

## THE STRENGTHS AND CHALLENGES OF USING DIALOGIC READING TO CHILDREN IN PERMATA GROUP

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### Abstract

Teaching reading is considered as a challenging task by the teachers. It is a challenge for the teachers to make the students engage with the reading activity. In Permata Group (pseudonym) teachers implemented dialogic reading to motivate the students in reading activity. This study discussed teachers' perception on the strengths and challenges of using dialogic reading to children in Permata Group. It is a qualitative study in which the data is gathered through observation and interview. The finding shows that there are seven strengths and five challenges faced by the teachers who facilitate the dialog reading activity to children in Permata Group. Few of the strengths is the picture and the limited words on the book in dialogic reading activity makes the students focus on the reading activity and curious with the story. Moreover, it motivates them to get involve in the dialog during the reading activity. Besides the strengths, teachers also face challenges such as the dialogic reading should be assisted by the experienced teacher.

**Keywords:** CROWD strategies, dialogic reading, PEER strategies

### Introduction

Harmer (2007) states that reading is an essential part in learning. Farzaneh & Nejadansari (2014) also adds that reading is a basic skill to acquire information. Therefore, reading tend to be related with academic success. Unfortunately, Indonesia has got reading level in the 48<sup>th</sup> of 56 positions across countries (Tjalla, 2010). Unquestionably, teaching reading is a challenging task. Therefore, teachers need to make innovation and find many ways of teaching reading to engage students with the activity and motivate them to read. Furthermore, in order to understand an English text, students need to know 98% of vocabulary in the text (Nation & Beglar, 2007). In other words, vocabulary is very important. In line with this statement, Richards & Renandya (2002) states that vocabulary has a big role in learning and using the language since it used in all skills such as listening, reading, speaking and writing.

The importance of reading activity and vocabulary learning to students should be considered by the teachers. One of the ways to support reading activity and provide vocabulary learning is through dialogic reading. Dialogic reading is a

shared reading activity in which it engages students with the activity and support vocabulary learning (Ping, 2014). Doyle & Bramwell (2006) also adds that dialogic reading supports one's socioemotional development. It helps learners increase their teamwork skill.

The implementation of dialogic reading involving interaction or dialog between teacher and students. Teacher uses strategies of PEER (prompt, evaluate, expand, and repeat) and CROWD (completion questions, recall questions, open-ended questions, wh- questions, and distancing) to engage students with the reading activity (Whitehurst, 2002).

Based on the pre observation in Permata group, Kutai Kartanegara, East Borneo, the researcher found that teaching reading to children is quite challenging. The learners are not motivated to read. Therefore, the teachers come up with the solution of implementing dialogic reading. The teachers used a local literature related to litter free environment to save Mahakam River. This study discussed the teacher's perception toward the implementation of dialogic reading using a local literature. According to Seng (2017) perception is a specific set of experience. The perception used in this study is related to the experience of teachers about the strengths and challenges of implementing dialogic reading to children in Permata group.

## Method

This research was done in Permata group, Kutai Kartanegara, East Borneo. There were 15 children and 3 teachers. The subjects of this study are the teachers in Permata Group. The subjects were asked about their perception of teaching using dialogic reading. The perception was related to the strengths and challenges of implementing dialogic reading to children in Permata group. The data was collected by using interview guideline, and check list observation. A set of questions were prepared before the interview session and more questions were developed during the interview session. the data was analysed by using Miles & Huberman (2002) which involving three steps, they are data reduction, data display and data conclusion. The data was explained qualitatively.

## Findings and Discussion

Table 1. Teachers' perception related to strengths on the implementation of dialogic reading to children

No	Strengths
1	The reading activity is interactive
2	Detailed picture and limited words make the topic more interesting resulting to children's curiosity and make the children focus with the activity
3	The activity engages the children to get involve with the dialog and activity. It supports children's skills and creativity
4	Intervention (PEER and CROWD strategies) by the teachers support the learning new vocabulary
5	The activity support children's skills and creativity
6	The activity relates the lesson or the topic with children's experience
7	The activity facilitates skill of socializing

Table 2. Teachers' perception related to challenges on the implementation of dialogic reading to children

No	Challenges
1	The activity needs to be accompanied by experienced teachers who know about dialog reading well.
2	The activity is more effective to be implemented in a small group of children with no more than five children.
3	The activity is more effective to be implemented in a limited time (10-20 minutes).
4	The activity is more effective to be implemented in a group where the children have the same language proficiency level and same topic interest.

Teachers' perception related to strengths on the implementation of dialogic reading to children are:

*The reading activity is interactive*

The finding shows that there was interactive dialog between children to children and children to teachers. Teachers' questions that follow the strategic of PEER and CROWD stimulated the children to speak up their opinion, questions and answers, as said by Mr. Agus "...children were so active. They kept asking and answering my questions... they told their peers about what was going on in the picture..." it is in line with the study conducted by Napoli & Johnson (2019) that states dialogic reading engage students to speak so that there will be interactive dialog between them and teachers.

*Detailed picture and limited words make the topic more interesting resulting to children's curiosity and make the children focus with the activity*

The observation and interview found that interesting details of the picture and limited words on the book lead to children's curiosity. Children were curious about the story behind the picture as well as the next story. They even tried to guess the story on the next page. This situation makes the children feel fun. Moreover, children were not bored. Their curiosity makes increase their attention with the book and the reading activity, resulting to more ideas, questions and answers, as stated by Miss Fani "they really focused on the activity, they asked "why was the grass long?""

It is supported by Grolig (2020) who state that teacher and students can use the picture on the book effectively in the reading activity to stimulate students get involve in the activity. Teachers can use the picture to make a story based on students' language proficiency level to stimulate their skills in thinking and answering questions. Napoli & Johnson (2019) adds that dialogic reading technique attracts students' attention to listen enthusiastically. Stein & Glenn (1979) states that picture on the book stimulate readers' responses and reactions.

*The activity engages the children to get involve with the dialog and activity*

The finding showed that children responded the questions enthusiastically. Children get involve with the dialog, interaction and activity, as said by Ms. Dea "they answered teachers' questions... they were so active until the follow up activity". In Permata Group, teachers had 5 meetings of shared reading using the

same book with different focus on vocabulary for each meeting. In each meeting there were pre reading stage where teacher stimulated children with the cover of the book, reading stage where the teachers implemented dialogic reading technique, and follow up activity. In meeting 5 the follow up activity was making posters about litter free. It helped children to train their creativity and skills. children were so active in making posters. Studies such as Lonigan, et al, (2013); Whiterust, et al. (1994); dan Zevenberg & Whitehurst (2003) state that technique implemented in dialogic reading support students to participate in the reading activity. Doyle & Bramwell (2006) adds that the use of book with the content of socio-emotional can help students' social skills. It can be done to make the students focus on the meaning of the word and practice it so it can be an experience to students.

*Intervention (PEER and CROWD strategies) by the teachers support the learning new vocabulary*

Teachers make students familiar with some new words through dialogic reading technique during the reading activity, as said by Miss Fani "*can you find any broom? Where is the broom?*". Some children answered it correctly while others answered it incorrectly so the teachers make a sentence using the word of "broom". Then broom appeared again on the next pages, and the children already knew and familiar with that word. Children learn new words fun and effectively. It is in line with Blewitt, et al. (2009) who states that communication strategic used by teachers is effective to stimulate students to think during shared reading activity.

*The activity relates the lesson or the topic with children's experience*

The lesson or topic used in this reading activity was based on children's experience in their daily lives therefore the picture and the questions are related to their experience. It makes the topic easy, as stated by Miss. Fani "*the setting is in school, playground, backyard, and they already knew the pictures on the book because they often see them around. So, it was not hard. That's why when they guessed the new vocabulary, sometimes it's correct*". According to Whitehurst (1992) one of the techniques in dialogic reading is where the teachers' questions make the students connect situation in the picture or words to their life experiences.

*The activity facilitates skill of socializing*

This activity involved socialization skills such as making friends and interaction among peers. During the activity, children explain or tell their peers as said by Mr. Agus "*...children were so active. They kept asking and answering my questions... they told their peers about what was going on in the picture...*" he added "*they were so active until the follow up activity*". The children worked in a team to make posters based on their creativity. Some of them stucked the picture to the poster, some of them colored the poster, other wrote handwriting on the poster. Gestwicki (2007) states language is a tool to communicate and think, through language students can socialize to play and learn. And dialogic reading can help students to practice their skill in language and communicating.

Teachers' perception related to the challenges on the implementation of dialogic reading to children are:

*The activity needs to be accompanied by experienced teachers who know about dialog reading well.*

Dialogic reading must be accompanied by those who know well about the techniques of dialogic reading. Moreover, teachers need to make well preparation. As stated by Miss Fani "*children must be assisted by teacher who knows dialogic reading or even has experience about dialogic reading*" she adds "*the teacher must know the techniques such as the questions*". Therefore, teachers need to read literature before practice implementing dialogic reading. According to Whitehurst (1992) there is an intervention by form of questions from adult in dialogic reading activity.

*The activity is more effective to be implemented in a small group of children with no more than five children*

In Indonesia, the size of the class is big. State elementary school tend to have 30 – 35 students with one teacher in every class. While private English courses provide one teacher and one shadow teacher for about 12 students. Therefore, despite the advantages of Dialogic reading, it cannot be implemented in every class. As said by Mr. Agus "*in the third meeting in session one, there are only 7 children (there should be 10 children and it would be divided into 2 groups) so we put them in one group, and it was hard*" there was a problem, one of the teachers could not come because of the flood after heavy rain. So, there was no other choice. Unfortunately, it resulting to ineffective activity. Some children talked to other children, and the teacher could not focus to see all children. According to Whitehurst, et al. (1994) in dialogic reading activity, one group should be no more than 5 children.

*The activity is more effective to be implemented in a limited time (10-20 minutes).*

The finding found that the reading activity should not be implemented in a long time. As said by Ms. Dea "*in the second meeting, I tried to review the vocabulary while reading the book. It spent almost 10 minutes. I also focus on new words in the book... the total time that I spent was 25 minutes. children get bored*" it can be concluded that dialogic reading should not be implemented in a long time. It is in line with the study conducted by Huebner & Meltzolf (2005) who states that dialogic reading should be done in 10 – 20 minutes.

*The activity is more effective to be implemented in a group where the children have the same language proficiency level and same topic interest*

The next challenge is dialogic reading should be implemented in a group where the students have the similar language proficiency level. As said by Mr. Agus "*in the third meeting in session one, there are only 7 children (there should be 10 children and it would be divided into 2 groups) so we put 7 in one group, and it was hard*". It was hard because two children have different language proficiency level with those five children.

## Conclusion

Teachers' perception related to strengths on the implementation of dialogic reading to children are, (1) The reading activity is interactive, (2) Detailed picture and limited words make the topic more interesting resulting to children's curiosity and make the children focus with the activity, (3) The activity engages the children to get involve with the dialog, (4) Intervention (PEER and CROWD strategies) by the teachers support the learning new vocabulary, (5) The activity support children's skills and creativity, (6) The activity relates the lesson or the topic with children's experience, (7) The activity facilitates skill of socializing. Meanwhile, teachers' perception related to challenges on the implementation of dialogic reading to children are, (1) The activity needs to be accompanied by experienced teachers who know about dialog reading well, (2) The activity is more effective to be implemented in a small group of children with no more than five children, (3) The activity is more effective to be implemented in a limited time (10-20 minutes), (4) The activity is more effective to be implemented in a group where the children have the same language proficiency level and same topic interest, (5) The source or book that is related to local literature is limited.

One of the strengths that teachers found was dialogic reading is helpful in learning new words. It helps learners to understand the new English words and enjoy the story. Moreover, it also motivates learners to involve in the dialog by giving idea, answers and questions. Previous study such as a study conducted by De Temple & Snow (2003) states that complicated and unfamiliar words can be explained and introduced to young learners to book reading activities by the support of pictures and texts in the book. Furthermore, Ping (2017) also found that dialogic reading improved young learners productive and receptive skills.

Despite the strengths or advantages this study also found challenges of dialogic reading. One of them is, it should be accompanied by teachers who know dialogic reading well. A previous study conducted by Urbani (2011) found that teacher who taught dialogic reading to deaf and hard of hearing students thought dialogic reading required big effort of teachers to engage students in active participation by paying attention to students' attention and behaviour. The teacher thought that it was hard. The next study is hoped to be able to find significant correlation between students' perception toward online English classroom and their language achievement.

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