

Designing the Intercultural Teaching Using “Dialogic Reading” Strategies for the English Students at Primary Schools

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Abstract—English in primary schools has been declared as an extra-curricular activity regulated by the 2013 Curriculum, otherwise it is no longer as a local content subject as stated in past curriculum. Due to this reason, English as an extra-curricular activity should not strictly followed teacher teaching guideline which has been written before by the local National education, however the teacher should concern more on creative teaching and learning process. On the other hand teachers at primary schools are to be ready to implement the suggested Curriculum and be well equipped with the skills to design the instructional materials and activities relevant to the Curriculum.

This current research aimed at designing Dialogic Reading guideline to teach Intercultural in the teaching of English in primary schools based on 2013 Curriculum. Intercultural instruction related to sensitivity to culture, intercultural communication skills, personal and group attitudes towards other cultures, as well as knowledge of other cultures whereas in primary schools this instruction introducing cultural aspects and values of both languages, L1 and L2 cultures. Meanwhile, Dialogic Reading is further elaborated into some communicative instructional activities through reading, in which students are to perform a dialogue upon reading. The subjects of this research was SDN Bunulrejo 2 Malang with two teachers as the models of teaching. This current research was conducted by means of Research and Development (R & D) design, employing the stages as follows: observation, planning and drafting Dialogic Reading instruction strategies and guideline, trying out at schools, evaluation, FGD, expert validation, and finalizing the draft of Dialogic Reading guideline. After following those several stages, this R & D resulted Dialogic Reading Intercultural Instructional Strategies and for upper grades (4-6) students of Primary Schools. It is expected that those instructional strategies could be utilized by primary school teachers in wider scope and increase the students competence in English research.

Keywords: *Dialogic Reading, Intercultural, 2013 Curriculum, Primary Schools*

1. Introduction

2013 Curriculum is a new policy of the Ministry of Education and Culture (Kemendikbud) which has an impact on the position of English subject at all levels of schooling, especially at the elementary level (SD). In 2006 along with the issue of Unit Level Curriculum (KTSP) policies, English subject in primary education is categorized as local content and must be taught in intra-curricular subjects. However, in 2013 curriculum, elementary school students learn English as supporting knowledge related to everyday life (Sari: 2013).



Along with the evaluations of 2013 Curriculum implementation that have been conducted by the Evaluation Team from Ministry of Education and Culture (Kemdikbud) in 2014, the government issued Ministerial Decree (Decree of the Minister) No. 179 342 / MPK / KR / 2014 concerning the implementation of 2013 Curriculum on December 5, 2014. One of the points in the decree is the discontinuance of 2013 curriculum implementation at schools where the curriculum has been applied for only one term, that is, in 2014/2015 academic year and the re-use of Unit Level Curriculum (KTSP). As for schools which have applied for three consecutive semesters since 2013/2014 academic year will continue to use 2013 curriculum and must be willing to be pilot schools of this curriculum implementation.

Based on the empirical facts above, it is clear that the implementation of 2013 Curriculum is not mandatory for all schools and Unit Level Curriculum (KTSP) is re-implemented. It means that English learning in primary schools is still taught as a local content. The characteristics of English learning at both curriculum equally accommodate the principles of creative and fun learning, as well as authentic assessment. Thus, English learning in primary schools must be able to offer contextual learning to the students.

The fact shows that up to now English learning in primary schools still teach English as a tool only and has not been taught on how to use it contextually. It can be seen from the materials and teaching methods applied by the teacher in the classroom. For example, students are taught the concept of 'like' and 'dislike' of food, but students are still directed to think about their own culture that mentions regular meals they have every day. At the pragmatic level, to make students have cultural sensitivity of English native speakers, the learning must give knowledge of English culture, for example, introducing food that they do not generally have every day. So when students are later confronted directly with native speakers of the target language and culture, students will have no trouble to understand it.

Initial studies conducted by Sabilah (2014) for English language learning in fourth (IV), fifth (V), and sixth (VI) grades in five primary schools in Malang City found that there is no English language learning which leads to the knowledge of intercultural competence. In addition, all teachers (five people) stated that they do not know how to teach intercultural competence. However, all of the teachers stated that they have indirectly taught learning materials related to



the culture of other languages. However, the portions are very small and brief just because there happens to be a topic that is related to the culture of other languages in the used textbook.

Other findings show that all the teachers strongly agree that intercultural competence in English language learning in primary schools is very important and urgent to teach. It is because it can train students' pragmatic abilities so that students' understanding of the learned language will increase and it will automatically increase their communicative competence. Therefore, research on intercultural competence in English language learning at primary school becomes crucial.

In addition to the aforesaid factual results, an observation piloted in SDN Bunulrejo 2 Malang, in the end of 2014, revealed that the English instruction still concerned on teaching the language as a tool, not on using the language in communicative and contextual ways. Moreover, the teacher was still dominating the use of English in the classroom activities as the techniques used were still classical. Accordingly, the implementation of such interaction made the students less active in using English and passive in terms of reading skill.

The identical condition was also found out on the further observation the researcher had in the beginning of semester, in September 2015, at SD Muhammadiyah 4 Malang, one of primary schools that has been employing and committing to incessantly implement 2013 Curriculum. Nonetheless, in its implication, there were several occurring obstructions, which were: 1) the implementation of the instructional activities had not met the characteristics of 2013 Curriculum; and 2) there was not any guideline to execute the English instruction based on the scientific approach as highlighted in 2013 Curriculum. This must obviously be a challenge for primary school teachers and academicians to formulate a way how to pattern English instructional activities as a reflection of the running curriculum. Therefore, this current research formulated the following statement of the problem: 'How is the design of Dialogic Reading strategies for teaching intercultural of English in primary schools based on 2013 Curriculum?'

2. Theoretical Basis

Principles of Teaching English in Primary Schools

An aspect that is highlighted within the language instruction is that teaching a new language (whether, in this case, English or the other foreign languages) to the children differs from teaching a new language to adults. 'Pedagogy' is the term that refers to teaching the early-



aged children or learners; while ‘androgogy’ is identical with adult learners, in which the instructional activities are suited to their ages and characteristics. Phillips (2000) elaborates that teaching language to the children should underline several aspects as follows. Firstly, the provided activities are to be as simple as possible so that students are allowed to get the point. Secondly, the tasks given should be reached out by the students’ competence. In addition, those tasks must be solvable and are to make students amused as well as satisfied right after completing them all. Thirdly, the classroom activity has got to be orally-based. Fourthly, the writing activity is to be taught as minimum as possible due to the students’ competence that has not been good enough in writing in spite of using their local language. Indeed, according to Sabilah (2004), there are some principles of teaching English to the children, they are: using the simplest pattern of language, conducting an exciting teaching, not the horrifying one; and being able to employ some tricks.

To appropriately teach English to the children, it is of importance to highpoint children’s characteristics. Children’s characteristics are distinguished into 10 major points as below (Sabilah: 2009):

1. Owing several stages of development so as the materials to be taught cannot be over the normal capacity;
2. Having a high curiosity;
3. To children, a world is full of surprises so that anything new is commonly attractive;
4. Adoring repetition so much;
5. Egoistic;
6. Believing in any teachings the teachers have taught, including accepting the second language;
7. Owing short attention span and low concentration;
8. Relying on having hands-on activities to easily learn;
9. Activating their five senses;
10. Wholeheartedly learning the language with love.

The classical theory from Scott and Ytreberg (2002) has also highlighted that there are several requirements that are to be completed by the English teachers in teaching children.



Firstly, teachers are to be well-equipped (constituting having a good speaking, being able to control children's psychology, and being competent in employing various teaching techniques). Secondly, English teachers for young learners are to be morally-equipped, by means of loving children, thinking as that of children, being enthusiastic, being humorous, and being able to be the special one for children, since they are supposed to be the role models for their students.

In other words, teaching English as a foreign language in Indonesia requires an intensive attention to make students euphoric and excited to learn and must be fully oriented to maintain their English mastery. Furthermore, one of the determining factors is the readiness of English teachers who have been supplied by the essence of determination, patience, perseverance, creativity, science, and various teaching techniques.

Intercultural Instruction

Intercultural competence means that learners have a sensitivity to a culture, in which they realize that in reality there are other cultures besides their own culture. Bennett (2011) stated that intercultural competence is a set of cognitive, affective and behavioral skills and the characteristics that support effective and appropriate interactions in various cultural contexts. These skills by Bennett were then translated into several components of competence, namely: 1) understand their own cultural identity, 2) communicate effectively with others, 3) develop the knowledge, skills, and attitudes that promote understanding, 4) manage the inevitable contact with others, 5) solve the problem together, 6) involve oneself in learning, and 7) work with other different cultures. Therefore, in essence intercultural competence is the ability of learners to mimic native speakers and the ability to explain to other people from the same culture what is the culture of native speakers and vice versa.

Fantini (2009) stated that intercultural competence is the ability to succeed in communicating with people who come from other cultures. This capability can be owned by learners from a young age, and / or later developed and improved according to the willingness and competence. It is clear from the statement that in order to achieve intercultural competence, a learner should be introduced to the cultural material of the language being studied in accordance to his cultural viewpoints at an early age. Ability formed from an early age will yield better competence. Adaptive characteristics of young learners and their high curiosity make them



more quickly in developing capabilities, strategies and skills in foreign languages with an intercultural insight. This basic ability is the asset for students to improve their ability at a higher level until the time they master the intercultural competence to communicate and interact in foreign cultures and with the societies.

Dialogic Reading

Dialogic reading signifies a technique used at the English instructional activities for students of primary schools that aims at upgrading students' communicative competence, mainly on reading activity. In addition to the communicative competence, Dialogic Reading technique is deemed to be able to upright students' non-linguistic competence; students are required to socially and culturally get into the interaction to meet the characteristics of 2013 Curriculum. Moreover, the purpose of such dialogic interaction is to involve students at a particular conversation or dialogue in continuance so that they can acquire several chances to deeply learn new concepts and vocabularies, to formulate newly-learned vocabularies, and to build first-hand phrases and sentences that are classier. Therefore, this is considered of urgency since students have more chances to read any texts in English.

Dialogic Reading strategy that is possible to be implemented at the English instructional activities in primary schools is "*Follow the CAR*" standing for, *Follow the child's lead, Comment and Wait, Ask questions and wait, and Respond by adding a little more and wait*. This strategy can be occupied by means of interconnecting with the instructional goals, instructional materials, and the readiness as well as competency of the students. Furthermore, a student-centered English instruction is allowed to make students get attracted in which their interest provides teachers with an ease to teach new concepts and vocabularies. After reading activity has been completed, teachers utter some comments to what is happening in the reading texts and wait for the students to comment, which is supposed to train students' critical thinking. Afterwards, teachers are to ask some questions to students for sharpening their speaking competence and wait for them to answer the whole questions. In this stage, teachers, furthermore, are allowed to repeat the questions. After students finish answering the questions, teachers are to respond and provide some new concepts while waiting for students' coming responses. In this stage, students will have more opportunities to prepare themselves to speak out, obtain new vocabularies, and re-



elaborate the concepts of patterning sentences until they are able to find out the precise patterns of the sentences by their own competence.

The core characteristic of the Dialogic reading technique is asking question. By asking question, students are accustomed to formulate the target language, to think about wording the concepts, and to develop the notions based on what are actually happening in reality. Consequently, the word 'CROWD' can be referred to a guideline for teachers to arrange the questions to ask. The followings are the exemplifications as well as the illustrations:

C-completion questions

'Five little monkeys jump on ____'

R-Recall questions

What happens after the wolf huffs and puffs?

O-Open-ended questions

'Tell me what is happening in this picture?'

W-'W-h-questions'

What is that? Who is..?

D-Distancing questions

What happened when we made your birthday cake?

3. Research Methods

This research is designed in the form of research and development with the main objective to produce an instructional strategy in teaching the intercultural study for English language learning at primary schools. The research begins with the initial research and followed by direct observation of English learning in grades IV, V, and VI and the examination of the lesson planning documents and learning materials used by teachers.

This research, moreover, was expected to result Dialogic Reading strategies for English instructional activities in SDN Bunulrejo 2 of Malang City by means of 2013 Curriculum-based approach. The development of this model aimed at upgrading English instructions in primary schools to be more meaningful, contextual, and able to arrive at students' communicative competence.

In this research, there are two (2) teachers selected from the school. While the students are those from these two selected schools and are in grades IV, V, or VI.

Informants in this research are English teachers and students, while key informants are education expert and expert in English language learning for primary education.



Data were collected through observation and discussion with the teachers and experts. The procedures of R & D of this research were as follows:

- 1) Collecting the information and piloting an initial observation – In this stage, the researcher team was learning some findings of the previous researches regarding the implementation of English instructions based on 2013 Curriculum. At the same occasion, the researchers visited numerous schools throughout Malang to observe the real condition of schools that were in their on-going implementation of 2013 curriculum. Furthermore, *SDN Bunulrejo 2 Malang* was appointed to be the representative of all public primary schools of Malang.
- 2) Planning – After piloting the observation, the researcher team constructed a technical plan for conducting the instructions by means of Dialogic Reading technique that had been completely matched to the schools' conditions;
- 3) Drafting a format – The researcher team created a practical guideline to be tried out at both of the schools;
- 4) Training to utilize Dialogic Reading guideline at the real instructional activities – In the end of the training session, the teachers of both schools gave feedbacks for the betterment of the design;
- 5) Piloting a field-testing – The researchers were to consider the feedbacks uttered by the teachers. Therefore, after the revised draft was complete, it was ready to be tried out at the real instructional activities in the classroom;
- 6) Revising – Alluding to the classroom implementation, some findings of the obstructions would be the bases for making an improvement on the design of Dialogic Reading guideline;
- 7) Expert Validation – *After the design had been completely perfected, the revised draft was handed out to the expert for being validated;*
- 8) Finalizing the revision – In this stage, the main activity signified refining Dialogic Reading guideline to be implemented in other classroom activities.

4. Discussion

This research has resulted Dialogic Reading strategies for Intercultural English instructions based on 2013 Curriculum in SDN Bunulrejo 2 of Malang. This product development, therefore, was purposed to make English instructions in primary schools more meaningful, contextual, and able to improve students' communicative competence.

This current research was conducted yielding the following outputs:

- (1) Dialogic Reading instructional strategies contained a list of frequently asked questions regarding Dialogic Reading. Those questions, moreover, comprised definition, advantages, characteristics, time to implement, instructional techniques, lists of dos and don'ts during the implementation, instructional procedures, text selection procedures, how to make questions, patterns of questions, and teachers' challenges in implementing Dialogic Reading instructional strategies.
- (2) Dialogic Reading guideline could be utilized by primary school teachers for teaching English in primary schools based on 2013 Curriculum in wider scopes. In detailed, the strategy has been designed was Dialogic Reading guideline for upper graders (4-6).

The reached outputs had already matched with the research procedures that followed the adopted procedures from Borg and Gall (1983:775-776) which were simplified based on the needs of this research. By report, the performed procedures consisted of the followings:

- (1) Collecting the information and piloting the initial observation – In this stage, the researcher team learnt some findings on the previous researches regarding the implementation of English instructions based on 2013 Curriculum. At the same occasion, the researchers visited numerous schools throughout Malang to observe the real condition of schools that were in their on-going 2013 implementation. Eventually, *SDN Bunulrejo 2 Malang* was appointed.
- (2) Planning – After piloting the observation, the researcher team constructed a technical plan of Dialogic Reading instructional strategies that had been completely matched with the schools' conditions.
- (3) Drafting a format – The researcher team created a practical guideline as the result of the researcher internal FGD. The initiation draft was the unprocessed one that would be

revised and modified by considering the suggestions uttered by the teacher team from both of the delegated schools. Further, there were 3 drafts that had been initially yielded and modified, which were; (1) Dialogic Reading instructional strategies, (2) Dialogic Reading guideline for the lower graders (1-3), and (3) Dialogic Reading guideline for the upper graders (4-6).

- (4) Training to use the design of Dialogic reading guideline at the instructional activities – As an initiation, the researcher and teacher teams piloted a closed simulation (without involving the students at schools), discussing the agreements of the detailed procedures to implement Dialogic Reading, including predicting some occurrences that might happen to be the challenges and obstructions during the classroom implementation. The instructional plans that had been constructed by the researcher team and was supposed to be able to be implemented in the real classroom condition gained some feedbacks from the teachers, which included: (1) the reading texts available were too complicated; and (2) the formulated language function was too sophisticated; one of the examples was the use of Simple Past tense. According to the teachers of both of the delegated schools, to the students, the provided reading texts were too puzzling since they were deliberately deemed suitable for the English native speakers. As a consequence, the initial drafts created by the researchers were to be modified by the school teachers.
- (5) Piloting a field-testing – Testing the try-out draft of Dialogic Reading guideline was piloted in both of the schools of which time schedules were different. The try-out was conducted at Grade 4 of SDN Bunulrejo 2 on Friday, May 13, 2016.

The instructional goals at Grade 4 of SDN Bunulrejo 2 Malang were: to define and comprehend the use of complicated vocabularies worded in the a reading text entitled *“Goldilocks and the Three Bears”*; to understand the plot and numerous expressions used by the characters within the dialogues in the form of narration; to read the text and highlight the main idea of the story; and to answer the questions regarding the reading text provided. Concerning on the language focus comprising vocabulary, grammar, speaking, and writing, the instructional activities were performed by means of flash storybook instructional media. Uniquely, the process of delivering a story was through reading aloud. The criticism that might arise on the implementation of reading aloud



technique was that it was a monotonous technique due to tedious activity that only activated the students to imitate the ways how the teachers read the texts; whereas the dialogues between the students were performed after the reading activity was over. However, regarding post-implementation discussion, the students gained more outputs from the utilization of reading aloud technique, that were: (1) the students were well-equipped to precisely pronounce any sounds of the words based on the modeling of the teachers; and (2) by reading aloud, the students were able to activate their memories to recall any information communicated in the stories.

The instructional goals at one of the lower grades, Grade 3 of SD Muhammadiyah 4 Malang, were: to transfer the meaning from the complicated vocabularies worded at the reading text entitled *The Greatest Treasure*; to find out the nouns in the reading text and see their meanings; to highlight singular and plural forms; to read through and understand the main idea of the reading text; and to answer the questions based on the reading text given. Referring to the language focus that covered vocabulary, grammar, speaking, and writing, the teachers used the video *The Greatest Treasure* completed with an English subtitle. In addition, the teachers played the video until the end without having any dialogue with the students and replayed by stopping at the particular scenes to have some conversations with the students. This activity, furthermore, revealed that the students were building a scheme of the story when watching out the video for the first time. Therefore, the dialogues with the students were more alive and communicative when the video was paused as there were a picture and a subtitle visible altogether.

Based on the observation, it has been detected that the questions formulated by the teachers were the simple forms of a CROWD design inserted at Dialogic Reading guideline.

- 6) Revising – The instructional stages that had been implemented within the instructions were included at a fact-based lesson plan. The revised lesson plans would not be tested anymore, but it was sent to the expert for validation. Thereafter, the revised lesson plan was manifested as Dialogic Reading guideline for the lower and upper grades.
- 7) Expert Validation – Dialogic Reading guideline that had been finished being validated had to still be revised. In fact, there were three urgent suggestions given by the expert,



namely: (1) The accuracy of the use of grammar in Dialogic Reading guideline was truly of necessity, so as this written guideline fulfills the accepted regulations. This was needed as one of efforts to minimize the misuse of grammar in Dialogic Reading-based instructions. (2) In implementing Dialogic Reading, there was one session to be included, which was Silent Reading. This session was useful to provide the students with the chances to re-read the reading text right after reading the text loudly. Reading aloud was advantageous for the students to enhance their pronunciation competence, but it, unfortunately, was not able to give the students wider chance to see the meanings of what they were reading through. (3) In Dialogic Reading guideline, it was suggested that the use of tenses be consistent.

8) Finalizing the Revision – The final version was thoroughly revised by several suggestions from the expert. In addition, Dialogic Reading guideline was not compiled like a book, but it was just packaged in the plastic folders and looped by a ribbon, because during the real implementation of Dialogic Reading, this guideline would be used separately by the teachers. Only pages needed for teaching were taken by the teachers.

5. Novelties

This research used Dialogic Reading by using “*Follow the CAR*” strategy standing for, *Follow the child’s lead, Comment and Wait, Ask questions and wait, and Respond*. Meanwhile, this research utilized one more strategy namely “Silent Reading”, so as the formula strategy called “*Follow the SCAR*”. “Silent Reading” strategy as the first novelty of this research was implemented to give more chance to students to comprehend and understand the text meaning more. The second novelty of this research was in the form of question formula in which the theory mentioned CROWD questions formula that consisted of Completion, Recall, Open-ended, Wh-questions, and Distancing questions. Meanwhile, this research found two additional question formula, they were Elaboration and Referential questions.

6. Conclusions and Recommendations

This research has resulted the targeted outputs planned beforehand, which were: Dialogic Reading instructional strategies for teaching English in primary schools based on 2013



Curriculum. To yield some outputs up to the final stage, the researcher and teacher teams had completed a set of stages based on the previously designed scenarios of the Research and Development, covering: planning, drafting, printing the draft, workshop and FGD for betterment, trying out at schools, revising, expert validation, and finalizing the products.

After accomplishing such set of research stages to result the products which were Dialogic Reading strategies in the form of guideline for teaching English at primary schools based on 2013 Curriculum and Dialogic Reading instructional strategies, the following suggestions were proposed: (1) English teachers are to be more creative in selecting and trying out numerous instructional techniques in effort to facilitate students to feel excited and meaningful in following English instructions; one of the examples is by means of Dialogic Reading technique that has been completed by the general guideline and the strategies to implement as highlighted in this research; (2) English teachers are not to rigidly adhere to Dialogic Reading instructional strategies and guideline that has been yielded from this research. They are allowed to have some innovations by modifying a number of aspects based on the requirements and the conditions of classrooms and students. For example, teachers could replace one text with other kinds of texts that are rich of vocabularies which students are capable of. In addition, they may modify the way to tell the story, from direct story-telling to reading the story aloud or even might just let students watch any movie played. Furthermore, all variances of implementation aim to conduct exciting English instructions that can attract students to try out and practice using English. In this case, therefore, it is advocated that English teachers be fully creative.

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