DISCOVERING STUDENTS' COGNITIVE PERSPECTIVE ON THE USE OF COOPERATIVE LEARNING IN EFL CLASSROOM

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Abstrak

This study aims to explore the students' cognitive perspectives when learning English in the classroom using the cooperative learning method. Cooperative learning is a learning method in which students with different learning abilities are conditioned to work together in a group to achieve the same learning goals. Johnson et al. (2013) added that in cooperative learning students can work together and maximize their learning. The data collection technique used in this study was semi-structured interviews conducted on three students as participants in this study. The data was processed qualitatively using thematic analysis. The findings of this study indicated positive cognitive perception obtained from students' learning experiences, namely, the discovery of partners that become supportive system in learning development and also the improvement of self-accountability in learning English.

Kata Kunci: cognitive perspective, cooperative learning, EFL classroom.

Abstract

Penelitian ini bertujuan untuk mengeksplorasi perspektif kognitif siswa ketika belajar bahasa Inggris di kelas dengan menggunakan metode pembelajaran kooperatif. Pembelajaran kooperatif adalah metode pembelajaran dimana siswa dengan kemampuan belajar yang berbeda dikondisikan untuk bekerja sama dalam kelompok untuk mencapai tujuan pembelajaran yang sama. Johnson dkk. (2013) menambahkan bahwa dalam pembelajaran kooperatif siswa dapat bekerja sama dan memaksimalkan pembelajarannya. Teknik pengumpulan data yang digunakan dalam penelitian ini adalah wawancara semi terstruktur yang dilakukan terhadap tiga orang mahasiswa sebagai partisipan dalam penelitian ini. Data diolah secara kualitatif dengan menggunakan analisis tematik. Temuan penelitian ini menunjukkan adanya persepsi kognitif yang positif yang diperoleh dari pengalaman belajar siswa yaitu ditemukannya Mitra yang menjadi sistem pendukung dalam pengembangan pembelajaran dan juga peningkatan akuntabilitas diri dalam pembelajaran bahasa Inggris.

Keywords: kelas EFL, pembelajaran kooperatif, perspektif kognisi.

INTRODUCTION

Teaching and learning English as a foreign language is certainly challenging. Besides the diversity of the students, the precision of teachers in determining the proper method will be able to help themselves manage classroom activities and reach their learning goals. Mina & Brady (2010) stated that cooperative learning has become a popular form of active pedagogy and commonly used in academic institution. It indicates that the affects of cooperative learning encourage significant positive progress of students in their learning. Therefore, several teachers decide to use cooperative learning as their teaching strategy in classroom activities. In short, it

can be concluded that cooperative learning method gathers students into group in order to accomplish their goals by utilizing the cooperation in group.

Cooperative learning (hereafter CL) refers to variety of learning method where the students with different learning ability work together in small groups to enhance better in classroom and to accomplish their shared learning goals asthe core of learning and teachiing activities (Tran Dat V. et. al, 2019; Setiawan & Ismaniati, 2018). CL is also described as an educational methodology based on small group of heterogeneous students who work together (Canabate et al., 2019). By gathering the heteregeneous students in one group, it is able to encourage their interpersonal relationship among other students. The discussion occured in the group stimulates their trust, confidence and eloboration of the way they share ideas, asking some questions, add some explanations and give some reasons and all of it are tied into cooperation. It is also supported by Johnson & Johnson (2011) that in cooperative learning, students of each group must have the trust that they have same learning goals or shared goals.

Cooperative learning is believed to provide benefits and positive impacts for both teacher and students (Saborit et al., 2016; Surian & Damini, 2014; Kyndt et al., 2013). Hsiung's (2012) study supported that cooperative learning could promote effective learning condition than individualistic learning. Effective learning condition could be showed as the students are engaged and attracked with material or tasks given and they focus learning and accomplishing it with their group members. It means that each students are able to fulfill their needs and accomplish their learning goals. Whereas in EFL context the need or the goal is to utilize the use of English as target language, Astuti & Lammers (2017) brought the good news that their study showed cooperative learning has significant contribution in promoting second and foreign language. It tends that CL brings significants benefits to help the EFL learners to accomplish their learning goals by giving them opportunities to elaborate their knowledge and the use of target language by group discussion. The study of Gudinge (2018) shows the results that cooperative learning put the teacher and students into joy atmosphere during learning teaching process and it also promotes motivation. In addition, cooperative learning helps the teacher to apply the appropiate method in managing classroom activity due to recognizing the types of learners or students is a good thing to do by teachers before starting the lesson.

Since CL is very helpful and essential method in students' learning, CL is close to cognitive view of learning which provides more opportunities for students to build up and evaluate their knowledge (Yassin et al., 2018). It is also supported by Casey & Goodyear (2016), cooperative learning can help learners to achieve the four basic learning outcomes: cognitive, social, affective and physical. In cooperative learning, students are supported to express their

knowledge. Thus, they can share information to the others and receive new information from the others that is the basic of CL in supporting students' to build their knowledge. It is also included in CL essential elements formed by Johnson and Johnson (2011) that is CL assist promotive interaction which occurs when students share information, help, support, encourage and praise each other. The process stimulated the students to gain more meaningful knowledge and information as their learning goals or outcomes. For those reasons, CL is convincing and proven has significant role in enhancing students' learning outcomes that is disclosing wide opportunities for students to build their own knowledge by the intense interaction occured.

Related to numbers of studies showed that CL provides significant effects toward students' learning, the present research intend to take part in this field. Even though many relevant studies conducted to CL show favorable results, however, it still get little scholarly attention on revealing how CL method works (see Astuti & Lammers, 2017). It is the motive of the present study to raise the phenomena about cooperative learning exactly in EFL context in secondary school students. The present study intend to explore the students' cognitive perspective on cooperative learning implementation in EFL classroom. Cognitive perspective itself refers to the way students build their knowledge through the interaction in CL. It is a descriptive case study which is going to focus on describing the cognitive perspective of students on the implementation of cooperative learning in classroom. Underpinning the notion stated by Johnson & Johnson (2011), cooperative learning has powerful effects and shows positive results, thus, the present study desires to discuss "What are students' cognitive perspective on the implementation of cooperative learning in EFL classroom?"

METHOD

This present study is a descriptive case study that is used to describe an intervention or phenomenon and the real-life context in which it occurred (Yin, 2003). It is a qualitative study with a descriptive case study approach that aims to get an in-depth understanding about a single case risen of the researcher (Gog, 2015). The further findings will provide descriptive explanation about the focus target of research which can answer the formulation of the problem. Descriptive case study design is also typically involve the researcher to take the data by focus individual and/or group interview with semi-structured interview as the guidelines (Bradway et al., 2017; Neergaard et al., 2009; Sandelowski, 2000). It is appropriate that the present study choosed individual interview to collect the data and provides semi-structured interview as the interview guidelines**.**

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Setting and Participants

The research was conducted in the junior high school located in Tasikmalaya, West Java, Indonesia. This school was choosen because of three considerations: (1) The cooperative learning are oftenly used by the teacher in this school; (2) The students with cooperative learning method treatment by the teacher have positive academic progress and attitudes; (3) The researcher had experienced as pre-service teacher at this school for two months. There were three students with average age of 13 to 14 years old in different gender and levels as the participants in this research were interviewed. The levels are divided into high, medium and low of students' academic performances in English learning. The recruitment of the students followed the school ethical's clearance.

Data Collection Technique

The data were collected through semi-structured interview in order to get the information regarding to my research questions. Alvehus (2013) stated that the interviewer should prepare open-ended questions which can open the discussion and avoiding kind of yes or no questions (Gudinge, 2019). *Bahasa* were used in the interview in order to make the communication runs easier for the students. The procedures of collecting the data, firstly the researcher asked for permission to the school and concerned parties, who are the participants. After getting the permission and agreement, the researcher collected the data through interview to the students by visiting their houses one by one because the face-to-face learning at school was still not allowed due to pandemic situation.

Data Analysis Technique

The data from the interview were transcribed. Then, the data were analysed using Braun and Clarke's (2006) thematic analysis. This kind of analysis provides flexibility for the researcher to discover the most suitable themes that represent the findings and the aims of the study. This analysis consists of six main stages, namely familiarization with data, generating initial codes, searching for themes, reviewing themes, naming the themes, and producing the final report.

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

Discovering Partners as a Supportive System in Learning Development

Promotive Interaction

For some students, to accomplish learning target or learning goals and fulfil their learning needs are quite difficult. They sometimes are harder to finish the tasks or even to understand the material given by the teacher. CL gives them opportunities to achieve their learning goals.

Excerpt 1

Q: What do you think if you do self-learning than group learning?

*"Yes, **I found more difficult if I do learning only by myself. But it got easier if my friends help me moreover in group discussion.**"*

(Semi-structured interview, P2/Male, taken on August 2020, Author's Translation)

Excerpt 2

*"......**learning by group is more pleasant..we can help each other..we just can share our answers**"*

(Semi-structured interview, P1/Female, taken on August 2020, Author's Translation)

P2 (second participant), after being questioned about individualistic learning, confessed that it is more difficult when he sometimes had to learn the lesson by himself. At the same time, P1 (first participant) also admitted that learning by group is more pleasant as they can help each other. She also can share her thought to all group members. It is indicated that CL facilitates students to help each other the main thing is to accomplish their learning goals. That is compatible with Gillies (2004) and Ajaja (2010) asserted that cooperative learning is the suitable method to actively promotes each other learning of students. On the other hand, Hsiung (2012) also supported, CL could promote effective learning condition than individualistic learning. It was proven by what P2 and P3 had experienced:

Excerpt 3

Q: What do you feel when you are learning in group with your friends?

*"**It is make us easier to do the task.**"*

(Semi-structured interview, P2/Male, taken on August 2020, Author's Translation)

Excerpt 4

Q: What do you feel when you are learning in group with your friends?

*"....**we can learn and help each other with friends**"*

(Semi-structured interview, P3/Male, taken on August 2020, Author's Translation)

There was noted that P2 and P3 experienced that their friends in their group kindly helped them finish the task and make them easier to understand the lesson. Various interactions and "helping each other" activities occured widely assist them to develop their learning outcomes. It is supported by Casey & Goodyear (2016) that CL is able to help learners achieve

the four basic learning outcomes: cognitive, social, affective and physical. Yassin *et* al., (2018) emphasized that CL is close to cognitive view of learning due to CL gives more opportunities for students to evaluate and build up their knowledge.

Positive Interdependence and Group Processing

As the place where heterogenous gathered, CL certainly consists of students with different ability. They are demanded to work together to accomplish the shared learning goals. It is even Johnson & Johnson (2011) asserted that in CL, each students in a group must have trust that they have same learning goals or shared goals to accomplish. Thus, they can start to do cooperation to achieve it (Hidayati et al., 2021).

Excerpt 5

Q: How did the cooperation run in your group during learning?

*"...**we can ask how to do this, how is the way to finish this..we complete each other..if there are anyone still wrong, we correct them**"*

(Semi-structured interview, P2/Male, taken on August 2020, Author's Translation)

Excerpt 6

Q: What advantages do you get when you are learning in group?

*"**I know more.....my knowledge...I don't know initally the things then I ask for help from other friends so that I knew then. I can expand my knowledge**"*

(Semi-structured interview, P3/Male, taken on August 2020, Author's Translation)

The data showed the positive interdependence elements of CL. It pictured that students take advantages for themselves from working on group. So that, they keep working with their group to accomplish their learning goals. It is line with Canabate's et al., (2019) statement that positive interdependence refers to the condition when the the group succeed achieve the goal can only be said if all the each members can reach the learning goals. It potentially build eager desire to utilize their best teamwork to cooperate each other by helping and motivate each other.

Excerpt 7

Q: How do your friends in group help you?

*"**They immediately helped..from the beginning till the end..**Zia said..San, this is the first words, it's the second, it's the third, it's the fourth, it is the fifth..oh I see, I answered. She said "okay **if you've already understood you can try it by yourself, if there are still the things you don't understand you can ask me again**"*

(Semi-structured interview, P3/Male, taken on August 2020, Author's Translation)

The experience of P3 (third participant) pointed that through CL, he can freely ask for help to other group members. The data showed CL disclosed wide opportunities for all students from different abilities to improve their performance and get better learning outcomes (Fauziyah et al., 2021). As cited by Leasa and Corebima (2017, p. 2), Pham affirmed that CL allows high and low ability students to motivate and help each other which directs them to improve their academic performances. It is equitable so that all students can take it chance to enhance their academic performances and learning outcomes.

Excerpt 8

Q: Can you give the example what kind of help do you get from your friends?

*"Hmmm...it is such **when there is a word we don't know the meaning of it.. for the example..what is the Bahasa of school?..It is 'sekolah'..other group members informed us..hmm yes, it is just they let us know the meaning of words that we don't know yet.."***
(Semi-structured interview, P2/Male, taken on August 2020, Author's Translation

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Excerpt 9

Q: Can you give the example what kind of help do you get from your

f riends?

*"**I often found new vocabularies**"*

(Semi-structured interview, P1/Female, taken on August 2020, Author's Translation)

The data showed that the students get new informations and knowledge or give informations they knew through group interaction. It pointed P2 and P1 students could get some of new vocabularies they had not known yet from their friends during cooperative learning activities in classroom. It is one of main essential elements of CL defined by Johnson & Johnson (2011) that is promotive interaction occurs when students share information, help, support encourage and praise each other. Learning process in CL condition stimulated students to gain more meaningful information and knowledge as their learning goals or outcomes.

Improving Self-Accountability in Learning English

Accomplishing tasks together through work in group is able to ease the barriers and difficulties faced by the students. Throughout the process of learning in CL circumstance, the students not only strive for the achievement of their group but they also have valuable opportunity to improve their own ability on self-learning further.

Excerpt 10

Q: What happened after your friend was helped by other group members?

*"...so, my friend..**he can do it by himself later on..after he was given example or the meaning of the words he didn't understand.**.for example...he is ordered to arrange the sentences...if other friends had informed him the meaning of each words then he can do it by himself later..**he became happy because he could do it by himself** "*

(Semi-structured interview, P2/Male, taken on August 2020, Author's Translation)

Excerpt 11

*Q: so..**if you had been given the explanation, you can do it by yourself**?*

*P3: Yes, I really thought like that. **I have to be able to do it later***

(Semi-structured interview, P2/Male, taken on August 2020, Author's Translation)

It is what Johnson & Johnson (2011) defined about individual accountability that is the responsibility to strive for the team and also for the development of themselves individually. The data showed that it is clearly assisted in CL. Within cooperative learning condition, students seek benefits both for themselves and all other group members (Johnson et al., 2013). The students are encouraged to have resposibility to understand the lesson and finish the tasks given. Thus, further they can apply or use the information and knowledge they had received during work in group when they have to do it by themselves.

Excerpt 12

*"So it just like that.. **my friends can do it by themselves**..for example if she was asked to come forward by the teacher when it's our group's turn..we asked her to represent our group to come forward. And.....**she didn't fear anymore because she got confident that she can do it..because we helped them**"*

(Semi-structured interview, P1/Female, taken on August 2020, Author's Translation)

P1 (first participant) confessed that helping their friends make them more confident to do kind of tasks by themselves. This is line with Listiadi's (2019) statement that in CL principles, the students must have the responsibility to learn the tasks together but they also have responsibility to do it individually. In short, by the assistance of their group members, the students got more confident to accomplish the task given without being fear or hesitate anymore. Thus, they are able to enhance their academic performance and their self-ability.

Gibbon (2015) argued that well-designed group work provides many advantages in terms of language acquisition and social development for EFL learners (Gudinge, 2019, p.12). Within group work, social interaction skill is also needed to improve.

Excerpt 13

Q: What can you do during the learning with group?

"we do discussion and question-answer each other in group"

"we sometimes give advices to each other."

(Semi-structured interview, P1/Female, taken on August 2020, Author's Translation)

Excerpt 14

Q: Why do you think that learning in group is better?

".....because **we can share our opinion in group, strenghten tolerance and friendship."**

(Semi-structured interview, P2/Male, taken on August 2020, Author's Translation)

Excerpt 15

"Hmmm..ya it is just like...let's we ask Susan first or the other..later on we do it together."

(Semi-structured interview, P2/Male, taken on August 2020, Author's Translation)

The data showed that working on group through CL gives them more opportunities and encourage them to interact each other and express themselves freely. The interactions occured foster their social interaction ability. Corebima & Leasa (2017) believed that social interaction occured in cooperative learning provides significant benefits in cognitive achievement. Indeed, CL assist the students improve their cognitive achievement by means of improving their social interaction skills.

CL showed that various interaction and activities occured during the classroom activities provides beneficial inputs for students to develop and improve their self-ability. The data depicted, CL brings students to the experience of how they get and sense the responsibility in self-learning, more confident to do the tasks by themselves and encourage themselves to improve their social interaction skills. Furthermore, it leads them to the improvement of cognitive or academic performances.

CONCLUSION

As the result of this research, the students' cognitive perspective during the implementation of cooperative learning in EFL classroom showed positive outcomes. It revealed by two findings: (1) Discovering Partners as Supportive System on Learning Development, and (2) Improving Self-Accountability in English Learning. It showed that CL faciliates the students learning positively and effecttively. In conclusion, CL provides significant role in students' learning academic performances. The students' cognitive perspectives displayed that through CL, they get many advantages related to their English learning process. During CL implementation, they discovered supportive system in their group and they could utilized the opportunities to improve their self-accountability in learning English. The possible suggestions for the future research are provided to develop this field of study. This study could be developed by involving more participants to broaden the perspectives towards cooperative learning that also could make broader comparison. Inviting more students by different grades or even different school will present various perspectives.

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