

Chapter One

Introduction

This section serves as an introduction to the research. The background of the research explains the research focus on students' perspective about the benefits of peer tutoring and how Vygotsky's theory of the Zone of Proximal Development (ZPD) affected Students English learning. The identification of the problem section outlines the challenges, and the delimitation of the research defines the scope of the study, focusing on students' opinions on peer tutoring in a private university in Yogyakarta. This chapter also contains the research questions, objectives, significance, and the organization of the chapters.

The Background of the Research

The acquisition of proficiency in the English language was deemed an indispensable skill for university students worldwide. Peer tutoring had been recognized as a valuable method for enhancing academic proficiency in the English language (Comfort & McMahon, 2014) and fostering the development of essential character (Miravet et al., 2014). According to the definition provided by Miravet et al. (2014), peer tutoring was characterized as a variant of collaborative learning approach involving a pair of individuals who assumed distinct roles in discussing subject matter.

Given that English served as the lingua franca of the world, attaining competence in this language was imperative for active participation in the global community (Maxamatismoyilovna, 2020). Nonetheless, conventional classroom settings might not have sufficed to equip students with the needed language abilities. As Tanjung (2018) asserted, Indonesian higher education students tended to heavily rely on their instructors, resulting in a lack of familiarity with effective language learning strategies and, consequently, subpar English ability levels, despite years of

English education. To address this issue, Fitriani (2016) recommended that the Indonesian higher education system undergo substantial enhancements, including the exploration of alternative learning methods such as peer tutoring.

The implementation of peer tutoring was closely intertwined with the concept of scaffolding and Vygotsky's ZPD theory. Following Vygotsky's ZPD theory, students could enhance their cognitive abilities when they received guidance, or scaffolding, from their peers who possessed a deeper understanding of specific subjects (Stone, 1998). As one of strategies in cooperative learning, peer tutoring could be seamlessly integrated with various other learning approaches, thereby fostering a more flexible, adaptable, and inventive learning environment. This perspective found support in the work of Slavin (2015), who contended that peer tutoring afforded students the opportunity to receive more individualized guidance from their peer tutors or those who are taking the role of the more knowledgeable others (MKO).

In a specific private university located in Yogyakarta, the utilization of peer tutoring had been incorporated as a means to enhance the English language ability of students. These initiatives were organized by EDSA and were supervised by designated lecturers. Their primary objective was to assist students studying English education in improving their skills in through additional programs conducted outside the conventional classroom setting, namely, Grammavo (Grammar and vocabulary); Readate (Reading comprehension); Sparkle (Speaking and public speaking); Scotion (Scholarship preparation); and Digiclub (Digital literacy in education). In the face of constant technological advancements and global changes, the education system required not only government-led reforms but also innovation and creativity from all stakeholders, including society, educators, and the students themselves. This viewpoint aligned with the

perspective of Dilobarkhon (2019), who contended that education should adapt to the evolving needs of a dynamic modern society by imparting knowledge and skills.

In relation to these peer tutoring strategies, certain phenomena had emerged in the aforementioned private universities in Yogyakarta. For instance, students discovered a secure environment to discuss their learning struggles and identify potential solutions. Additionally, participants in these tutoring programs, such as Sparkle and Readate, had displayed increased socialization and a willingness to undertake greater responsibilities within their social groups. Moreover, in another program, Scotion, some students had become more ambitious, actively seeking opportunities to enhance their skills, leading to notable achievements such as securing fully funded scholarships for international studies.

The researcher held the belief that gaining insight into students' perspective regarding peer tutoring could offer a potential solution to improve the learning strategies employed in the English Language Education Department (ELED) at one of the private universities in Yogyakarta, particularly for those students who faced challenges in their academic journey. Additionally, the researcher believed that this study had the potential to optimize the advantages of peer tutoring by deeply comprehending students' perspectives on these peer tutoring strategies and how the process of ZPD theory contributed to their English learning.

Identification of Problem

In the Indonesian higher education landscape, several problems emerged due to conventional classrooms characterized by large student enrollments with diverse backgrounds and abilities, as it remained a common practice. Firstly, as highlighted by Zamzami and Keumala (2018), traditional higher education classes in Indonesia frequently relied on one-way teaching

methods, resulting in passive student engagement and a predominant focus only on the lecturer's knowledge rather than fostering students' knowledge construction.

Secondly, while traditional classrooms included segments for questioning and answering, where students had the opportunity to seek additional information on specific learning topics, the time constraints of each lecture did not necessarily cater to the individual needs of every student (Staker & Horn 2012).

Thirdly, students who lacked confidence found it challenging to actively participate in a classroom environment crowded with numerous peers. This problem led to low participation in classroom activities and, consequently, hindered the learning process (Freeman et al., 2007).

Fourthly, the aforementioned ELED at a private university in Yogyakarta aimed to provide potential solutions for students struggling in traditional classroom settings by supporting peer tutoring activities through their EDSA's programs. It's important to note that these aforementioned programs were voluntary and accessible to all students enrolled in the department; however, this accessibility could lead to another issue where the advantages of these programs might not be effectively communicated or promoted, resulting in low participation rates.

These challenges needed further investigation, particularly by understanding students' perspectives on the benefits of peer tutoring and how the ZPD process contributed to the of their English learning. This research sought to identify potential solutions to enhance peer tutoring activities.

Delimitation of the Problem

To enhance the research's effectiveness, the study's scope was deliberately limited to a certain extent. The research exclusively concentrated on two specific aspects: first, students' perspectives on the benefits of peer tutoring, and second, students' perspectives on how the ZPD help the students' English learning. The study was conducted within the ELED of a selected private university in Yogyakarta, which had a history of implementing peer tutoring activities facilitated by its EDSA. Additionally, it was important to note that this research adopted a qualitative research approach.

Research Questions

In this research, two guiding research questions were put forth by the researcher. These questions were as follows:

1. What are the students' perspectives on the benefits of peer tutoring in learning?
2. How does the process of peer tutoring help students' English learning base on Vygotsky's ZPD theory?

The Objectives of the Research

Based on the research questions, the objectives of this research were:

1. To understand the students' perspectives on the benefits of peer tutoring.
2. To understand how peer tutoring help students' English learning based on Vygotsky's ZPD theory.

The Significance of the Research

Outcomes of his research is expected to provide advantages and positive influence in various fields including students, teachers, and future researchers.

For Students

This research is expected to serve as a valuable resource for students, offering them insights to establish collaborative learning environments for their future educational endeavours alongside their peers. Furthermore, it aided in comprehending the practical implementation of the ZPD theory through peer tutoring as an effective learning strategy.

For Teachers

This research is expected to help teachers to draw upon this research as a reference for seamlessly incorporating the ZPD theory into their teaching practices, both within the context of peer tutoring and traditional in-class learning. Additionally, it could assist them in the design of learning environments that were conducive and could potentially yield benefits for their students.

For Future Researchers

This research is expected to use the findings of this study to be served as a valuable point of reference for future research endeavours aiming to explore the same subject matter, albeit from diverse perspectives or with distinct target populations. Furthermore, other researchers who shared an interest in delving deeper into related studies could also benefit from the insights provided by this research.

Organization of the Chapters

In the introductory chapter of this research, there were six distinct sections, each serving a specific purpose. It began with the "Background of the Research," providing the foundational concept and reasoning behind the chosen research topic. Following that, the "Identification of the

"Problem" section addressed the relevant issues and challenges associated with the research topic. To provide clarity and focus, the "Delimitation of Research" section defined the specific boundaries and scope of the research. The core inquiries that this research sought to answer were presented in the "Research Questions" section, while the "Objectives of the Research" segment outlined the goals and intentions of the research. Demonstrating the importance of the study, the "Significance of the Research" section emphasized its contribution to the existing body of knowledge. Finally, the "Organization of the Research" section offered a brief overview of the structure and layout of the entire research study.

Chapter two, titled "Literature Review," was divided into three distinct parts, each serving a specific purpose. The first part of the literature review went through the established theories relevant to the research, providing a comprehensive overview of the theoretical foundations associated with the study. The second part conducted a review of prior research conducted by experts in the field, offering insights from earlier studies that were relevant to the research topic. In the third part, the chapter introduced conceptual frameworks that succinctly illustrated the problem addressed in the research, providing a conceptual foundation for the study's exploration.

Chapter three, titled "Methodology," was structured into five different parts, each contributing to the research's methodological framework. The first part explained the chosen research design that guided the study's approach. The second part provided the research settings, offering insights into the specific "where" and "when" aspects of the research. In the third part, the chapter detailed the research's participants and the process that would be employed to select the sample for the study's respondents. The fourth part outlined the data collection method, explaining how the researchers gathered the needed data for the research. Lastly, the fifth part

addressed data analysis, providing an explanation of the methodology that was employed to analyse the collected data for the research.

Chapter four, titled "Findings and Discussions," presented the results and discussed the outcomes of the data analysis. This section included a detailed presentation of the results and the analysis of the data.

Chapter five, titled "Conclusion and Recommendations," provided the conclusion and recommendations. This section encompassed various suggestions and offered overall responses to the research questions. The recommendations were directed towards teachers, students, and future researchers, forming the concluding part of the study.