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STUDENTS' ENGAGEMENT IN EFL CLASS THROUGH CREATIVE TEACHING

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Abstract

Penelitian ini berdasar pada fenomena yang dibuktikan dengan studi awal melalui kuesioner terhadap siswa di 5 sekolah di Surabaya Barat dan Utara yang menunjukkan bahwa kurangnya minat dan keterlibatan perilaku siswa kota Surabaya dalam pembelajaran bahasa Inggris di kelas. Sebanyak 64% siswa menganggap pelajaran agama lebih penting dari pada bahasa Inggris. Selain itu 54% siswa menganggap bahasa Inggris merupakan pelajaran yang sulit karena banyak kosa kata yang tidak mereka ketahui. Ironisnya, mereka tidak didukung oleh peran serta orang tua tentang pentingnya bahasa Inggris. Sebanyak 88% tidak mengikuti pelajaran tambahan bahasa Inggris di luar sekolah. Penelitian ini menggunakan desain kualitatif untuk mengetahui bagaimana keterlibatan perilaku siswa pada saat guru mengajar dengan metode mengajar kreatif. Subyek dari penelitian ini adalah 40 siswa dari 1 sekolah di Surabaya. Pengamatan dan rekaman video digunakan untuk mengumpulkan data. Hasil yang signifikan dari penelitian ini adalah 90% siswa terlibat aktif, 5% siswa terlibat pasif dan 5% siswa tidak terlibat dalam pengajaran kreatif. Berdasarkan hasil penelitian ini, dapat disimpulkan bahwa minat dan keterlibatan perilaku siswa dalam pembelajaran bahasa Inggris dapat ditingkatkan dengan melalui mengajar kreatif.

Kata kunci: Student's Engagement, Creative Teaching

1. INTRODUCTION

In English Foreign Language (EFL) class, teaching English does not always run as it has been designed. The students' engagement contributes to the matter in teaching and learning process. Most students seem to be reluctant in learning English since they have difficulty in English vocabulary. Most students are unable to understand what their English teachers say in English utterances. As a result, the students are incapable of speaking English as well as lack of engagement during the EFL class. Relating to this phenomenon, the preliminary study about students' interest in English has been conducted to students at 5 junior high schools in the North and West part of Surabaya. Through the shared questionnaire and 166 returned responses, 64 percent students state that religion is more essential than English. Moreover, 54 percent students feel that English is a difficult subject. On the other hand, they are not interested in improving their English competence. 88 percent students are reluctant to have English course besides their English lesson at school. While such situation happens during the teaching and learning process, students are lack of engagement in learning.

There is significant dissimilarity in how student engagement is defined and measured. The word of student engagement is generally used to define meaningful student involvement during the learning environment (Zepke & Leach, 2010;

Martin & Torres, 2017). It can be stated that student engagement in learning is the matter of how to create the positive learning atmosphere in which it involves the student participation in learning actively. Similar to the statement above, Taylor & Parsons (2011) states that engagement needs a deeper mutuality in the teaching and learning practice. Student engagement increases as they enthusiastically perform their learning in cooperation with teachers, contain with deep theoretical understanding, and provide their own ideas to construct new knowledge or new practices. Based on the statement above, it seems that a teacher has a vital role to minimize the existence of boredom so that the students are engaged in the classroom. There is a necessity for teachers to perform creative teaching to engage students in learning.

In recent years, there have been several studies focused on creative teaching. Tanggaard (2011) conducted creative teaching study on three Danish primary and secondary schools. It was found that creative teaching can really develop creativity both for teachers and students. However, it was not included the impact on students' engagement. Another study was also conducted in creative teaching strategy. Lou & Chen (2012) presented blended creative teaching to 46 second year students from the department of early childhood education in a vocational high school. The result revealed that students possessed positive

engagement and strengthening toward the blended creative teaching model. However, the engagement of vocational high school students in the previous study were different from the current study since the recent study observes the students' engagement of the junior high school students.

Several studies about creative teaching also existed in the following years. Obradović, Bjekić, & Zlatić (2015) offered **creative teaching with ICT support for students with dyslexia**. The result of the study showed there was an improvement of reading skill for the students having specific learning disabilities (SLD). On the other hand, it did not state the improvement on students' engagement. Another study was also conducted on creative teaching. Another study about creative teaching are still in progress in 2017. Nuraida (2017) investigated creative teaching in the teacher trainee. However, it was focused on creative problem solving not students' engagement.

The reviewed studies above have shown that there were several studies conducted on creative teaching with different findings. However, the studies did not investigate the role of creative teaching on students' engagement. Therefore, it is necessary to observe students' engagement in EFL classroom through creative teaching.

In one meeting lesson, while a teacher is teaching one material, initially the teacher should observe the base competence and learning indicators that will be achieved in the meeting as stated in the lesson plan. However, the creative teacher should change their teaching procedure based on the situational condition to have an effective teaching and learning process. If the students are in a bored condition, in the last lesson hour in which the students feel very exhausted, or even in a transition after having sport and break hour, a creative teacher can start the class by conducting an interesting brainstorming, ice breaking, showing attention grabbing pictures, or holding light game as a part of situational teaching strategy. The use of various idea creation technique is considered as 21st century creativity skill (Pirto, 2011). In the main activity, the teacher should run the prepared lesson plan. The teacher is able to implement the creative teaching steps based on the designed lesson plan. However, the creative teacher is able to simplify and modify the plan into a situational one based on the current teaching and learning condition to achieve the indicators of basic competency.

Relating to the practice of creative teaching, the subject of this research is a creative teacher who has applied creative teaching. However, the teaching implementation has not been reported in a scientific research.

2. METHODOLOGY OF RESEARCH

In this study, a qualitative research method is conducted since this study is intended to describe

the students' engagement while creative teaching practices are being applied. The subject of the research is the students of class 7F. They are 40 seventh graders of junior high school in the same class in Surabaya. The chosen class is the most passive one whose students are from the mixed tribe of Javanese and Madurese. Moreover, most of them are hardly engaged in learning due to their lack of prior knowledge. As a result they show lack of engagement during the teaching and learning process. Those are the reason why the researcher chooses them as the research subjects. Each student is labelled by his/her absent number, so that it enables to be observed.

Some actions of the students **during the teaching and learning process** are the data of this research, which are taken from observation as the source of the data. Action can be in the form of behavior, activities, practices, conversation, interaction, language, feeling and emotion. In briefly, from the action, the students' behavioral engagement can be classified as being actively engaged, passively engaged, and not engaged.

The data collecting is conducted five times during the teaching and learning practice. The researcher observes the students' engagement during the implementation of creative teaching practice. At the same time, the researcher also has someone to record what the teacher and the students do in a video. The video are taken during 80 minutes or the same as 2 lesson hours in each observed lesson.

To answer the research question, the researcher observes the students' actions taken from the instrument of observing students' engagement as well as the video recording to search for evidence of engagement of every student. Then the existed engagements are classified according to the aspects of behavioral engagement. Students having behavior of asking questions, responding to questions, volunteering information, sharing ideas, or manipulating materials are classified as actively engaged. Students with behavior of listening but not responding to questions, not asking questions, and being involved but appearing disinterested in the assigned task are categorized as passively engaged. Moreover, students showing behavior of being unresponsive, uninterested, distracted, or involved in off-task behaviors are ordered as disengaged based on the theory of creative teaching skills in the 21st century (Pirto, 2011)

3. RESULT AND DISCUSSION

In general, there are 2 creative teaching practices conducted by the teacher during the 5 observed lessons. The creative teaching practices are *Word on Word (WoW)* and *Hot Spin*. During the five observed lessons, most students were actively engaged. Specifically, the result was 90% students were actively engaged, 5% students were passively engaged and the rest of 5% students were

disengaged. The findings answered the research question.

Actively Engaged Students

The high level of actively engaged students resulted from all observed lessons. During the implementation of *Word on Word (WoW)* and *Hot Spin* creative teaching practices, most students enjoyed the lessons so that the average of 90% students were actively engaged during the first to the fifth observations.

The highest rate of actively engaged students happened in the third observed lesson in which 100% students were actively involved in the teaching and learning process. This result was contributed from the teacher's creativity in applying the meaningful teaching and learning process. Moreover, the use of *dangdut* music in *Hot Spin* which was very familiar to the students increased the students' engagement. The students were very acquainted with the song of Via Valen, the famous *dangdut* singer. While the students were moving the ball and being accompanied by *dangdut* music, all students participated enthusiastically. When the music stopped and one student got the ball, all students laughed cheerfully. Nobody appeared disengaged in this learning session. The same engagement was also existed when the students implemented *WoW* teaching practice. While the teacher was showing 2 attention grabbing pictures, all students laughed. It indicated that the teacher was successful in attracting the students' engagement. The students also reflected 4 indicators of active engagement including responding to questions, telling information, sharing ideas and working on teaching and learning materials. The only indicator missed by the students was asking questions since nobody was observed asking questions during the observed lesson. However, it was not influential to the result since the students had reflected 4 indicators of students' engagement.

The lowest rate of students' engagement happened in the fourth observed lesson when the teacher presented the material of describing places. There was a significant difference with other observed lessons in the percentage of actively engaged students, whose number achieved 62%. When the teacher implemented *Hot Spin* and *WoW* teaching practices, 18 students from 29 students joining the lesson reflected the indicators of active engagement. Nobody was observed asking questions, as stated in the first indicator of active engagement. The actively engaged students during the teaching and learning process can be observed in the following figure.



Figure 1. The actively engaged students during *Hot Spin* implementation

Passively Engaged Students

There were 2 meetings in which the students were observed as passively engaged students, consisting of 4 students in the fourth meeting and 1 student in the fifth meeting. During the implementation of *WoW* and *Hot Spin* teaching practices in the fourth meeting, student number 17 was observed laying his head on the table. Students number 1, 2, and 14 were laughing each other. It seemed that they were discussing funny thing out of the lesson. Moreover, student number 21 looked at her watch intensively indicating that she wanted to finish the lesson. Student number 22 put her two palms on her cheeks reflecting boredom. Furthermore, student number 26 was observed day dreaming. Moreover, the only student having passive engagement in the fifth observation was student number 26 who was observed day dreaming. The passively engaged students could be observed in the following figure.



Figure 2. The passively engaged student was laying head on the table

Disengaged Students

The disengaged students were also existed in the fourth and the fifth observed lessons, consisting of 7 disengaged students in the fourth observation and 1 disengaged student in the fifth observation. The fourth observation contributed the most disengaged students for several factors: the condition of fasting in *Ramadhan* month, just had got mathematics exam, the slow breeze from outside the class as well as underperformed teacher made the students uninterested in the teaching and learning process.

The implementation of *WoW* and *Hot Spin* teaching practices in the fourth observed lesson resulted on 7 disengaged students. Students number 1, 2 and 14 were observed laughing each other. It seemed that they were discussing funny thing out of the lesson. On the left and back corner, it was found two students who were busy reading their books. Students number 25 and 39 did not pay attention to their teacher. Moreover, Student number 30 was moving sight, not paying attention to the teacher. At last, Students number 30 and 36 were talking each other.

The only student showing uninterested action in the fifth observed lesson was student number 21. The disengaged student seemed to be uninterested due to his reluctance of moving the ball to his friends. It seemed that the student was bored with the repeated action conducted by the teacher. The condition of one of the disengaged students can be observed in the following figure.



Figure 3. The disengaged students were talking each other

4. CONCLUSION

Having observed the findings and relates them to the discussion, it is concluded that the creative teaching practice is necessary to be applied in teaching and learning process. *Word on Word* and *Hot Spin* as the creative teaching implementation in the five observed lessons really engage the students actively in the form of showing behavior to the teacher or among students, responding the teacher's questions as well sharing ideas.

The disengaged and passively engaged students were contributed from the students' anxiety of the delivered teaching materials as well as low performed teacher in the teaching and learning process. While the teacher was in active teaching performance, the students' engagement was also activated. In conclusion, there is a correlation between creative teaching practice and students' engagement so that creative teaching practices can improve the students' engagement.

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