

Reflective Group-Based Peer Teaching for Up-Scaling Student Teachers' Pedagogical Literacy

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Abstract

This study attempted to investigate how the implementation of Reflective Group Peer Teaching (RGBPT) up-scaled the pedagogical literacy of English student teachers. The study belongs to a case study method that tried to explore and describe to what extent the application of reflective-based Peer Teaching (RGBPT) could promote the pedagogical literacy of English student teachers. The pedagogical literacy development highlighted in the study covers three aspects, namely learning materials development, effective teaching strategies, and students' learning autonomy to promote interactive ELT. The participants involved in the study were English student teachers who joined the Micro Teaching Course. The results showed that Reflective Group-Based Peer Teaching (RGBPT) has up-scaled the pedagogical literacy of English student teachers in the aspects of learning material development, effective teaching strategies, and learning autonomy development. This study potentially contributes to increase the ability of student teachers to comprehend, reflect on, and implement pedagogical knowledge and skills to improve instructional efficacy.

Keywords: Reflective Group Based Peer Teaching (RGBPT), literacy development, student teacher, interactive ELT

1. Introduction

Students' participation in the language teaching and learning process is highly demanded. Interactive English Language Teaching (ELT) is expected to be implemented in an English Foreign Language (EFL) class because it can encourage students' participation in the learning process (Jiang, 2021; Nai, 2022; R. Sun et al., 2020; Wahyuni et al., 2020). To invite active participation in the EFL class, students should be engaged in such a way that they feel voluntarily involved in the classroom activities. When students experience an interactive class, "students' disinterest can be avoided" (Lin et al., 2020; Pishghadam et al., 2021; Resnik & Dewaele, 2020; Sun & Pan, 2021). Interactive ELT has recently been a demand since teachers are now dealing with the generation of students who have grown with the rapid development of ICT (Agyei & Agyei, 2021; Nie, 2021; Pan, 2019). Now, students live in a millennial era which allows them to interact with each other without meeting face to face.

They can also get updated information in just a few seconds from the internet. The phenomenon of smartphone exposure to students which leads to the degradation of social interaction among them has also contributed to a tendency of passiveness in classroom interaction. It is then a big concern for teachers in which they should encourage them to design interactive classes (Guo & Gao, 2022; Nai, 2022; Rivadeneira & Inga, 2023). To respond to this concern, teachers are recommended to actively reflect on their teaching materials, teaching strategies, and students' responses to the learning activities. A teaching reflection can be done by a teacher alone or with other colleague teachers. If it is done alone, it is considered reflective teaching, which means teachers should look at what they have done in the classroom and why they do it and evaluate whether it works or not. Therefore, it seems like a self-observation and self-evaluation process (Elmedina Nikoçeviq-Kurti, 2022; Habte et al., 2021; Rahimpour et al., 2020).

A teaching reflection may also be conducted with colleague teachers which is in the form of peer reflective teaching which can be done by only two people or more than two people or in a group (de Vink et al., 2023; Fatimah et al., 2021; Murtisari et al., 2020). Reflective teaching is further extended to a peer review of teaching (Le Thanh Thao et

al., 2023; Megawati et al., 2020). As suggested by (Bozung et al., 2021; Fatimah et al., 2021), a peer review of teaching is conducted to give feedback to teachers about their teaching to foster the improvement of their teaching quality. They may regard that the students have done the work well but if they have a willingness to spare more time to focus on what has happened in their class, they will notice and be more aware of many things to evaluate to create more interactive ELT class (Nai, 2022; Pan, 2019; Sidash et al., 2020). Reflective peer teaching reveals an implication of a systematic process of populating, exploring, analyzing, and even scrutinizing ideas for a better change in the teaching and learning activity (Colmenares-Quintero et al., 2022; Li et al., 2023; Oo & Habók, 2020; Suntiah, 2021).

When teachers are going to assess their teaching quality, they can also do a teaching reflection. This activity is done to collect as much information as possible about how a teaching activity has been performed. Reflective teaching may be conducted individually, with colleagues, and in groups. Once it is done individually, a teacher should recall the memory of the teaching activity she/he has done by writing what happened in the classroom in her/his teacher's diary (Godsell, 2022; Gudeta, 2022; Mabasa-Manganyi, 2023). The teacher's diary may contain an analysis of what problems are faced during the class, why those problems could happen, what are the solutions in the future, etc. A teacher's diary is the simplest way to do a teaching reflection since it directly describes the personal performance of a teacher. Reflective teaching can also be conducted with the assistance of other teacher colleagues, which is the so-called peer review of teaching. It is more or less a way of evaluating, analyzing, and reviewing a teaching performance from the perspective of other teacher colleagues. A peer review of teaching is possibly done in the form of a formative or summative type. Formative peer review is done for a developmental purpose while summative peer review is conducted for an evaluation purpose (Blake, 2021; Bozung et al., 2021; Tutyandari et al., 2022).

Meanwhile, in EFL context, before doing an internship teaching practicum program at real schools, student teachers as EFL teacher candidates should join a micro-teaching class as one of the partial subjects of the pre-service training program held by the English Education Department, in which this research is conducted. In the micro-teaching class, student teachers are supposed to do three main activities, i.e. practicum of peer teaching based on the updated curriculum, teaching reflection, and peer teaching assessment. Additionally, before taking the micro-teaching class, student teachers should complete some theoretical classes, such as Teaching Design for Young Learners (TDYL), Teaching Design for Adult Learners (TDAL), and Language Teaching Media (LTM). Those subjects cover the theories of pedagogical and pedagogical teaching and they should have been taken by the student teachers before joining the micro-teaching class. Meanwhile, in the micro-teaching class student teachers are supposed to conduct several sessions of peer teaching practices. In doing peer teaching, which is a kind of role play in a classroom setting, student teachers will play roles of being teachers and students as well. Peer teaching can help student teachers consolidate learning, increase confidence, develop communication skills, and assess learning

In line with the current dynamics of the global community which is signed by the development of ICT, teachers are faced with challenges to change students' passiveness and disinterest in the class into autonomous, creative, critical, active, responsive, and communicative students reflecting the characteristics of the 21st century's learner. To respond to this challenge, promoting teachers' pedagogical literacy is one of the important answers (Merlino et al., 2020; Sibanda & Kajee, 2019; Steinbrink et al., 2019). An alternative model that was proposed to cope with the demand was the use of Reflective Group Peer Teaching (Chiang et al., 2021; Saldanha et al., 2021; Ünver & Yurdakul, 2020).

This study aimed to investigate and describe how the implementation of Reflective Group Peer Teaching up-scaled the literacy development of English student teachers. The scope of pedagogical literacy focused in the study covers three aspects, i.e. (1) learning materials development (2) effective teaching strategies, and (3) students' learning autonomy to promote interactive ELT. The three aspects are explored to see, to some technical extent, how Reflective Group-Based Peer Teaching (RGBPT) helps English student teachers upscale their pedagogical literacy in the practicum sessions of micro-teaching classes.

2. Method

2.1 Context of Study

Reflective Group-Based Peer Teaching (RGBPT) applied in this study was a model of reflective peer teaching practice held in several study groups consisting of 10 - 12 student teachers each. In each study group, student teachers were given opportunities to have Focus Group Discussions (FGD) either in the micro-teaching class sessions or outside the class. Before doing the Focus Group Discussion (FGD), the lecturer of the micro-teaching class gave some reviews about theories of pedagogy. The lecturer also refreshed the students' knowledge about how to make good lesson plans, design contextual-based learning materials, teaching techniques and strategies as well and media they could use to

meet the characteristics of the millennial students.

The reviewed theories and concepts were then further explored in the Focus Group Discussion (FGD). The FGD should result in recommendations for each member of the study group that they might consider doing in the peer teaching performance. They might also do a teaching simulation in their group before conducting the classical peer teaching performance.

2.2 Data Collection and Analysis

The data collection's method applied in this study was observation since the focus of the study only concerned the three aspects of pedagogical literacy analysis, i.e. material development, teaching strategy, and the promoting efforts of learning autonomy for interactive ELT, the researchers gave a detailed outline for each aspect to be used as the guidelines for evaluating a peer teaching performance. The detailed outline of Data Analysis on the three aspects of pedagogical literacy's up-scaling was described in table 1.

Table 1. Aspect of Pedagogical Literacy Analysis

Material Development	Teaching Strategy	Efforts to be made to set an interactive ELT through autonomous learning activities
Is the topic in line with the student's learning level? (reflected from the learning outcome in the lesson plan)	How does the student teacher use classroom English expressions?	What learning activities are typically set by students and the teacher? Do the learning activities stimulate the students to learn independently?
Do student teachers engage the teaching materials with contextual life?	How does the student teacher engage the students to participate in the learning activities?	How is the student response to the learning activities?
To what extent the material is contextual?	How does the student teacher create an interactive class?	Is the class interactive and to what extent is it interactively set by the student and the teacher?
What are the strong points and weak points of the learning material in terms of English skill mastery?	How does the student teacher deliver the instructions?	
	How does the student teacher manage the class?	
	Does the student teacher conduct a material review and follow-up learning activities?	

The table above shows the details of the three aspects analyzed in the study to explore the contribution of Reflective Group-Based Peer Teaching (RGBPT) towards the promotion of the student teachers' pedagogical literacy (Gozali et al., 2021; Nugroho et al., 2020; Park et al., 2021; Y. Sun, 2023).

2.2 Research Design

The study applied a case study method in which it tried to qualitatively explore and describe to what extent the application of Reflective Group-Based Peer Teaching (RGBPT) could upscale the pedagogical literacy of English student teachers. The number of participants involved in the study was 36 English student teachers who attended the Micro Teaching course.

The steps of the study were choosing a case by selecting a specific subject, such as a person, group, location, event, organization, or phenomenon; constructing a theoretical framework; creating a research focus and theoretical framework to guide the research; gathering information or data by using a variety of research methods, such as interviews, observations, or document analysis, and describing and analyzing the situation to reach meaningful conclusions (F. Fernando et al., 2020; Mukhtar et al., 2020; Rasmitadila et al., 2020).

Next, classical practicum sessions of peer teaching began and the student teachers were supposed to conduct teaching performances in turns. They were engaged in a bigger class of reflective peer teaching sessions. In the practicum sessions, each student would have the experience of being a teacher while the peer friends become the audience (students) and in turn, he/she served as the students. Therefore, in this practicum session, the student teachers

experienced a role play in which each of them would have to play four roles in turns, i.e. (1) a role as a student teacher, (2) classroom attendees, (3) an observer, and (4) an assessor. A student teacher should perform an EFL teaching practice in which he/she is encouraged to conduct an interactive class (R. Sun et al., 2020). In another turn, a student teacher would experience some sessions of serving as the attending student who would have the experience of seeing a learning process from the perspective of an EFL student.

Meanwhile, a student teacher also served as an observer that enabled him/her to give reflective feedback, i.e. constructive criticism, suggestions, ideas, and recommendations, more specifically concerning the three aspects of material development, teaching strategy, and the promoting effort for learning inter-activeness (Bugaj et al., 2019; Sunggingwati, 2018). As the assessor, a student teacher played the role of giving a more comprehensive evaluation of the teaching performance. These four role models were practiced in a reflective classical group-based peer teaching simulation.

3. Results

The study found that the English student teachers had been engaged in an intensive learning experience of up-scaling their pedagogical literacy through the implementation of Reflective Group-Based Peer Teaching (RGBPT) in the teaching practicum sessions of the Micro Teaching Class. Micro Teaching is a compulsory subject that should be taken by English student teachers as part of a pre-service training program before they join a three-month teaching internship program at secondary or high schools.

The up-scaling of pedagogical literacy can be seen from the observation records, which include three aspects of learning material development, effective teaching strategies, and learning autonomy development, as shown in following diagram.

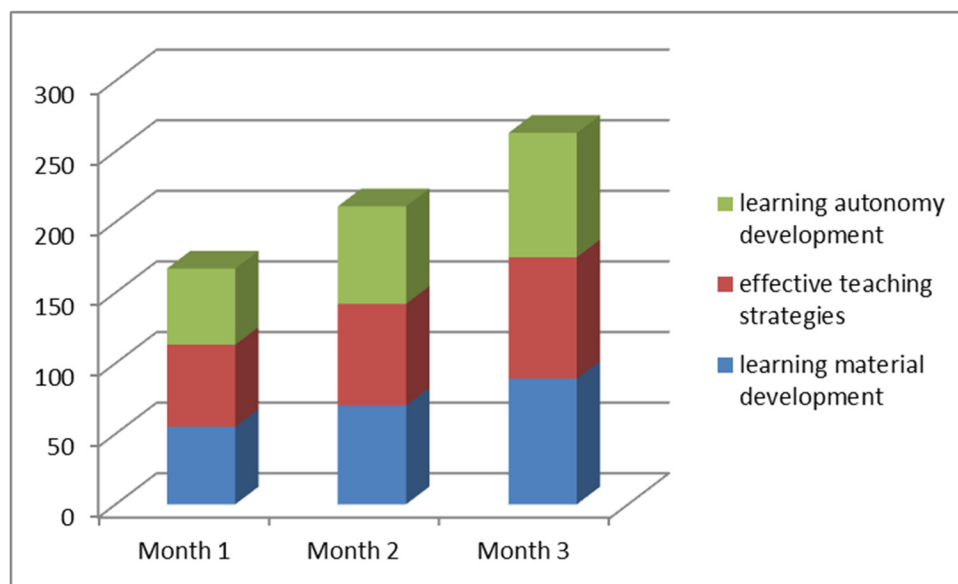


Diagram 1. Indicators of Pedagogical Literacy's Up-Scaling

The diagram shows that there is a progress in pedagogical literacy's level from the increase in value of each aspect, which is reflected in activities during Micro Teaching class. In Micro Teaching class, there are four stages for the student teachers to get through, those are (a) Reviewing theories of pedagogy tutored by the lecturer, (b) Conducting Focus Group Discussion (FGD) to apply RGBPT in study groups, (c) Performing Classical Peer Teaching Practice to apply RGBPT in a bigger forum, (d) Conducting Teaching-Learning-Assessing Role Play to uphold RGBPT technically. The four stages showed a gradual practical activity of peer teaching which enabled the student teachers to have individual, group, and classical teaching practices. The activity stages reinforced the student teachers to practically scale up their ability to develop learning materials, effective teaching strategies, and learning autonomy to promote their pedagogical literacy. The idea of "learning by doing" was found to occur in this RGBPT implementation. Pedagogical literacy was empirically up-scaled through the activity of "learning by doing", i.e. learning from practice,

learning from peer friends, learning from group discussion, learning from the classical discussion, and learning from online or offline resources (Adams et al., 2023; Magangxa & Geduld, 2023).

The finding has shown that directing students to do autonomous learning to create interactive ELT was indeed a challenge and not easy. Therefore, intensive practices should be done by student teachers since creating an interactive ELT does not only depend on the quality of teaching material and strategy but also on skills of managing the classroom. The analysis result showed that RGBPT contributed to facilitating student teachers to have intensive learning and practice through dialogic reflection and sharing sessions to give ideas and insights for them to design interactive ELT which indicated the up-scaled level of pedagogical literacy (Ansari & Khan, 2020; Smiderle et al., 2020; Tanis, 2020).

4. Discussion

In the stage of reviewing theories of pedagogy, student teachers were tutored by the lecturer, as a short review, of approaches, methods, strategies, material, and media of ELT for young and adult learners. Student teachers then made a draft of the lesson plan as a reflection of the review (Buhagiar et al., 2023; Elmedina Nikoçeviq-Kurti, 2022). Later, the lesson plan would be applied in the Focus Group Discussion (FGD) forum in study groups and the classical forum in peer teaching performance (Rouf & Mohamed, 2022; Wang, 2021). In the study groups through FGDs, each student teacher could share their draft of the teaching plan to be evaluated by the other peer friends in his/her study group. In these small forums, student teachers had the opportunity to reflect on and evaluate their plan of learning material, teaching strategy, teaching media, and learning assessment. Through the activity of discussion, student teachers were empirically encouraged to improve their knowledge about the application of pedagogical theories and in turn bring it into practice (Derakhshan et al., 2020; Fiskia et al., 2023; Manton et al., 2023).

Thereafter, their pedagogical literacy was up-scaled through peer observation, peer reflection, and peer assessment of teaching practice. To this extent, Focus Group Discussion (FGD) contributed to triggering the student teachers to always learn from any resources to make their pedagogical literacy better. FGDs also helped student teachers to have no psychological gap when performing the teaching practice. This may in turn make themselves prepared and motivated to perform teaching practice in a bigger forum, that was in classical peer teaching practice. The more practice, the more prepared, and the more literate the student teachers will be (Shu & Gu, 2023; Tarbutton & Doyle, 2023).

In the Classical Peer Teaching Practice, the student teachers applied their teaching plan which had been reflected, evaluated, and assessed in the Focus Group Discussion (FGD) in the study groups. It was expected that they would conduct better teaching performance. In this stage, student teachers were having a role play in a classroom setting as a teacher, an observer, and an evaluator. These roles have practically allowed the student teacher to “learn more by doing more” in the perspective of each role which consequently gave him/her various insights into what dos and don’ts. The experience of being a practicing teacher gave the student teachers insights into improving the quality of pedagogical mastery.

Finally, when serving as assessors, student teachers were trained to make teaching-learning evaluations and grade teacher’s qualifications (Fakhrudinova et al., 2020; Nugroho et al., 2020; Y. Sun, 2023). Hence, the implementation of Reflective Group-Based Peer Teaching (RGBPT) was found to have given contributive insights, ideas, points of view, and empirical practice to the efforts of developing student teachers’ literacy in ELT. In terms of the humanism and constructivism approach, RGBPT is an alternative method in ELT since it optimizes the social potential of students to work together to solve learning problems and it also facilitates student teachers to construct learning products.

In the application of RGBPT, it could empirically be found that sessions of peer teaching review or reflection are done on many occasions. As a consequence, student teachers were provided with many sharing sessions to analyze, correct, evaluate, and review their teaching performance. In these sequential and repeated sessions, a learning process occurs and literacy is in turn gradually developed through the “learning by doing” activities. RGBPT enabled the lecturer to be a facilitator for teacher candidates to strengthen their pedagogical literacy and improve their teaching performance. The RGBPT is an alternative learning model that can be adopted by the English Education Department as one of the ways to create a learning experience to foster the professional, pedagogical competence of teacher candidates during their pre-service training (Nguyen & Khau, 2022; Nunes et al., 2023). Some learning experiences that the student teachers have gone through are (a) autonomous learning, (b) cooperative learning, (c) classroom English proficiency development, (d) social interaction development, and (e) literacy development. RGBPT is a role-play model that facilitates student teachers to do either individual learning or in-group learning as well as classical learning called triangular learning opportunities (Brändle et al., 2023; Meulenbroeks, 2020; Rugambuka & Mazzuki, 2023; Yotta, 2023).

In terms of teaching strategy, RGBPT assisted student teachers in designing interactive teaching strategies. Through the teaching reflection done in the study groups and classical discussion, student teachers got evaluations from the observer (their peer friends) and the assessors. The evaluation was concerned with giving the student teachers insights into whether or not the teaching strategy had created an interactive classroom. The study found that most of the student teachers used cooperative learning techniques to create interactive ELT. The techniques were among others role play, game, group discussion, quiz, peer work, and classical discussion. The teaching media used by student teachers, such as flashcards, PowerPoint, pictures, puppets, and film have been effective in creating interactive classes. Suggestions given by the peer friends were mostly concerned with the technical use of teaching strategies and media (S. Y. Fernando & Marikar, 2017; Riera et al., 2023; Zhang et al., 2023). However, the lecturer, in many cases, addressed the use of classroom English in giving instructions and alternative teaching techniques. At this point, the observers and assessors evaluated how the student teachers engaged the students to participate in the learning activities to create an interactive ELT. To a certain extent, student teachers have learned much about the theory and practice of pedagogical literacy from their peer friends and lecturer in a dialogic setting so that the student teachers did not feel like being interrogated and there were no psychological barriers or gaps among them (Rugambuka & Mazzuki, 2023).

The last point of the analysis refers to efforts to be made by student teachers to set an interactive ELT through autonomous learning activities and how their peer friends and lecturers assisted the student teachers in doing so. Interactive classroom occurs only if there is no psychological gap between students and teachers. It also required a classroom setting that facilitated the students to voluntarily get involved in learning activities. It had been a challenge for student teachers to direct the students to learn autonomy in an interactive learning environment (Farrell & Brunton, 2020; Heilporn et al., 2021; Lee et al., 2019).

5. Conclusion

The study has found that Reflective Group-Based Peer Teaching (RGBPT) has facilitated student teachers to have learning experiences in developing their pedagogical literacy, especially in the aspects of (1) learning materials development and (2) effective teaching strategies and (3) Efforts to be done to set an interactive ELT through autonomous learning activities. Through RGBPT student teachers experience intensive “learning by doing” opportunities in the stages of the RGBPT implementation, i.e. a) Reviewing theories of pedagogy and andragogy tutored by the lecturer, (b) Conducting Focus Group Discussion (FGD) to apply RGBPT in study groups, (c) Performing Classical Peer Teaching Practice to apply RGBPT in a bigger forum, (d) Conducting Teaching-Learning-Assessing Role Play to uphold RGBPT technically. By applying RGBPT student teachers were also encouraged to be more self-confident, responsible, open-minded, sociable, and creative. Based on the findings of the study, it is recommended that the use of RGBPT should be maintained by lecturers who teach micro-teaching courses. The important things to do in implementing this model are the consistency of lecturers and students in carrying out their respective roles by theory and procedures in applying RGBPT, willingness to be scrutinized and evaluated by others, and willingness to develop themselves

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