

The Effects of Using Prior Knowledge and Cooperative Learning on Reading Comprehension and Attitude

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Abstract. The purpose of this study was to examine the effects of prior knowledge and cooperative learning on pupil attitude toward reading and the reading performance. In order to fulfill the purpose of this study, two null hypotheses were stated pertaining to the role of using prior knowledge and working in cooperative pairs during reading in English as a foreign language in the students' reading comprehension and attitude toward reading. Paired storytelling, a reading technique incorporating students' prior knowledge and using cooperative pairs, was used. This research was conducted according to an experimental design. Subjects were randomly assigned to two experimental and two control groups. This research project involved 94 first-year college students in the English Department at Petra Christian University in Surabaya, Indonesia. The results of this study demonstrated that while there were no significant differences between the treatment groups on the comprehension tests, paired storytelling helped develop positive attitude toward reading. This second finding of the study seems to support other studies which revealed that helping students build an anticipatory model of the text has positive effects on their attitude toward reading.

Key words: prior knowledge, cooperative learning, reading comprehension, attitude toward reading, paired storytelling.

Abstrak. Tujuan penelitian ini adalah untuk menelaah pengaruh pengetahuan latar belakang dan belajar gotong royong (*cooperative learning*) pada sikap pembelajar terhadap proses membaca dan kemampuan pemahaman mereka atas teks. Ada dua hipotesis null yang berkaitan dengan peranan pengetahuan latar belakang dan belajar berpasangan (*cooperative pairs*) selama proses membaca dalam bahasa Inggris pada pemahaman membaca dan sikap terhadap membaca. *Paired storytelling*, suatu teknik membaca yang melibatkan pengetahuan latar belakang pembelajar dan menggunakan pasangan kooperatif digunakan dalam penelitian yang menggunakan desain eksperimental ini. Subjek sejumlah 94 dibagi secara random ke dalam dua kelompok eksperimental dan dua kelompok kontrol. Subjek adalah mahasiswa tahun pertama di jurusan Sastra Inggris UK Petra. Temuan penelitian ini menunjukkan tidak ada perbedaan signifikan antara kelompok eksperimental dan kontrol dalam tes pemahaman bahasa. Namun dalam hal sikap terhadap membaca, *paired storytelling* cukup berpengaruh meningkatkan sikap positif. Temuan ini sesuai dengan temuan dalam beberapa studi lain yang menunjukkan bahwa membantu pembelajar membangun model antisipatoris teks mempunyai dampak positif terhadap sikap mereka dalam proses membaca.

Kata kunci: pengetahuan latar belakang, belajar bersama, pemahaman bacaan, sikap terhadap membaca, teknik membaca

Very few people in Indonesia speak English or use it as a means of communication. As a foreign language, English is taught in secondary schools for approximately two to four hours a week with an

emphasis on the grammar rather than on the usage of the language. In other words, students study English as a subject, not as a means of communication.