

Conference Paper

Peer Tutoring: An Effective Technique to Teach Reading Comprehension

Brigitta Septarini Rahmasari

IKIP PGRI Madiun

Abstract

Reading is a demanded skill that should be mastered by students. With reading, students can gain much information. In fact, the reading comprehension of many students is still low, worrying, unsatisfactory, and far from the expectation. Students are reluctant to read due the fact that texts are difficult to understand. This condition leads the teachers to apply some teaching techniques in reading class. One of them is peer tutoring. Peer tutoring is a technique where the students play the roles of a tutor and a tutee. This technique helps students to focus on what is important. By generating questions and answering them, the students review and reformulate their knowledge about the text so that it provides students more chance to enhance their understanding toward the text. The students gain a better understanding of the materials by learning from each other. This article is aimed at describing the use of peer tutoring in teaching reading and what happens with the class when peer tutoring technique is applied. It is hoped that peer tutoring can enhance students' confidence and motivation in reading class. Besides, the class becomes active and alive. It is, therefore, recommended that teachers use peer tutoring in teaching reading comprehension.

Keywords: Reading Comprehension, Peer Tutoring, Motivation

Corresponding Author:
 Brigitta Septarini Rahmasari;
 email:
 brigittaseptarini@gmail.com

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1. Introduction

English language teaching has identified “four skills” - listening, speaking, reading, and writing – as of paramount importance (Brown, 2001: 232). It means that four skills of English language are important in teaching. Reading as one of the four skills of listening, speaking, reading, and writing has always formed part of the syllabus in teaching of English. It means that reading is a basic skill in teaching and learning English. It must be mastered by learners because without reading, the information is not gained by them.

In ([21]: 22) states “ Reading is the process of receiving and interpreting information encoded in language form via the medium of print”. It means that reading is a process to get some information and knowledge from the written text. It is not only simple process of getting information from the text but also the process of thinking to understand the content of the text.

While ([1]: 28) says reading is for many people, an enjoyable, intense, private activity, from which much pleasure can be derived, and in which one can become totally absorbed. It means that reading is a fun activity for the readers to combine information from a text and their own background knowledge to build a meaning. In this article, the researcher focuses on teaching reading by considering that reading is one of English skills which has to be mastered and reading is the main skill in all subject. Everyday, every time, everywhere and every person is reading something. So, reading is human close activity. Based on those situations, the researcher knows the importance of reading. By reading, someone can increase his/her understanding about some information, events, knowledge, and everything.

Reading is regarded as the difficult skill for learners to master. Most of students have an assumption that reading English Text is boring activity. It is because, there is a complexity in its generic structure and language features. Generally, students feel uninterested in this process. Students usually feel reluctant to open dictionary in searching the difficult words. In this time the students as a poor readers, because they are unaware the important of reading comprehension. In (Bambang Yudi Cahyono, 2010: 48) states, " for many people, reading can sometimes be very complicated since it very often requires certain skills so that reading can become activity for restoring input from written text". It means that reading makes the students difficult to understand written text.

Furthermore, (Nunan, 2003: 74) states, "in reading comprehension can be affected by background knowledge includes all of experiences, knowledge of how texts can be organized". It is critical that readers relate their world knowledge to the content of a text in order to make sense of what they are reading. Background knowledge influences the students' difficulties to give a meaning in the text and they often rely too much on dictionaries for looking up new words as they read and the students are difficult to evaluate their expectations for the text.

Based on the pre observation and, the third grade students of English teaching Department get some difficulties in reading comprehension. Many students are not good enough in reading comprehension, are difficult to explain the content of the text and have low mastery of vocabulary, grammar structure, and are confused to summarize the text using their own words.

These facts are caused by some factors such as; in the class, the teacher does not use any strategy in teaching reading but the teacher always asks the students to do the worksheet. Besides, the teacher reads and explains the content of text to the students and the teacher does not give the students oppourtunity to read text. Futhermore, the teacher just asks the students to translate the passage by using dictionary. To solve this problem, the researcher proposes the use of Peer Tutoring technique that can be applied in teaching reading. Peer Tutoring is a collaborative learning strategy in which students alternate between the role of tutor and tutee in pairs or groups.

Peer tutoring refers to the process of having learners help each other on a one-to-one basis [3]. Two types of this kind of peer tutoring are found in adult literacy and basic education: (1) "near peer" in whom one learner is more advanced than the other; and (2) "co-peer" in which the learners are fairly well matched in skill level [23]. Examples of near peer pairings include more academically capable learners working with those experiencing difficulty. When co-peers are paired, learners are able to work together as equals and gain a better understanding of the materials by learning from each other. Although peer tutoring is done with pairs of learners, sometimes having learners work in groups of three better meets the needs of both the learners and the learning task [3].

Peer tutoring refers to students working in pairs to help one another learn material or practice an academic task. Peer tutoring works best when students of different ability levels work together. During a peer tutoring assignment, it is common for the teacher to have students switch roles partway through, so the tutor becomes the tutee. Since explaining a concept to another person helps extend one's own learning, this practice gives both students the opportunity to better understand the material being studied.

In addition, Peer tutoring is a type of instructional strategy in which students are taught by their peers, who have been trained and supervised by the classroom teacher. Peer tutoring involves having students work in pairs, with another student of the same age or grade. Peer tutoring is an extremely powerful way to improve student academic, social, and behaviors. Peer tutoring works for six reasons: first, students have more opportunities to respond to academic material. In other words, they have more opportunities to practice what they are learning by talking about what they are learning.

Second, students receive feedback and error correction immediately and more frequently. In large group or teacher-directed settings, it is impossible to provide feedback and error correction to every student for every response. With peer tutoring, students receive feedback and correction immediately for every response.

Third, students are engaged in active learning, not passive learning. For example, when using peer tutoring, students are actively asking each other questions, responding, correcting mistakes, and providing positive feedback, as opposed to simply watching and listening to the teacher (passive learning). Active learning has been shown to be more effective in promoting student achievement.

Therefore, this technique is beneficial because students have a chance to be both the tutor and tutee. The roles are equitable, which can promote an environment of acceptance. Peer Tutoring gives students the opportunity to make choices throughout the learning process. By making choices, students enhance their self-management skills, and enhance control over learning and cooperation with others. Furthermore, students are accountable for monitoring and evaluating peer performance. In addition, student can be more active during lecturing and has high motivation in teaching

learning process. Thus, it is believed that Peer tutoring can improve students' ability in reading.

The purposes of the research are to know the implementation of peer tutoring in teaching reading at the third grade students of IKIP PGRI Madiun and to know the advantages and disadvantages of using Peer Tutoring in in teaching reading at the third grade students of IKIP PGRI Madiun.

2. Method

This research is done by using descriptive qualitative research. Qualitative research is the research that it enables the researcher to conduct in-depth studies about a broad array topics, including everyday terms. (Yin, 2011: 6). It means that qualitative research is study about a broad array topics and describing social phenomena as they occurred naturally, involves studying the meaning of people's lives, under real-world conditions, qualitative research takes place in the natural setting.

The type of research is a case study. According to (Flick, 2009: 134) a case studies can capture the process under study in a very detailed and exact way. They are not restricted due to an intended comparability and are able to fully use the potential of certain methods. It means that a case studies is the process understanding something that is unique to the cases. This sample is chosen by applying purposive sampling technique.

In this research, the researcher uses purposive sampling. According to (Yin, 2011: 88), "Purposive sampling is the process selecting the specific study units is to have those that will field the most relevant and plentiful data, given your topic study". The researcher decides to use purposive sampling because the researcher wants to know the implementation of teaching reading comprehension by using peer tutoring to the third grade students of English Department.

Technique of collecting data and instrument data are important in a research activity. They are related with the fact and used to get information from the problems statement. To collect the data, the researcher must have appropriate method. The selection of appropriate methods for collecting data will influence the result of the research uses some method for collecting data are: observation, interview, and documentation. The researcher does direct observation and semi structure interview by face to face. The documentation are RPP, syllabus, lesson plan activities, and students' name list.

Data Validity Technique in this research is data triangulation. Triangulation means that researchers take different perspective on an issue under study or more generally speaking in answering research questions. (Flick, 2009: 445). It means that triangulation is different perspectives by the researchers on a issues to answer the research questions. In this case, source's triangulation used to examine credibility of data by checking data has been taken through some of sources.

In this research, the researcher needs to analyze the data to solve the problem. According to Miles and Huberman there are three concurrent flows of activity: data reduction, data display, and conclusion drawing/ verification (Miles and Huberman, 1994: 10-11) as follows: Data Reduction refers to the process of selecting, focusing, simplifying, abstracting, and transforming the data that appear in written-up field notes or transcriptions.

In this case the researcher presents data in the form of table, graphs, brief description based on the fact in the field. In this research the researcher insert the result of observation, interview, document, and photography and, then the researcher make brief description about the data related with the research problems. After analyzing data, the researcher makes a report in final project and gives conclusions based on the problems of the research and the result of data.

3. Research Finding and Discussion

3.1. The Implementation of Peer Tutoring in Teaching Reading Comprehension for Third Grade Students of English Teaching Department of IKIP PGRI Madiun

A. Opening

The researcher entered to the classroom at 11.30 a.m., and then the researcher greeted the students by saying "Good morning all. How are you?" They answered "Morning mom. I am fine, thank you, and you?" The researcher said "I am fine. Thanks." After that, the researcher checked the attendance list. There were six students who were absent. The whole students are forty students; fourteen male students and twenty six female students. This activity lasted for five minutes.

B. Main Activities

1. Pre reading activity

Before the researcher introduced Peer tutoring, she told the students the objectives of the meeting; that was implementing Peer tutoring to develop their skills in reading. Following this activity, the researcher distributed the text entitled "Tiger". She then explained to the students how to find main ideas, find details, draw inferences, and predict the word meaning from context. When she explained skimming and scanning technique, most of the students had known about it. Therefore, she just reviewed it. She also explained some types of questions which were categorized into main ideas questions, details questions, inferences questions, and word meaning questions.

2. While reading activity

In while reading activity, she explained what Peer tutoring is and how the procedures are. The researcher told them that in peer tutoring, they would play the roles as a tutor

and a tutee. Some of students laughed when they heard the term "tutee". It was so because the term "tutee" sounded strange for them. It was like the name of Indonesian female person. After that, she went to next step. It was putting students together into pairs or dyads. Next, she gave students a model how to conduct training sessions with the tutoring materials prepared by her. This was the moment for guided session for the students. She led the students to pay attention when the researcher gave a model or trained them how to be a good tutor and a good tutee. Once the researcher asked the students whether they had understood or not. The answers were smiling and the silence. The researcher addressed the same question again to the student, namely IS. He said "Yes mom, I understand." As she finished giving a model, she assigned students to make some types of questions taught before, along with their answers, with different text entitled "Postponing Death." While they were making questions, the researcher walked around the classroom to help the students if they got stuck on making questions. There was a student, AK, who raised his hand because he was rather confused to make word meaning question. He said "Mom, the answer should be taken from the text, right?" The researcher replied "Yes, of course. You must try to predict the meaning from text without using dictionary." Then, he showed his word meaning question to the researcher and it was correct. Next, the researcher instructed them to practice tutoring sessions after they finished making the questions. Besides, the researcher also asked them to give feedback each other. Unfortunately, only few students gave feedback to their tutee in this first meeting. Also, some of them made mistake in following the procedures of Peer tutoring. They said "You are wrong" when their tutees or their partners gave incorrect answer. Therefore, the researcher always reminded them if their friends answered wrongly; they had to repeat the question and if their tutees could not answer it, they had to provide feedback.

Besides, the researcher had them switch roles between tutor and tutee so that all of them had the same experience. Here is the example of the result of their peer tutoring:

(DR) : "My First question, what is the main idea of paragraph 2?"

(OA) : " Harvest Moon Festival is A Chinese Celebration."

(DR) : "Yes, You're right. Next, when Yinlan's family gathered at her house for dinner?"

(OA) : "At harvest moon festival in August or September."

(DR) : Yes, You're right. Number 3, why Yinlan and her family still celebrated Harvest Moon Festival although Yinlan no longer lived in China?"

(R) : "Why did Yinlan and her family still celebrate Harvest Moon Festival although Yinlan no longer live in China? " **(The researcher corrected the question)**

(OA) : "Because Harvest Moon is Chinese Celebration, so although Yinlan does not in China, their family still celebrated that. "

(DR) : "Why did Yinlan and her family still celebrate Harvest Moon Festival although Yinlan no longer live in China? " **(DR repeated the question because OA answered incorrectly)**

(OA) : "Because Harvest Moon is Chinese Celebration, so Yinlan want to celebrate it. "

(DR) : "Why did Yinlan and her family still celebrate Harvest Moon Festival although Yinlan no longer live in China? " **(DR repeated again the question because OA answered incorrectly, so DR gave feedback to OA)**

(DR) : "The correct answer is because Yinlan and her family are Chinese people. Mom, mereka bangga jadi orang cina apa ya? "

(R) : "They are proud of being Chinese people. "

(DR) : "They are proud of being Chinese people, so they still celebrated Harvest Moon although they did not live in China anymore. "

(OA) : "Ok! I see"

(DR) : "The last question, grateful in line 15 means ..."

(OA) : "Feeling or showing thanks. "

(DR) : "Good answer"

(R) : "Now, OA, it's your turn to be the tutor. "

(OA) : "Yes, Mom! Number 1, what is the main idea of paragraph 1? "

(DR) : "Yinlan was happy because her family came to her house to celebrate the Harvest Moon Festival. "

(OA) : "Yes, you're right. Number 2, what Yinlan and her family do? "

(R) : "What did Yinlan and her family do at her house? " **(The researcher completed the question)**

(DR) : "Celebrate the harvest moon together. "

(R) : "Can you answer completely with good grammar? "

(DR) : "Gimana ya Mom? "

(R) : "Your sentence was lack of subject and use past tense! "

(DR) : "Yes Mom. Gini ya yang betul. They celebrated the Harvest Moon together. "

(R) : "That's right. OA, what do you think about DR's answer? "

(OA) : "Good job, OA. Number 3, did Yinlan dead was rarely and unique? "

(R) : "Was Yinlan dead rarely and unique? " **(The researcher corrected the grammar)**

(DR) : "Yes, she was. "

(OA) : "Excellent. Number 4, what is the meaning of "weak" in line 13? "

(DR) : "Not strong. "

(OA) : "Weak in line 13 means ..."

(DR) : "Oya, weak artinya pale or sick ya"

(OA) : "Good job. "

All the students did the peer tutoring very well although there were still many mistakes in constructing the sentences mainly in grammar and tenses. This activity needed 30 minutes to finish.

3. Post reading activity

In post reading, the researcher invited them to present their result of peer tutoring. At the first time, they were reluctant to come in front of the class. But when the researcher told them that they were all learning, they had bravery to present it. Only three pairs who presented theirs because the time was almost up. It left 10 minutes to end the class. The researcher reviewed the process and the result of peer tutoring. She said that the process ran well although some students had no bravery to present their results. Most of them could follow the procedure easily.

C. Closing

The researcher asked what they felt and what their difficulties are during the activities. For a moment, they kept silent but luckily, one student namely WT answered that she enjoyed during the activities. In contrast, the difficulty was that she could not distinguish between WH question and Yes-No question. Then, the researcher promised to explain it in the next meeting. When the researcher watched the clock, the time showed 12.50 p.m. It meant that the time for reading class was over. To end the class, the researcher reminded the students to review what they had got at home. After saying goodbye, the researcher and the collaborator left the class.

3.2. The Advantages of the use of Peer Tutoring in Teaching Reading Comprehension for Third Grade Students of English Teaching Department of IKIP PGRI Madiun

1. Peer tutoring can help the students to gain better understanding of the text

It is clear that the use of peer tutoring help students to focus on what is important. By generating questions and answering them, the students review and reformulate their knowledge about the text so that it provides students more chance to enhance their understanding toward the text. The students gain a better understanding of the materials by learning from each other.

Another support is purposed by [3]. He states:

"Peer tutoring can enhance learning by enabling learners to take responsibility for reviewing, organizing, and consolidating existing knowledge and material; understanding its basic structure; filling in the gaps; finding additional meanings, and reformulating knowledge into new conceptual frameworks".

The old adage, "those who teach learn twice," holds true for peer tutoring and is frequently given as the basis for using the technique. Although a teacher can anticipate problems, questions, and concerns, no teacher can learn for another individual. Thus, when peer tutoring is adapted, learning becomes much more effective because learners are teaching themselves.

It is supported by [23]. He states that learners are able to work together as equals and gain a better understanding of the materials by learning from each other.

Meanwhile, peer tutoring refers to students working in pairs to help one another learn material or practice an academic task. Since explaining a concept to another person helps extend one's own learning, this practice gives both students the opportunity to better understand the material being studied.

2. Peer tutoring can develop the students reading skills

Through peer tutoring, students are able to develop their reading skills, namely finding main idea, finding details, drawing inferences, and predicting word meanings since during this process, the students generate and answer questions about main idea, details, inferences, and word meaning. More frequent they make and answer the questions, more frequent they learn them.

The students only focus on these four types of questions so that they can practice their reading skills on main idea, details, inferences, and word meanings well. They can develop their reading skills by learning from each other. Also, by making questions, the students can remember the components which are needed in reading comprehension.

The researcher agreed to Walker's theory (1988: 178): Reading is interactive process that requires the readers to monitor their behavior by asking their questions about the important information in the text and answering these questions.

Another support is also purposed by some theories as follows: A tutor who encourages a student to take in-text or marginal notes does a student a great service. By encouraging a student to make notes as he reads, he is less likely to miss the main idea and supporting details, thus greatly increasing comprehension (http://www.ehow.com/way_5285036_lreading-tutoringstrategies.htm).

Once a teacher has identified students with learning difficulties, peer tutoring should begin immediately. Because sessions are usually 10-30 minutes, teachers should concentrate on specific skills at a time. This helps keep the student focused and not feel overwhelmed. For example, if comprehension is the problem, the students can practice specific reading skills like predicting difficult words, finding unstated information or summarizing with a short passage from a story (http://www.ehow.com/way_5285036_reading-tutoringstrategies.html).

A tutor can promote reading comprehension by pausing periodically to ask the tutee comprehension questions about the story (e.g., who, what, when, where, how) and to

encourage them to react to what a tutor both has read (e.g., "Who is your favorite character so far? Why?") (http://www.jimwrightonline.com/pdffdocs/prtutor/prtutor_lesson3.pdf).

3. Peer tutoring can increase students' motivation and self-confidence

In peer tutoring, the students are motivated to raise questions before or during or after tutorial sessions, be cooperative and take active part in all tutorial activities, solve problems together, be punctual and attend all tutorial sessions. Their confidences also improve when they are asked to teach or tutor one another.

Both tutors and tutees gain self-confidence, the tutor by seeing self-competence in his or her ability to help someone and the tutee by receiving positive reinforcement from peers (Topping, 1996: 234) Effects on both tutors and tutees were positive in the areas of learning, attitude toward subject matter, and self-confidence [2]. Peer tutoring improve self-confidence and communication skills – As you teach and share with your peers, you will unknowingly develop self-confidence and communications skills. These are very useful traits to have as you go on to work (<http://physictuition.blogspot.com/p/about-me.html>).

In [7] states:

As students are trained in preparation to become tutors, their motivation to learn increases, personal feelings of helplessness are reduced, and the stigma fades of accepting help from others. Since all students have the chance to participate and the opportunity to help, peer tutoring empowers them to feel valuable and worthwhile. From these roots, grows a more cooperative classroom learning spirit.

In [23] elaborates that peer tutoring can be useful in helping students see added aspects of this material that prompts new questions. Peer tutoring increases students' motivation by enlisting their personal interest with success in mastering something and thereby gaining the "rank" of tutor.

4. Peer tutoring can reduce teacher dominancy

Peer tutoring helps create child-centered classroom. It can help students move away from dependence on teacher toward belief in their own ability to create knowledge. the teacher becomes a co-learner and facilitator, acting as a guide and a coach. The teacher is no longer the person with all the answers; instead, the teacher talks with students and offers opinions, explores strategies, and helps.

Both learners and teachers will find that peer tutoring changes their roles as well as the learning environment. When peer tutoring is used, the instructional environment usually becomes more learner (as opposed to teacher) directed, and the learners have a more significant role in helping shape the learning [9].

5. Peer tutoring can make the students active

In peer tutoring, students are engaged in active learning, not passive learning. For example, when using peer tutoring, the students are working cooperatively and following the procedure, actively asking each other questions, responding, correcting mistakes, and providing feedback.

Active learning has been shown to be more effective in promoting student achievement as opposed to simply watching and listening to the teacher (passive learning) [16].

3.3. The disadvantages of the use of Peer Tutoring in Teaching Reading Comprehension for Third Grade Students of English Teaching Department of IKIP PGRI Madiun

First, the students are still confused to predict what will happen in the next story, especially in unfamiliar story, the students are difficult catch the content of the story. "one important aspect of prediction and inference is recognizing that whether readers' logical predictions or inferences match the authors' and illustrators' intentions is not as significant as the readers' active interaction with the text" (Moreillon, 2007: 76).

Second, the students needs a long time to predict the meaning of difficult words and also to infer their answers based on the questions, it was very difficult for the students who have no ideas and lack of vocabulary. friends. By sharing their unique responses to what they read, students who discuss their reading with partners or within literature circles learn that there are multiple perspectives that can mirror and enrich, or contradict or contrast with, their own interpretations of a work. It spent much time in teaching and learning process" (Moreillon, 2007: 77).

On the other hand, there were also negative results in implementing peer tutoring technique. They were (1) students were not brave enough to raise their hands if they got stuck on making questions. As a result, they did not get help for a question, so they were slow to move on to the next questions. (2) The researcher could not assist the students equally because some pairs needed longer assistance. When the researcher walked around the class, she was restrained into the pair that asked her help about making questions. Consequently, the other pairs did not have the proportion for the guidance. Also, the researcher could not monitor them one by one since there were 20 pairs in the class. Only a half of them could be controlled by the researcher.

4. Conclusions and Suggestions

The researcher concludes that peer tutoring can improve students' reading comprehension significantly. Furthermore, the class situation also improves well. Therefore,

using peer tutoring in reading comprehension is strongly suggested for some reasons. First, peer tutoring is a very good way to get students involved in learning so that they are not just passive learners receiving information. Second, students receive feedback and error correction immediately and more frequently. In large group or teacher-directed settings, it is impossible to provide feedback and error correction to every student for every response. With peer tutoring, students receive feedback and correction immediately for every response. Third, students are able to work together as equals and gain a better understanding of the materials by learning from each other.

Based on the researcher's experiences during doing the research, the researcher would like to give some suggestions for improving students' reading comprehension. They are as follows:

1. For English teachers

For the sake of the improvement of students' reading comprehension, English teachers are suggested to: apply peer tutoring in teaching reading comprehension, encourage the students to use peer tutoring as their own reading strategy, be a facilitator or motivator not as an instructor, so she or he does not dominate the class.

2. For the students

For the sake of the successful learning of reading comprehension, students are suggested to: train a lot in reading using peer tutoring, monitor their comprehension by generating questions and providing feedback, get feedback and error correction immediately for every response from tutors, develop their reading skills through forming reading habit in their life, don't be shy to consult to a teacher when they get difficulties in comprehending the text.

3. For the Institution

For the effectiveness of teaching learning process, the institution is suggested to: familiarize peer tutoring among the English lecturers in the institution and facilitate the institution with several books or references which help the effectiveness of peer tutoring implementation.

4. For other researchers

The other researchers are suggested to: conduct other researches on the use of peer tutoring in teaching reading or other English skills and do classroom action research related to the attempt of improving students' reading comprehension using different technique or media.

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