A CASE STUDY OF BUDDY READING AMONG THREE YEAR 4 ESL STUDENTS IN A NATIONAL PRIMARY SCHOOL

JOYCE LOW SOONG PING

UNIVERSITI SAINS MALAYSIA

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A CASE STUDY OF BUDDY READING AMONG THREE YEAR 4 ESL STUDENTS IN A NATIONAL PRIMARY SCHOOL

by

JOYCE LOW SOONG PING

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KAJIAN KES PEMBACAAN BERKUMPULAN ANTARA TIGA PELAJAR DARJAH 4 DI SEKOLAH RENDAH KEBANGSAAN

ABSTRAK

Membaca merupakan salah satu kemahiran utama kepada pelajar bahasa kedua untuk memperoleh ilmu. Namun, kepentingan membaca semakin membimbangkan. Tambahan pula, pelajar lebih mempraktikkan pembacaan secara pasif kerana penggunaan buku teks atau buku latihan Bahasa Inggeris yang berstruktur rigid lebih ditekankan. Mereka kebanyakannya juga lebih suka membaca dalam bahasa ibunda sendiri. Merujuk kepada cabaran tersebut, suatu kajian tentang pembacaan berkumpulan yang berunsur penggunaan bahan bacaan yang direka oleh tutor, tutor bersilang-usia dan pembelajaran koperatif telah dijalankan untuk mengekalkan minat pelajar untuk membaca dalam Bahasa Inggeris dan juga meningkatkan tabiat membaca dalam Bahasa Inggeris. Tiga orang pelajar Tahun 4 yang terdiri daripada penguasaan Bahasa Inggeris yang berlainan telah terlibat dalam kajian ini. Pengalaman membaca dalam Bahasa Inggeris dan tabiat membaca dalam Bahasa Inggeris merupakan dua kriteria yang dilihat dalam kajian ini. Pemerhatian, laporan kemajuan dan temu bual berstruktur telah digunakan untuk mengumpul data. Secara keseluruhannya, penggunaan bahan bacaan yang direka oleh tutor telah menjadi rangsangan kuat untuk menggalakkan mereka untuk membaca dalam Bahasa Inggeris. Selain itu, tutor bersilang-usia berjaya menjana pengalaman membaca yang bermotivasi, dijanjikan interaksi yang baik antara tutor dan tiga orang pelajar tersebut. Melalui sokongan dan interaksi yang bermakna, pembelajaran koperatif telah menggalakkan mereka agar yakin untuk membaca dalam Bahasa Inggeris. Yang paling penting sekali, tabiat membaca dalam Bahasa Inggeris antara tiga orang pelajar tersebut berjaya ditingkatkan walaupun prestasi ketiga-tiganya berlainan.

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ABSTRACT

Reading is one of the main literacy skills for second language learners to obtain knowledge. However, the prominence of reading books is alarming. In addition, students tend to practice passive reading in schools due to over emphasizing on using English textbooks or workbooks which are rigid and less authentic. Most of them also prefer reading in their own mother tongue language. Acknowledging the challenges, a study was conducted by incorporating tutors' self-produced English reading materials, cross-age tutoring and cooperative learning in Buddy Reading to be demonstrated as a viable method to sustain students' interest towards English reading and to develop their English reading habits. Three Year 4 students of different English language proficiency were involved in this study. Their English reading experience and English reading habits were two main criteria that would be looked into. Observation, participants' progress reports and a structured interview were used for collecting data. In overall, the results indicated that tutors' self-produced English reading materials had been a great stimulus to encourage English reading among them. Besides, cross-age tutoring had been a powerful method to provide motivating reading experience, provided good interaction between the tutors and the Year 4 students. By providing supportive environment and meaningful interaction, cooperative learning had been encouraged them to be confident in English reading. Most importantly, their English reading habits were successfully developed although each one of them performed differently.

CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

1.0 Overview

"Teacher, I like reading, but why should I read this? I want something different!" This was a question posed by one of my Form 1 students in my first reading lesson during the period of teacher training. Her question shocked me as I was just asking them to take out their English textbooks. However her question keeps turning in my mind and it reveals a fact which reading can be very boring using the same reading materials without changing the learning methods. Sustaining students' interest towards English reading and developing English reading habits among students become impossible if students do not experience interesting English reading experience. Hence it is encouraging to provide other alternatives to our students in experiencing interesting and motivating English reading, instead of engaging them in English classroom reading solely.

The emphasis on examination in the Malaysian education system influences students' learning and perceptions of reading (David, 2004). Thus reading is commonly viewed as hard work and is used mainly for instrumental purposes (David, 2004). This also implies that most of the Malaysian students read mainly for the purpose of examination (Nor Shahriza, 2006). Although they are equipped with literacy skills particularly reading skills, their reading habits are still unsatisfactory (Azilleo, 2010). Students are reluctant to read during "out of school" time because they hardly find pleasure in it. It is believed that the nature of learning which stresses on students' personal satisfaction of completing tasks, ungraded written work as well as students' measurement on their own progress (Davis, 1999) is beneficial to aid students in finding

purposes and pleasure in English reading. In relation to this, it is crucial to introduce aesthetic transaction which encourages the readers to experience personal interaction with the text without interference from traditional concerns of text-oriented reading such as text structures (Connell, 2000).

Buddy reading is believed to be effective in providing aesthetic reading experience which leads to students' motivating reading experience. Buddy reading has many variations in approach (Shegar, 2009). Burns (2006) claims one variation involves the pairing of older children with younger ones and it is known as cross-age tutoring while another variation comprises children of the same ages being paired together and it is known as peer-tutoring. There is also other variation which bases on students' reading abilities in which the struggling readers being paired up in some cases (Schnorr & Davern, 2005). Although these variations are focused on the method of pairing, Lowery, Sabis-Burns, and Anderson-Brown (2008) suggests that buddy reading groups can be formed among students. This is because group learning ensures the full complexity of knowledge is shared amongst group members, but not owned by any individual only (Dillenbourg, 1999). Slavin (2006) further claims group learning increases students' achievement generally. In addition, different ages can be formed in buddy reading group to experience cooperative learning and sharing among one another (Babicki & Luke, 2007).

This study is inclined towards the first variation – cross-age tutoring. However 'grouping' is adopted in this study, instead of 'pairing'. In other words, this study involves the grouping of the older students who play the role as tutors and the younger students who play the role as reading buddies. In this study, the tutors have upper- intermediate English proficiency level and they must be competent to provide guidance to reading buddies in their reading as well as in

completing the follow-up reading activities. On the other hand, the reading buddies are selected from three different categories (good, average, and poor) according to their English proficiency level. Different abilities of reading buddies are grouped together in order to enable them to experience cooperative learning in completing the follow-up reading activities together.

In general, buddy reading involves reading to, with, and by students (Bernadowski, 2008). Sharing in reading (Cassy, 2009) is the basic idea of buddy reading. The common characteristic of buddy reading requires readers sitting together with some kind of printed texts (Shegar, 2009). In other words, there is no fixed rule in buddy reading and a variety of learning methods are encouraged to be used. Focusing on the reading texts, tutors' self-produced English reading materials are used as the main reading materials in this study. According to Connell (2000), readers are active while constructing meaning from a text and they go through a lived-through experience with the text. Thus, the central concept of tutors' self-produced English reading materials is the reading buddies (the readers). By doing so, reading buddies can relate their personal experiences and interests to the texts while reading tutors' self-produced English reading materials. This serves as the basis of generating their personal response towards the texts which is vital to the formation of aesthetic experiences (Connell, 2000). This is also supported by the finding of a buddy reading study by Mak, Coniam, and Chan (2008) which reveals that most of the reading buddies show great interest in the stories which are written by the tutors. In addition, their involvement in buddy reading is supported by some reading activities. Pre-reading activities are designed on the basis of making prediction. Making prediction is helpful in students' reading (Opitz, 1999). One of the synthesizing processes of aesthetic experiences is a stimulation of imagination (Connell, 2000). As making prediction is useful to induce students to explore a particular text further by tapping their curiosity towards the text (Arnone, 2003), it is believed to

be an effective way to encourage their imagination towards a particular text. Besides, follow-up reading activities which are designed by the tutors for the reading buddies in this study are cooperative in nature. As mentioned earlier, the reading buddies have to work cooperatively to complete the follow-up reading activities. Ballantine and McCourt Larres (2007) claims that students acquire the generic skills to interact more effectively with each other in cooperative learning. Cooperative learning among reading buddies is helpful for them to acquire positive attitude towards reading (Topping, 1989). This is believed to be helpful in transforming their attitudes towards English reading from indifference to avid reading (Harris & Sipay, 1975).

1.1 Background of the Research

There is an urgent need for Malaysians to read to enhance knowledge due to the challenges of globalisation and the K-economy in the country (Ng, 2005). As English language is internationally used and recognized, it is crucial for our students to develop English reading habits. However, most Malaysian students find English a difficult subject although English is the second language and it is taught in all primary and secondary schools in Malaysia. This is supported by Hashimah, Norsimah, and Kesumawati (2009) who quote from Utusan Malaysia, 16th November 2006 that 70% of students are weak in English subject in UPSR 2006. According to Asraf and Ahmad (2003), one of the best ways to increase students' language proficiency is to encourage them to read extensively. Hence the researcher is concerned to develop students' passion towards English reading. However it is undeniable that Malaysian students read much lesser than others of their age group (Ng, 2005). In addition, many students prefer to read reading

materials in their first language or mother tongues (Asraf & Ahmad, 2003; Low & Mohamad Jafre, 2011). It implies that the amount of their English reading is very little.

NILAM Reading Programme (*Nadi Ilmu Amalan Membaca*) is a reading programme which is commonly conducted in Malaysia to develop students' reading habits. It is conducted in both primary and secondary schools in Malaysia since 1998 (Ng, 2005). However, schools that have started the programme are still in the initial stage and many schools have yet to start the programme in year 2000 (Kaur & Thiyagarajah, 2000). Students are not actively engaged in it. Mentor Mentee system is adopted in this programme. Teachers play the role as mentors are accountable to track on students' NILAM Record Book twice per term and write constructive comments for students (Ng, 2005). Besides, students are rewarded certificates of achievement annually based on their progress in NILAM Record Book in order to encourage them to read more books. This programme is said to be not comprehensive as teachers are not the best option to be the mentor. Nowadays teachers bear heavy responsibilities in schools. Mentoring students in NILAM Programme definitely increase their burdens. In addition, rewarding system in this programme encourages students to read more effectively (Ng, 2005) but it is not applicable for long term basis. Reading for pleasure helps preparing students for lifelong learning (Ng, 2005) so students should be encouraged to read for fun and pleasure instead of reading to obtain rewards. Developing students' passion towards reading is important to enhance their reading habits.

Students desire to read if they are situated in the society of readers (Ng, 2005). A community of readers has to be created in order to encourage students to read. In buddy reading, students are situated in a small community of readers in which they read and complete reading activities together (Shegar, 2009). One way to increase students' reading habits is through buddy

reading (Mohamad Jafre, Pour-Mohammadi, & Low, 2011). However it has not been implemented in Malaysia although it is quite popular in many other countries.

Hazra, Loh, Fang, Zhuang, and Dai (2008) report on buddy reading in Singapore's primary school which manages to improve the reading capabilities of the reading buddies. The emphasis of the study is more to service learning as to provide help to those in need and to train those who are more capable to help those who are less capable. In this study, Primary 3 students are the tutors of Primary 1 and 2 students. Although it is considered a successful study overall, Primary 3 students are not suitable to be chosen as tutors of Primary 1 and 2 reading buddies as they are still young and it is very challenging to provide training to them.

Besides, a buddy reading study which is conducted by Shegar (2009) is mainly to evaluate 'Pause, Prompt, and Praise' approaches in the implementation of buddy reading. Each approach is analysed in order to determine the most effective one. The study also emphasizes on the training of using each approach which is provided to tutors. On the other hand, Mak, Coniam, and Chan (2008) successfully conducted a study on buddy reading in Hong Kong schools in which secondary school tutors' creativity in producing creative stories for the primary reading buddies is the main concern. On the other hand, the study includes peer support among tutors and reading buddies in the buddy reading stage as well as the peer support among tutors in writing the stories. Most of the participants provided positive responses. It is a success as it leads more secondary and primary schools in Hong Kong to implement buddy reading. Positive results that have already obtained in most of the studies are encouraging, so the researcher intends to look into it more comprehensively.

1.2 Statement of the Problem

Nowadays reading books is no longer attractive, especially to the youngsters. Only 20% of Malaysians read regularly and 80% of them are called "reluctant readers" (Pandian, 2000). Najeemah (2010) claims those who can read mostly spend their free time by participating in other recreational activity, instead of reading. There are many exciting recreational activities available, aside from reading books in this new era. For instance, the use of ICT has influenced the predominant cultures of our new generations (Ng, 2005). People would rather choose to read in the Internet than reading books. Most of the students read in the Internet about 3 hours a day but most of them read about 3 books a year (Low & Mohamad Jafre, 2011). The prominence of reading books is alarming. It is not surprising because people desire for something new. By injecting new elements, reading books can be very interesting and attractive.

Nevertheless most students remain playing passive role in formats of education today (Neo & Neo, 2003). Most of them are passive in reading as well. Passive reading refers to the process of reading in which the reader commits text information to memory and prepares to recall the information in its original structure (Ryder & Graves, 1988 as cited in Premadevi Raman, 2010). Most of the time, students repeat 'copying' the text information without really comprehending it when answering reading comprehension questions in exercises and examinations (Premadevi Raman, 2010). They commonly practice typical 'questions and answers' method and do not comprehend the texts by restructuring the information that they have read. This also leads to boring and de-motivating reading experience. Hence there is a need to develop active reading among students. As tutors' self-produced English reading materials are specially designed for reading buddies in this study, reading buddies can relate their personal experiences while reading as well as produce personal responses towards those reading materials.

Thus, they play active role while reading and understanding tutors' self-produced English reading materials.

It is also a norm seeing a teacher standing in front of the classroom to deliver her teaching to her students. Teachers have been the key persons to teach and guide students in schools. It is unquestionable that teachers play important roles in the process of teaching and learning, especially in English lessons. Teachers are more knowledgeable and experienced in guiding students in English reading as it can be complicated if students face difficulties in reading and understanding the texts. However, this kind of practice accustoms students' passive reading indirectly. According to Wang (2006), Asian students are more accustomed to a teacher-led way of learning and this leads to passive learning. Teachers teach and guide in the way to prepare their students to be able to answer in the examinations. They are restricted by syllabuses and limited time frame. They also tend to spoon-feed their students so that students can get everything ready easily to face the examinations. In English reading, teachers are irreplaceable but it can be beneficial for having elder students or more knowledgeable peers to guide younger or less capable students in certain context in order to create active reading. Cross-age tutoring supports young students' reading (Fisette, 1996) and provides authentic purposes for students to read (Oiesecke, 1993; Haluska, & Gillen, 1995, as cited in Fisher, 2001). According to Carol, Saundra, and Mary (2004), it is very important for the one who teaches to have knowledge of students' backgrounds in order to create effective ways of interacting with students. It is impossible for a teacher to know each of her student well as a teacher handles many classes and the number of students in each class is numerous. Being the tutors, elder students or more knowledgeable peers can approach the younger or less capable students more easily than the teachers. Cross-age tutoring establishes meaningful interaction among the students (Francine,

2014) and it helps to improve students' reading competence (Fuchs, Fuchs, Thompson, Svenson, Yen, Al Otaiba, Yang, McMaster, Prentice, Kazdan, & Saenz, 2002).

English textbooks and workbooks have been the main reading materials for students in dealing with English reading in their school years. It is undeniable that textbooks and workbooks are very useful in aiding students to answer well in examinations. However, textbooks accustom students' passive reading (Misco & Patterson, 2009). In addition, many textbooks and workbooks are designed using the approach which only focuses on specific language features and functions (Fauziah Ismail, Marzilah Abdul Aziz, & Tina Abdullah, 2008). These materials are rigid, less authentic, and less creative. Over emphasis on using English textbooks and workbooks familiarizes students to be passive in English reading and hinders them from developing passion towards English reading.

This leads to unsatisfactory English reading habits among ESL learners. The majority of them prefer to read reading materials in their first language or mother tongues (Asraf & Ahmad, 2003; Low & Mohamad Jafre, 2011). This is because they may encounter language problems (Kıray, 2002 as cited in Ögeyik & Akyay, 2009) include difficulty to understand the texts as there are many words that they do not understand the meaning of (Asraf & Ahmad, 2003). Gee (1999) suggests that competence in reading or a perception of competence promotes reading. Thus, it is important to help students in acquiring competence or a perception of competence in English reading in order to encourage them to read more English reading materials. It can be achieved by incorporating tutors' guidance in reading, encouraging reading buddies' cooperative learning in completing reading activities, as well as introducing tutors' self-produced English reading materials in which readers are the central focus.

1.3 Purpose of the Research

In this study, the researcher hopes to look at reading experience of reading buddies who have different English language proficiency. This study also acts as a platform for reading buddies to find individual pleasurable recreation in English reading. It is vital in building lasting interest in English reading. Hence it is also the researcher's interest to explore whether this study improve on reading buddies' English reading habits. The following are the research objectives:

i) To explore reading buddies' reading experience using tutors' self-produced English reading materials in buddy reading (according to their proficiency level).

ii) To explore reading buddies' reading experience via cross-age tutoring in buddy reading (according to their proficiency level).

iii) To explore reading buddies' reading experience via cooperative learning among them in buddy reading (according to their proficiency level).

iv) To investigate reading buddies' English reading habits during the implementation of this study (according to their proficiency level).

1.4 Research Questions

The following research questions are formulated to meet the research objectives:

1. How do tutors' self-produced English reading materials affect reading buddies' reading experience (according to their proficiency level)?

2. How does cross-age tutoring in buddy reading affect reading buddies' reading experience (according to their proficiency level)?

3. How does cooperative learning among reading buddies in buddy reading affect reading buddies' reading experience (according to their proficiency level)?

4. What are reading buddies' English reading habits during the implementation of this study (according to their proficiency level)?

1.5 Significance of the Research

This study is significant to students as it introduces English reading materials which are readers oriented instead of examination oriented. In this study, reading buddies are given opportunity to read reading materials which are reading buddies oriented as the reading materials are written and designed to be personally related to them. These readers oriented reading materials are more enriching and user-friendly than school textbooks and workbooks. They are purposive to enhance students' English reading experience, instead of remaining on the practice of passive reading. This is very helpful to foster students' interest towards English reading. Comparatively, students in Malaysia have associated reading with academic tasks and not for knowledge or pleasure most of the time (Inderjit, 2014) as most of the school textbooks and workbooks are examination oriented. According to Shazila, Puteri Rohani, Roszainora, Razita, Norliana, Elangkeeran, Gopala Krishnan, Mohan, Ramachandran, Wan Aida, & Nor Syamimi Iliani (2012), reading interest plays major role in fostering reading for pleasure. Thus, it is beneficial to provide reading buddies oriented English reading materials for reading buddies in this study. In relation to this, this study is significant for the Curriculum Development Centre (CDC) to be aware of the needs to look into students' personal interest in selecting English reading texts. Their reading experience should be given importance to, instead of training them to answer well in reading comprehension questions merely.

On the other hand, this study hopes to make students realize that the purpose of reading is not confined to examinations only but they also have to realize that reading is an active process. In relation to this, cooperative learning is practised in this study. According to Neo (2005), cooperative learning can be used as an alternative to the traditional learning mode in Malaysian context as it effectively promotes active student learning and learning of team skills. To be illustrated clearly, reading buddies have to complete some reading activities cooperatively in this study. By completing reading activities cooperatively, reading buddies learn to take responsibility in their own reading process. Meanwhile they are also responsible for their own group achievement in completing particular task. Thus, they are given opportunity to experience active reading via cooperative learning.

This study is significant to the educational development of our country as well. As Malaysia ventures into a new era of fully developed nation by the year 2020, literacy development must be achieved. As English language is internationally recognized, Malaysians' poor English reading habits probably a stumbling stone to achieve literacy development. Najeemah (2010) claims the effort to develop a society that has reading habits is crucial in forming a creative and innovative nation which is beneficial in realizing Vision 2020. The researcher is aware of this problem and hopes to enhance students' English reading habits by creating a small community of readers in buddy reading. Having friends who like to read and with whom they can discuss and recommend books also correlated significantly with positive attitudes towards reading (Nor Shahriza & Amelia, 2007). In this study, the reading buddies who are involved in this study form a small community of readers as they practice English reading and some reading activities together in buddy reading sessions. They are also provided English reading books for home reading and they have to share about their reading as well as to

recommend interesting English books to the other reading buddies during buddy reading sessions. Thus, it is possible to enhance students' reading habits if they are situated in a literacy environment in which communities of readers are created.

1.6 Limitations of the Research

Logistics problem is the major limitation of the study. The involvement of secondary Form 1 and primary Year 4 students needs careful planning in terms of time arrangement. The researcher has to arrange the date and time of each session in order to fit every participant. The day and time have to be planned carefully to avoid interrupting their normal classes. Furthermore it is problematic to obtain full attendance for every session. Sometimes they may encounter sickness which hinders them from attending school.

Besides, Form one tutors' writing skill to produce the reading materials is limited to their ability only. It is possible for them to write well but the vocabularies that they know are limited to Form 1 level. They do not possess professional writing skills as the professional storybooks writers. In terms of writing skill and vocabularies, tutors' self-produced English reading materials may not be as excellent as the other English reading materials in the market. However, tutors' self-produced English reading materials are reading buddies oriented, which are personally related to reading buddies' experience and interests.

1.7 Operational Definitions

(a) Buddy Reading

Burns (2006) claims one variation of buddy reading involves the pairing of older children with younger ones and it is known as cross-age tutoring while another variation involves the pairing of children of the same ages and it is known as peer-tutoring. Schnorr and Davern (2005) also claim another variation which bases on students' reading abilities in which the struggling readers being paired up in some cases. This study is more to the first variation. Thus, this study involves the older students to be the tutors and the younger students to be the reading buddies. However, as the purpose of this study is to create a community of readers, 'grouping' is adopted in this study. Besides, group learning ensures the full complexity of knowledge is shared amongst group members, but not owned by any individual only (Dillenbourg, 1999). In addition, the only characteristic of typical buddy reading requires readers sitting together with some kind of printed texts (Shegar, 2009). However, this study is not only about shared reading among the tutors and the reading buddies. Reading buddies are also involved cooperatively in completing some reading activities while tutors are responsible to guide them in reading and completing some reading activities.

 (b) Tutors' Self-produced English Reading Materials

In general, a focus on form (Rivers, 1968), a focus on the writer (White & Arndt, 1991) and a focus on the reader (Raimes, 1983) are the three approaches in producing ESL reading materials. In the context of this study, tutors' self-produced English reading materials are reading buddies oriented, which is inclined to the third approach (a focus on the reader). The reading materials are specifically written to match reading buddies' personal experiences and interests.

(c) English Reading Habits

Habits are defined as behavioural tendency to repeat well-practiced actions in recurring circumstances (Wood, Tam, & Witt, 2005). To put the definition in reading context, reading habits refer to individual's behavioural tendency to read in recurring circumstances. Sangkaeo (1999) as cited in Tella and Akande (2007) defines reading habits as the behaviours which resemble individual tastes of reading. Students' reading preferences are closely related to their reading habits. For the purpose of this study, the definition of reading habits is based on both definitions. According to the derived definition, the scope of reading habits in this study is only limited to the frequency of reading books and their reading preferences. In other words, reading buddies' English reading habits are measured by looking into these two aspects.

(d) Reading experience

Common words that are used to deal with reading experience in the magazine industry are "involvement with magazines" and "magazine wantedness" (Malthouse, Calder, and Eadie, 2003). They further explain that reading experience is about a person's thinking and feeling when they read. For the purpose of this study, the definition of reading experience is based on this definition. In other words, reading experience in this study deals with reading buddies' involvement in reading English reading materials and their "wantedness" towards English reading materials through buddy reading. Their thinking and feeling when they read in buddy reading are also considered.

1.8 Conclusion

This study attempts to investigate the implementation of buddy reading by grouping reading buddies who have different level of proficiency in English. They work together as a small reading community in which tutors' guidance is offered. They are also given opportunity to learn cooperatively in some reading activities. In other words, they read and learn at the same time. As the world today is full of challenging and interesting options, new element should be injected into buddy reading. Introducing tutors' self-produced English reading materials to reading buddies is considered interesting because the reading materials are specially written and designed for them. This leads to reading buddies' aesthetic and active reading experience which enable them to develop passion in English reading. In short, this study is worthwhile to be conducted.

CHAPTER TWO

LITERATURE REVIEW

2.0 Introduction

This chapter presents an overview of the related literature on reading, online reading, reading for pleasure, extensive reading, intensive reading, reading habits, cooperative learning, cross-age tutoring, the selection of reading materials, buddy reading and studies related to the buddy reading. The related theories which are the backbones of the study are also discussed in detail. The summation at the end of this chapter will provide a conceptual framework as a means of demonstrating the general idea of the study as well as the direction in which the study aims to proceed.

2.1 Reading

In general, reading is known as an act of understanding and interpreting something that are intended to be read. According to Sprick, Howard, and Fidanque (1998), reading is defined as the understanding of what is seen in a text, which is the ability of the reader to capture and process incoming visual information in order to obtain meaning from it. Bullock (1975), as cited in Ong (2002) stated that the reading process is active and demanding because it is more than a reconstruction of the writers' meaning but also to understand those meanings within the relevant experiences of the reader. According to Dietrich and Matthews (1968), cited in Harris and Sipay (1975), reading must be understood and interpreted as a tool of invention, relevance, and creativity that gives dimension to firsthand experience; and as an important means by which the intellectual inheritance is examined and developed. In other words, in the process of reading, the

reader makes an effort to decode what the author is trying to convey by relating the meaning to reader's background knowledge and experience. Besides, Davies (1995) stated that a reader has to follow and respond a message from a writer who is distant in space and time which makes reading process more complex. Different people define reading differently but reading always has a purpose (Berardo, 2006). Berardo (2006) explained about three main purposes of reading: for survival, for learning and for pleasure. This study focuses on the purpose for learning and for pleasure.

Reading, a basic tool of education (Makotsi, 2005 cited in Tella and Akande, 2007) aids the readers to improve in terms of many different aspects, not merely in terms of knowledge. As mentioned earlier, the readers have to deal with own experiences and prior knowledge while reading. As a reader's knowledge and experiences influence how he reads and processes a text (Berardo, 2006), it is good that reading buddies are exposed to tutors' self-produced English reading materials which are written and designed specifically to be relevant to reading buddies' personal experiences in this study. Thus reading can be exciting voyage to self discovery as it makes way for a better understanding of one's experiences (Tella, & Akande, 2007). By doing so, the process of reading is unique in which the readers learn to understand themselves better.

Krashen (1984) described reading as the flashlight under the blanket which helps to increase the ability to make better in the language overall. Reading skills are important during our lifespan and reading for pleasure could improve reading comprehension, writing style, vocabulary and grammatical development (Krashen, 1988). Eskey (1988) stated that reading is the only instrument to familiarize anyone with the words made out of language that writers create. This statement best explains how reading helps to improve one's language. Once the reader is familiar with the language, it is easier for the reader to interact with the text as well as

to learn and understand the language styles. Thus, the reader could improve his or her language ability by reading a lot. Frequent reading leads to the development of sophisticated language structure, higher levels of comprehension and improved word analysis skills which are associated with greater interest and skill development (International Reading Association, 2000).

According to Dupuy, Tse, and Cook (1996); Kim & Krashen (1997), and Krashen (1993) as cited in Gee (1999), reading is now recognized as an important source of input for second language acquisition, but the majority of ESL students do not choose to read. As we enter 21st century, this situation would have to be examined seriously because reading for knowledge and information becomes a crucial source for competitive advantage (Eyre, 2003). As stated by Freire (1981), reading the world always leads to reading the word, and reading the word entails reading the world persistently. Language and reality are closely connected to each other. To survive in this world, one must understand the world and the best way to do it is by reading. The importance of reading is in evidence and there is a demand for ESL students to read in order to strengthen themselves in this new era of globalization.

The use of appropriate materials and the inclusion of affective factors as well as attitude in reading are considered necessary for second language learners (Davies, 1995). Students' preferences and needs in selecting appropriate reading materials as well as their attitude in reading are important and these elements have to be considered as far as reading is concerned. According to Raths, Wassermann, Jonas, and Rothstein (1986), good readers are emotionally engaged, inspired to read, socially active in completing reading assignments, strategic in examining the interactive practices that aid comprehension. Hence it is indispensable to say that a good reading learning requires learners' motivation and their independent participation in reading activities.

2.1.1 Intensive and Extensive Reading

Intensive reading is defined as reading small amount of texts and it usually involves translation exercises (Shen, 2008). Intensive reading requires students to read through texts slowly, understand each new word and phrase that they have encountered, and analyze the grammatical structure if needed (Zhang, 1997). As students grasp the meaning of the text by analyzing each word or sentence in it, they are instructed to obtain detailed comprehension and skill practice (Powell, 2005). In addition, students are instructed to use methods such as skimming, scanning, and summarizing in intensive reading in order to monitor their understanding while reading (Porcaro, 2005). However, students' attention is largely focused on features of the text such as the lexical and syntax elements (Porcaro, 2005) and may cause students' failure to notice other important aspects of the texts such as the related cultural knowledge.

Extensive reading involves large amount of reading (Al-Homoud, & Schmitt, 2009; Shen, 2008) and the reading materials are often self-selected (Al-Homoud, & Schmitt, 2009; Kembo, 1993). Self selected texts encourage students to enjoy their reading, develop their reading competence at their own pace, and in turn increase their motivation to read (Meng, 2009). Students read for the purpose of pleasure and general information in extensive reading (Al-Homoud & Schmitt, 2009; Porcaro, 2005). It is also intended to develop good reading habits among students, encourage their positive attitudes towards reading, and strengthen their knowledge of vocabulary and sentence structure (Richards, & Schmidt, 2002 as cited in Meng, 2009) Besides, extensive reading is called as free reading or home reading (Powell, 2005). Thus, extensive reading can be carried out both in and outside the classroom without rigorous supervision (Kembo, 1993). This study is inclined towards the practice of extensive reading,

instead of intensive reading. Although tutors' self written creative reading materials are the main material of this study, the reading buddies are also exposed to different genres of reading materials which are available in the bookstores and they are given opportunity to select their favourite books to bring home for reading. This promotes positive attitudes towards reading among the reading buddies and supports their home reading simultaneously.

There are some arguments regarding the effectiveness of intensive and extensive reading. Intensive reading is more effective than extensive reading if the purpose of reading is to learn the meaning of words (Brown, 2009). However, reading is not only about learning new vocabularies. There are many other important elements regarding reading, such as students' comprehension towards the texts, their reading fluency, students' motivation to read and so forth. In general, extensive reading strengthens students' confidence, vocabulary, reading skills, and reading comprehension (Al-Homoud & Schmitt, 2009; De Morgado, 2009). In extensive reading, students read texts that are appropriate for their levels and they read mainly for general understanding, thus the density of new words is low to ensure reading fluency (Al-Homoud & Schmitt, 2009). Besides, students who take part in extensive reading read self-selected texts which follow their own interest (Powell, 2005), thus they are motivated to read faster to see the climax and the ending of the story (Al-Homoud, & Schmitt, 2009). Furthermore, students who participate in extensive reading show interest to continue reading by their own intention (Al-Homoud, & Schmitt, 2009). In other words, the extensive readers are more likely to develop reading habits than the intensive readers.

2.1.2 Reading for Pleasure

Reading for pleasure refers to reading that is initiated by own intention and it often involves the readers' expectation towards satisfaction that they will obtain from their reading (Clark, & Rumbold, 2006). Students who read for pleasure usually involve in extensive reading. Besides, they choose reading materials, reading time, and place according to suitability and preferences (Clark, & Rumbold, 2006). Reading for pleasure is usually associated with personal purposes and human needs (Cremin, 2007). This study encourages the reading buddies to read for pleasure as many different genres of books are presented to them. From the titles and cover pages of the books, they can select any of them which meet their interests, purposes, and needs. On the other hand, tutors' self written creative reading materials are also intended to lead them to be delighted in reading.

According to Guthrie and Alvermann (1999) as cited in Cremin (2007), students' positive attitude towards reading is positively correlated with reading for pleasure. Clark and Rumbold (2006) added that motivation is the most influential factor in inspiring students to read for pleasure. Hence attention should be given to strategies that motivate students in reading in order to foster pleasure in reading. However the practice of reading for pleasure among students is insufficiently supported by many schools and educators (Cremin, 2007). Thus it is very beneficial to look into it more comprehensively in this study.

Although reading for pleasure is conceived as recreational activity, reluctant readers and motivated readers value pleasure reading differently. Reluctant readers believe pleasure reading as an assignment which is beneficial to their intellectual growth while good readers believe pleasure reading as a recreational activity (Poppe, 2005). According to Poppe (2005), most of

the reluctant readers perceive reading as burdensome activity and they prefer to do other recreational activities. On the other hand, the act of pleasure reading is very valuable for the good readers because they perceive reading as an adventure and exploration of new things (Poppe, 2005). Obviously, good readers are likely to read more as they are motivated to do it and this brings about improvement in terms of vocabulary and language skills (Clark & Rumbold, 2006). Reluctant readers will be left behind if they remain to be negative towards reading. Thus the purpose of involving reading buddies who have different level of proficiency in English in this study is to provide opportunity for good, intermediate, and poor readers to learn together and influence each other positively in a group.

2.1.3 Creative Reading

Creative reading is conceived as creative art and it captures the imagination of reader in ways that ultimately lead to creative thought and expression (Small & Arnone, 2011). Grant, Hutchison, Hornsby, and Brooke (2008) believed that creative ways of learning offer more opportunities to engage students holistically in learning. Ben-Yosef (2010) further stated that creative reading is comprehensive in terms of language, culture and ability levels. Hence it allows every reader, in spite of individual diversities, to discover personal meaning and creatively respond to the chosen text. On the other hand, reading is alive with built-in reward scheme (Ben-Yosef, 2010). Hence creative reading encourages students to enjoy the reading activity itself instead of providing external rewards (Small & Arnone, 2011) in order to inspire students to read throughout their lives.

In order to provide pleasurable reading experience to students, Small and Arnone (2011) suggested that wide range of reading materials must be exposed to students both at schools and at home. Meanwhile they also stated that creative reading activities encourage students' autonomy in selecting reading materials and the ways of reading. Ben-Yosef (2010) agreed by claiming that students are motivated when they take control over their reading, however it should be students' goal to read for their interest, imagination and desire in reality. Thus this study encourages students to read more by providing them a number of English reading materials and they are free to choose their preference reading materials to be read at home.

Curiosity is a critical element of creativity, however it is challenging to foster curiosity and creativity in learners today (Arnone, 2003). Pascal and Bertram (2000) stated that creativity can be typified by learners who exhibit curiosity and interest in life. Curiosity and interest are two important elements to value creativity and both are interrelated. Keller (1987) as cited in Arnone (2003) recognized the importance of arousing curiosity in gaining and maintaining learners' attention, which is the first component of ARCS Model. Arnone and Small (1995) as cited in Arnone (2003) added that curiosity is also an essential factor in the other components of ARCS Model—relevance, confidence, and satisfaction. Furthermore, students' innate curiosity is a powerful means to promote pleasurable reading among students (Small & Arnone, 2011). Curiosity can be tapped by introducing them a new idea or a new situation and inducing them to explore further (Arnone, 2003). It is believed that the concept of producing original stories by the older students to be read by younger students as well as the idea of older students providing tutoring to the younger ones is considered new to students in the Malaysian context. Thus, students' curiosity and interest of learning can be enhanced.