognize the text being read (Yurtbakan et al., 2021). The researcher, in her capacity as a language instructor, could incorporate dialogic reading into reading exercises to reevaluate the dynamics of reading sessions.

Not only do students need supervision, but they also tend to be more engaged when working on group assignments. There are observable differences between the way they work on tasks individually and in groups. For example, students frequently avoid eye contact with the teacher when working on individual assignments because

they are afraid of being given a task. On the other hand, students seem more involved and even compete with each other to earn points from the teacher when working in groups. As a result, the researcher plans to employ a read-around technique in which students read both independently and in groups.

The primary objective of this study is to thoroughly evaluate how students respond to dialogic reading sessions that are enhanced by the read-arounds strategy. This evaluation will focus on several key aspects. Firstly, it will assess how these sessions can boost students' confidence in their reading abilities, particularly when it comes to English texts. By examining students' interactions and progress during these sessions, the study aims to identify specific factors that contribute to increased confidence.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Previous Related Study

Herdanti & Saefullah (2021) used micro-ethnography classroom research to examine how junior high school students and teachers engage during dialogic reading activities. The study took place in one of Karawang's schools. Ten junior high school students and an English language teacher participated in the study, which had the effect of boosting the students' enthusiasm to participate in class activities.

Yurtbakan et al. (2021) explained on how students motivation to read was affected by the use of Dialogic Reading. The findings demonstrate that students value dialogic reading over traditional reading and that it is a good way to boost motivation and reading interest in them.

Hidayatullah et al. (2023) discussed how parents and children who are just beginning to read can work together to adopt dialogic reading. It has been observed that children who are beginning their education require assistance from both parents and teachers. Nonetheless, parents' at-home assistance comes first in the implementation of these learning activities, with teachers still playing a significant role.

Dialogic Reading

Dialogic reading is a method of application where the teacher reads the material aloud to the students and they alternate roles throughout time. The teacher plays the role of an active listener who also poses questions (Yurtbakan et al., 2021). DR begins with questions from the teacher that help the students think critically about the text and arrive at their own interpretation. The teacher then assesses the students' responses, elaborates on their comprehension, and repeats the process of reading as needed (Kang & Hong, 2023).

In the classroom, dialogic reading—a shared participatory reading method—might be helpful in fostering communication between EFL students and teachers. When using dialogic reading, the student tells the story and the instructor acts as an active listener (Herdanti & Saefullah, 2021). Dialogic reading is a useful teaching strategy that can help EFL students and teachers communicate in the classroom, which is crucial to language acquisition (Herdanti & Saefullah, 2021). Dialogic reading is an approach to teaching reading that uses educational resources to improve basic literacy and language competency (Herdanti & Saefullah, 2021).

Since dialogic reading encourages students to recognize their own and other people's feelings and thoughts, it benefits both their mental and affective development (Towson et al., 2017). The fact that research on the dialogic reading process has shown to increase students' interest, enthusiasm, and curiosity about reading is a significant factor in reading motivation. Activities, group projects, and student experience sharing all increase reading interest and are acknowledged elements of dialogic reading. These student-centered studies may help improve students' reading habits (Yurtbakan et al., 2021)

When conducting dialogic reading exercises, teachers might employ a range of methods or approaches. A few of these consist of posing succinct queries, offering chances for recounting, seeking illustrations, seeking definitions for terms, and more (O'Sullivan, 2021). In dialogic reading activities, students take on the roles of active readers who interpret the text rather than passive listeners (O'Sullivan, 2021).

Read-Arounds

Students can share a passage from a book they particularly liked with their peers by using the Read-Arounds approach. After reading a selected book, students choose a passage to share with others (Antonacci & O'callaghan, 2011). With help from their teacher and peers, they reread their selection in preparation for reading it to their peers. At the conclusion of a unit, Read-Arounds can be utilized as celebrations of featured novels. Students take pleasure in the shared reading of book passages with others and in listening to friends read the passages they have chosen (Antonacci & O'callaghan, 2011). The read-around strategy has been used to encourage peer opinions when peers are reluctant to give them. Since shyness, fear, embarrassment, disregard for peers' opinions, and a sense of lost ownership are among the well-known reasons why students are reluctant to participate in peer group editing sessions, this technique has been used to encourage peer opinions.

Antonacci & O'callaghan (2011) suggest that guided reading is one setting in which the read-around approach may be used. According to them, in this context, students can select a few phrases or a short passage from the book they have read, read it aloud multiple times with the teacher's direction and criticism, and then take part in the read-around exercise. Read-around, like other applications, start with practice

reading aloud, and then they go into a discussion of the meaning of the book (Antonacci & O'callaghan, 2011).

METHOD

Design and Samples

Because the researcher conducted this research in a classroom setting while taking into consideration the social backgrounds of students who would be participants, micro-ethnography classroom research is thus appropriate to employ in this study. Micro-ethnography studies how contact is structured socially and culturally in specific situational situations, such as classrooms, where important events that could have a lasting impact on people's life may happen during regular activities. In order to portray herself as a participant observer with an insider perspective who is focused on involvement in this study, the researcher attended the classroom and participated in the activities happening there. Therefore, in order to organize the students or convey knowledge, the researcher posed as a teacher in the classroom.

Instrument and Procedure

In this study, the author used three instruments to collect data. The first instrument was an observation checklist. The author acted as both the researcher and the teacher in the classroom. The procedure involved the author entering the classroom to deliver the lesson while simultaneously conducting observations. In the observation checklist, the author prepared a field note to record important notes on occurrences in the classroom, such as student interactions and attitudes. The second instrument was a semi-structured interview used to gather data. The author prepared six questions regarding the participants' feelings, opinions, and challenges related to the classroom activities. The interviews were conducted in Indonesian after the class activities were completed, and the responses were then translated into English. Lastly, the author used a reflective journal to strengthen the data. Five questions were prepared on two sheets of paper, which were then honestly filled out by the participants. The author provided guidance to the participants if there was anything they did not understand.

Data Analysis

Thematic analysis was used to analyze the data. A data analysis method commonly used in all qualitative research designs is thematic analysis (TA) (Castleberry & Nolen, 2018). For conducting this kind of research, a six-step framework is quite beneficial (Braun & Clarke, 2008). Acquaint yourself with the data, (2) Create preliminary codes, (3) Look for themes, (4) Examine themes, (5) Define themes, and (6) Write up are the six phases.

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

Many studies have been conducted on dialogic reading; nevertheless, there is a dearth of research on the application of certain methods in dialogic reading activities. As stated by (O'Sullivan, 2021), teachers may use a variety of techniques or strategies while delivering dialogic reading sessions. Consequently, the read-around technique is presented in this study's dialogic reading sessions. In contrast to conventional dialogic reading, which primarily involves students interacting with the teacher through questions, the read-arounds technique promotes peer interaction through group reading. Students' reading activities have been found to benefit from this peer-to-peer engagement. The study's conclusions show that using the read-arounds technique improves students' understanding and reading interest. Based on data collected from six students who participated in the study, as indicated by their responses that utilizing the read-arounds strategy can help students with three things: (1) increasing their self-confidence; (2) motivating them to read in English; and (3) improving their vocabulary and pronunciation.

1) Increasing their self-confidence

Students' attitudes differ from when the meeting starts to when the learning activity is underway. They appeared shy at first as well. They had to first look at each other to respond to the questions posed by the researcher, suggesting that they were asking each other questions in the hopes that their companion would respond. They appear more at ease and engage in more active conversation after a while. Additionally, they responded without hesitation when asked to read the provided material. One participant admitted that she was nervous of misreading the text, but she tried to read it aloud to others, which gave her greater confidence. Some students say that they like the strategy implemented because they don't feel like they are learning alone but together with their friends, so they can help each other. This makes them enjoy it, so they can feel more confident to read aloud in front of their friends. This is also pointed out by (Antonacci & O'callaghan, 2011), who said that students love discussing book sections with others and hearing peers read their selections. Usually in research on dialogic reading activities, previous researchers used a peer strategy. As in the research conducted by Herdanti & Saefullah (2021) where the activity focused on interaction between students and teachers. Whereas in this study, students used a read-arounds strategy where students focused on reading repeatedly with their friends so as to help their reading fluency, and this helps them gain self-confidence.

2) Motivating them to read in English

During the researchers' observations, many students expressed that they didn't really enjoy reading English and had a general dislike for English subjects. They found English reading to be challenging and unengaging, which contributed to their overall lack of enthusiasm for the subject. However, after participating in the reading activity that incorporated the Read-arounds strategy, there was a noticeable

shift in their attitudes. The students reported that they began to enjoy the reading sessions, finding them more engaging and less intimidating than they had anticipated. This positive change in their attitude was accompanied by an increase in motivation. One of the participants mentioned that they usually feel hesitant and afraid of making mistakes when asked to read English. However, during the reading activity with the author, she suddenly stepped forward and wasn't embarrassed to read in front of her friends. She felt more motivated to read English more often. Dialogic reading, according to Towson et al., (2017), helps children develop mentally and emotionally by enabling them to identify themselves as well as other people's opinions and emotions. Based on the students' responses, one of the factors that motivates students to read more English is the reading material they read. This is supported by Yurtbakan et al., (2021), stated that students enjoy illustrated books, and they become interested about the answers to the questions in these books.

3) Improving their vocabulary and pronunciation

The pronunciation of words is a significant factor contributing to why students often struggle in English classes. One of the primary challenges lies in the discrepancy between how words are written and how they are pronounced. English is notorious for its irregular spelling rules, where many words do not follow standard phonetic patterns. As a result, many students find English pronunciation particularly difficult, which can lead to anxiety and a lack of confidence in their language skills. They may fear mispronouncing words, which can hinder their ability to communicate effectively and understand spoken English. This fear extends to reading, where students worry that they might misunderstand the text due to unfamiliar pronunciations. Consequently, the challenge of mastering English pronunciation can create a significant barrier to overall language proficiency, affecting students' performance and enjoyment in their English classes. In addition to the challenges students face, this activity assists them in resolving issues they encounter through group discussion and inquiry. In addition, teachers assist them. One of the participants said that they can learn to have the courage to stand at the front of the class and become more confident in reading aloud in front of peers. Additionally, improving pronunciation to achieve greater fluency and accuracy is considered very beneficial for them. As noted by Antonacci & O'callaghan (2011), the teacher's supportive presence in class and group discussions has fostered this heightened motivation. In this study, students said that through the activities they had carried out, they gained new vocabulary and improved their English pronunciation. This is in line with the statement by Herdanti & Saefullah (2021), which said that dialogic reading is beneficial for the development of spoken language understanding, the vocabulary, and narrative abilities.

CONCLUSION

When the Read-arounds method is used in Dialogic Reading activities, positive outcomes have been seen in student participation and reading confidence. As seen by the students' passionate participation and the events' flawless execution, this

technique successfully lowers reading anxiety by making learning enjoyable. Reading materials that were carefully chosen and illustrated pamphlets that went along with them made learning and having fun even simpler. Students' response indicated that, in spite of initial challenges, the Read-arounds technique significantly raised their sense of self-worth and enthusiasm to read in English. The teacher's encouraging role and the group discussions were crucial in creating a cooperative environment where students could get past their anxiety. These findings demonstrate the critical role that supportive and participatory learning strategies have in enhancing students' reading experiences.

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