

STUDENTS' PERCEPTIONS ON THE USE OF PROJECT-BASED DRAMA LEARNING FOR ENGLISH READING

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Abstract: Project-Based Learning provides students opportunities in engaging in a natural-driven context where they use language for talking about their activities. Similarly, Project-based Drama Learning offers beneficial doings which activate students' motivation, independence, potential, critical thinking and language use. This study aims to describe students' perception on the use of *Project-Based Drama Learning* in English language learning. The participants were 30 students who were enrolled in Literature in ELT (English Language Teaching) subject. A questionnaire was given to the students after the project completion. The data from questionnaire were then analyzed by having descriptive statistics. The result shows that most of the students gave agreement to the use of Project-Based Drama Learning. The participants believe that it could facilitate English learning. Additionally, the phases which exceedingly facilitate reading capability are Critical Reading and Character Analysis.

Keywords: *project-based learning, project-based drama learning, literature, Reading, Speaking*

The use of drama as a method has been widely practiced by researchers and scholars in the world. The results show that drama is quite effective in improving English language skills (Shokri & philip, 2013; Bengtsson, n.d; Rew & Moon, 2013). The use of drama can be a motivation for learners in the learning process. According to

Hismanoglu (2005), and Miller in Arzu (2008), learning through drama can improve reading ability and also students' oral abilities. Bengtsson (n.d) adds through drama, students can improve language skills because there are opportunities to respond affectively, cognitively and physically.

Project-Based Drama Learning is a modification to the typical use of drama in teaching language. Based on the writer's teaching experience when teaching Drama to EFL students, there was only limited source of teaching model for drama instruction in English language teaching. As a result, in 2015, Project-Based Drama Learning was designed and experimented to improve students' writing ability (Fiftinova & Zuraida, 2015). This was indicated by data in the form of an average score of students' writing achievement which increased from pre-test to post-test, from 42.90 to 56.28. In 2016, Project-Based Drama Learning was experimentally applied with the aim of obtaining information whether or not the Project-Based Drama Learning was able to improve students' reading ability. The results showed that Project-Based Drama Learning could improve reading achievement as the students' reading achievement average score enhanced from 56,05 in pre-test to 62,40 in post-test (Fiftinova & Hambali, 2016). It can be inferred that Project-Based Drama Learning could be an alternative for teaching literature (drama) in ELT.

Project-Based Drama Learning is a marriage between learning through Project-Based Learning (PBL) and learning drama both as technique and learning material. It is a learning process through a classroom-based drama whose ultimate goal is to stage a play after a series of activities like: Critical Reading, Character Analysis, Class Discussion, Script Writing, Cast of Characters and Team Formation, Hot Seat Interview, Team Presentation, Drama Practices, Rehearsal, and Drama in Stage. In one term, students prepare everything for staging drama by forming a teamwork consisting of players, directors, scriptwriters,

photographers, costume, make-up character, publishing, or camera man.

Project-Based Drama Learning is a learning model designed for both language learning and language teaching. In this case, Project-based Drama Learning gives positive contribution to students' language engagement and development. It provides natural context for learning English. They learn not only the language existed in the drama or the novel they read, but also the spontaneous language they use when they are doing their project. Project-based drama learning is also comprehensible procedure which can be used by teachers for teaching drama in English language teaching; every phase of project-based drama learning offers language engagement covering the four skills (reading, writing, speaking and listening). Figure 1 presents the procedure of Project-Based Drama Learning.

The steps of Project-Based Drama Learning starts with Critical Reading and Character Analysis. At this stage, students do silence reading and are asked to presuppose that there is an ideology that the author of the story built. The students try to question, analyze the text, interpret and finally conclude by providing valid evidences (Ozensoym 2011 as cited in (Karadağ, 2014)). Some questions which can be used are: what is the author's motive writing the novel? What is missing in the text? Who is the author's intended audience? When was it written? Who is the author.

In the meantime, character analysis is a way of understanding characters in the story, leading to plot and the whole story comprehension. It is a higher order thinking activities which stimulate the students' thinking and inference

about the characters' trait as indicated by characters' actions, motivation, saying, and thinking. At this phase, students make judgment (usually personality) to a certain character and find clues to support the claim. To do that, they analyze the character's personality by looking at what character says, does, thinks, feels, likes and dislikes. The guiding questions for this activity might include: what kind of

person the character is? What is the evidence? What does he do when he faces problem? What do other characters about him? Another goal of character analysis is to examine how characters develop and support the ideas with specific information from the text about the characters' relationships and interactions with the community (setting) and other characters.

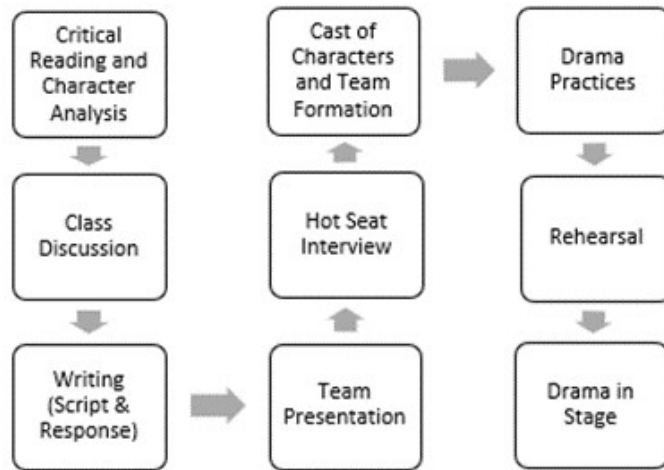


Figure 1. Project-Based Drama Learning Procedures

Class discussion is done during the reading process. During critical reading and character analysis, students are discussing with their teachers and peers about some claims or judgments they made. They might challenge their opinion, and at the same time respecting other students point of view as they have different world. They should be motivated that all the interpretation they made is true as long as it reveals logical reasoning.

Writing in this project refers to writing as a response to the reading of the literary text and writing script for drama performance. After reading, talking and sharing with their friends about the character and other elements

of the story, students gain full comprehension of the text. It is assumed that they become familiar with the character and his/her personality. Writing activity is another way of expressing their ideas. Furthermore, in this part, students in groups starts to write draft of script. The lecturer gives a theory about the preparation of manuscripts. In the preparation of manuscripts students are asked to pay attention to blocking, lighting, and background music, settings and also property.

Cast of characters and team formation are where the students along with the lecturers test the students' ability in understanding the character

and the plot of the story with the aim to select the main and supporting character. This stage is done by finding 5 candidates for each character, and asking them to play the role in front of the class. All classmembers discuss which students are eligible to be the main actors and supporting actors. Besides, students are also divided into team consisting of Director, Costume, Make-up Character, Property, Music, Cameraman and Videographer.

Next phase is hot-seat interview. In this activity, each character will be asked to sit on a hot seat. Here students will be interviewed or given questions related to the story character to be played. The advantage is to ensure the understanding of the selected actor to the story. By doing this, they have also an opportunity in speaking spontaneously.

In team presentation, the students who have been selected in a small team reports what they have done in preparing the drama performance. They should present, for example, what kind of costume the character will use, how many times they will practice, what music which is good for background music, and how they attract the spectator to come. Their goal is to have a successful performance.

Before the students do rehearsal and drama performance, drama practices in classroom for a couple of time should be done. This is so reminding that practice makes perfect. It is expected that the students have self confidence when doing drama in the real stage. Drama practices are usually conducted in order to check the students' English pronunciation. Students are asked to correct the pronunciation of the words spoken by

student-actor. In this activity, students also practice body movement. They try to interpret the motion, the expression of the characters according to the text of the drama being read. This activity allows the students to have role play by reading the script. However, they should be encouraged to perform without looking at the script all the time.

Rehearsal is done two or one day before drama in stage. This time, students practice at a theater room or a hall. They practice without reading the script anymore. Moreover, all of the team have prepared all the things needed for the performance such as costume, setting, property, lighting, camera, video, and background music.

Lastly, drama performance in stage is carried out after all the preparation completed by the students. The students act out and show their potency to the spectator who come in to the theater room. This final part is a result of learning English and learning how to work in a team. By having those series of activities, students become motivated. They read in details the drama material, they recognize new vocabulary, discuss, think critically, learn to behave, express opinions on the basis of their knowledge and life experience. Through this research, the writers hope to give insights to the prospective teachers about the process of learning the language and literature through Project-Based Drama Learning. When graduated, they are expected to be able to apply this activity in elementary, middle or university classes. Consequently, the objectives of this study are to illustrate the students' perceptions on the use of Project-Based Drama Learning for reading English literary passages and

to describe the activities in Project-Based Drama Learning that could support students' English reading ability.

METHODOLOGY

A cross-sectional survey design was applied in this study where data were collected at one point in time. The purpose of this research is to explore information about how Project Based Drama Learning can develop English reading skill of the students of English education study program, Faculty of Teacher Training and Education (FKIP), Sriwijaya University. This method allows the authors to get trends or tendency on how students' perceive Project-Based Drama Learning in English reading.

Context of Research

Setting or place of the study is English education study program, FKIP, Sriwijaya University. The course or class that becomes the context of the research is the Literature in English Language Teaching (ELT). This course aims to introduce students with a variety of literary-based learning methods that include short stories, novels and plays. To teach this course, the author acted as lecturer who have been implementing Project Based Drama Learning for three years. The time required for teaching with Project-Based Drama Learning was 76.5 hours. With the Credit System of Semester 3, in one week it takes 510 minutes assuming 1 credits equivalent to 170 minutes (face to face, training and self-study). With the number of meetings 9, the teaching process takes 9x510 minutes or 4590 minutes or the equivalent of 76.5 hours.

Research Participants

The participants were students and lecturers involved in Literature in ELT course. The participants were the fifth semester students who took Literature in ELT subject in 2017/2018 academic year. The number of participants was 30 students with high, moderate and low reading level. Another participant in the study was one lecturer who was also responsible for teaching Literature in ELT.

Data Collection

In this study, the questionnaire was modified based on a ready-made questionnaire from Teresa (2007). It consists of 63 items with three main aspects: Project-Based Drama Learning, Reading and Speaking. The aspect of Project-based Drama Learning (27 statements) and reading (13 statements) in this questionnaire became the focus of this study. Its validity was checked by referring to the research objectives which investigate students' opinions or attitudes towards the implementation of Project-Based Drama Learning in the classroom. The form of the questionnaire selected was a close-ended questionnaire with five possible options. They are 1 = strongly disagree, 2 = disagree, 3 = neutral, 4 = agree, 5 = strongly agree. Examples of questions that may appear in the questionnaire are:

- 1) I enjoy each phase of the project.
- 2) I do the project seriously.
- 3) I learn to summarize.
- 4) I learn to be critical reader.

Data Analysis

The collected data were analyzed by having percentage analysis with the

help of Microsoft Excel program. The purpose of the analysis is to present the descriptive statistics of the data: mean or percentage. This way of analysis could show the trend of the study. The result of percentage analysis, then, was transferred into chart so that it could be interpreted easily.

FINDINGS

The questionnaire was given to the students after the learning process with Project-Based Drama Learning was completed; that is when the students had passed all the phases of Project-Based drama learning and performed the drama (The Three Musketeers) in stage. The purpose of this questionnaire is to describe students' feelings, opinions and attitudes toward Project-Based Drama Learning. The questionnaire was given to 30 students of research participants involved in the drama of The Three Musketeers. The questionnaire consisted of 40 questions with 5 choices: Strongly Agree (SA), Agree (A), Neutral (N), Disagree (D), and Strongly Disagree (DS) with 5, 4, 3, 2 and 1 respectively.

The result shows that the students give agreeable response to the learning with Project-Based Drama Learning. Of the 27 statements relating to activities in Project-Based Drama Learning, over 80% of the students agreed to the project positive impact, as shown in figure 2. For example, in statement 1, there are about 63.33 percent of students who are very fond of, and 33.33 percent of students like Project-Based Drama Learning. This means there are 96.66 percent of students or almost all students love Project-Based Drama Learning. Highly agreed and agreed percentages are also indicated by questions 2, 3, 4, 6, 7, 8, and 10 as illustrated by the histogram below. This means that students decide that Project -Based Drama Learning make students' creative, active, participative, and motivated. Besides, they could have a collaborative work which can enhance their life skills and language skills. They also claim through the project, they did not only have fun class as revealed by item 5 “*The drama project is all about having fun*”, “*There is no work to be submitted*”. Fifty percent of the respondents' response was in disagreement.

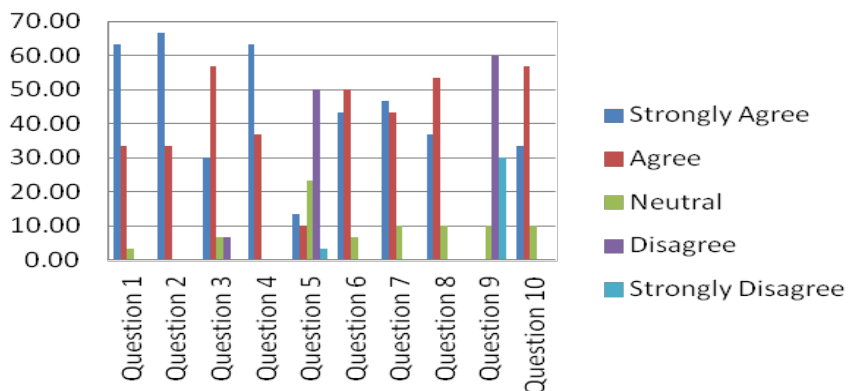


Figure 2. Students' Perception on the Use of Project-Based Drama Learning

Instead of having fun, students did hard work, and it made them contributive and responsible for every job assigned to them in order to have a

successful drama performance This is evidenced by 90,33 percent of the students stated that they do the project seriously (statement 6).

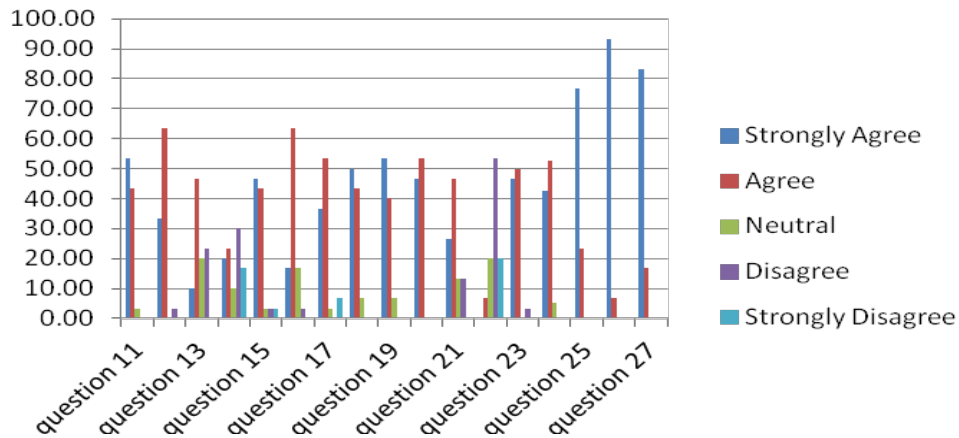


Figure 3. Students' Perceptions on The Use of Project-Based Drama Learning

As shown in Figure 3, the majority of the students agree on statements such as "All the stages in the project help me speak in English", "I like to have drama in my English lesson in the future ", or" We learn how to solve problems ". Moreover, they tend to disagree with the "I dislike group work which is part of the project" statement.

For statements relating to whether or not Project-Based Drama Learning helps students in reading, it can be identified that almost all students agree with these statements.

For example, there were 96.66 students who admitted that they had learned 96,67% of the participants that they learned to be Critical Reader (item 28). They express agreement that they learn to get main idea, topic, implied meaning, new vocabulary, new sentence structure or summary through Project-Based Drama Learning. Even for the statement number 32 "I learn to summarize parts of the story", all students (100%) agree.

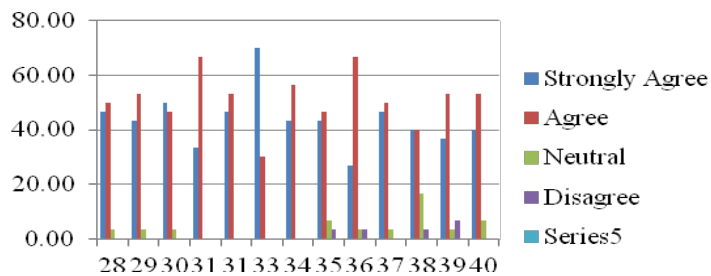


Figure 4. Project-based Drama Learning for Reading Activities

Based on the data above, it can be concluded that, according to the participants students, all the activities in Project-Based Drama Learning support language learning: reading. The activities in Project-Based Drama Learning which really facilitate them in reading is Critical Reading and Character Analysis. It is supported by the fact that 46,67 % of the students state that character analysis help them in reading the text, in this case the novel entitled *The Three Musketeers*. Additionally, 30% of the students believe it was Critical Reading which help them in understanding the text.

DISCUSSION

Project-Based Drama Learning is a Project-Based Learning method at the end of learning after project execution or drama performances. Project-based Drama Learning is a marriage between English Language Teaching and drama learning. There are stages of activities in the implementation of Project-based Drama Learning: Critical Reading, Character Analysis, Class Discussion, Script Writing, Cast of Characters and Team Formation, Hot Seat Interview, Team Presentation, Drama Practices, Rehearsal, and Drama in Stage.

Project-Based Drama Learning facilitates students in developing their reading skills as this model gives students the opportunity to critically examine the text in order to carry out a class project in the form of drama performances. Students read, respond, think and critically interpret the plot, the theme of the story, the symbol and especially the character of the story in accordance with the knowledge and experience possessed. Specifically, in this study, the students analyzed the character traits, and gave reasons to

explain these traits. The reason is poured in the form of quote pages, paragraphs or lines. Through such readings, students recognize and understand the nature and personality of the characters and at the same time help them how they should be later when playing the story characters in the drama staging project.

The fact that the Project-Based Drama Learning facilitates reading ability is supported by Hismanoglu (2005) which states that the drama activity "facilitate and accelerate the development of the oral skills of a work's plot and a deeper comprehension and awareness of its characters. "Meanwhile, Miller in Arzu (2008), students not only read what is in the text but also 'live' in the text, a process that leads to a better understanding. The advantage of the learning method with Project-Based Drama Learning is that students can practice language according to context for a particular communication purpose naturally (Haines (1989) in Fragoulis and Tsiplakides (2009).

Basically, all the learning stages with Project-Based Learning Drama facilitate reading activities. But activities that are very supportive of reading activities are Critical Reading and Character Analysis. Almost all students showed a positive response to the use of Project-Based Drama Learning. They state that Project-Based Drama Learning help them to become confident, and motivated. Through Project-Based Drama Learning, they can build a good friendship and teamwork. This means Project-Based Drama Learning is one alternative that can be used in learning English.

CONCLUSION

It can be concluded that the activities in Project-Based Drama Learning give the students the opportunity to develop English reading ability. Critical Reading and Character Analysis are considered two steps which remarkably facilitate reading activities. However, it does not mean other stages such as Class Discussion, Script Writing, Cast of Characters and Team Formation, Hot Seat Interview, Team Presentation, Tableau/Frozen Activity, Drama Practices, Preparation, Rehearsal, Drama in Stage, are not trivial. Practically, in all phases, the students are continually engaged in reading activities.

Furthermore, Project-Based Drama Learning can be taken account as a driving force to read. It helps them to keep going reading in order to reach the goal. Students showed their agreement to each of its phase and this means they are confident and optimistic to what they do and what they read.

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