

Higher Order Thinking (HOT) to Promote EFL Students' Awareness in Go Green Issues

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Abstract: As one of agendas in Curriculum 2013, Higher Order Thinking (HOT), so far has been integrated in English Learning particularly for junior high school students although the outcome seemed not to be satisfying. One of the indicators is the students could not get exposures clearly deal with increasing their social awareness in Go Green issues. Therefore, this paper presents research result focusing on HOTs in storytelling to promote EFL students' awareness in go green issues. As a case study, it involves one class of seventh grade students with one teacher. Two instruments were employed to collect the data namely classroom observation and interview with the students and teachers. The findings show that the teacher applied brainstorming in go green issue through showing pictures, direct observation to their environment, and role playing with a go green specific topic related to their surrounding situation. The results from the interview show that the students could understand well the materials given since they directly reflect to what really happen in their place. By doing so, they realize that what they have learnt in the classroom should direct them to raise their awareness so that the issue of go green could be done well. In addition, the students also claim that they could place themselves and behave optimally to contribute the go green program. It was recognized by the teachers in the interview that the students tended to accept what the teachers instructed them to succeed go green issue as they were engaged through HOTs in storytelling classes.

1 INTRODUCTION

Nowadays in the millennia time crimes among the youngsters can be found in many places in the country. Even, some criminal actions may be recognized as common cases in the present societies. They break the traffic rules as if they do not do anything, distract their friends through bullying, or have a less sympathy attitude toward their environment. It seems that the education process taken by the students does not significantly change the way students think and behave in their real life. Specifically, in Indonesia which has a diverse culture, place, language, race, and ethnic, being tolerant is one of the issues faced by the citizen. Tolerance is defined as an attitude of being willing to accept and get along with other people, and "not minding if they have opinions that we don't agree with" (Zakin, 2012).

One of the reasons for that condition is due to the practice of teaching and learning which mostly still focuses on mastering content knowledge but paying less attention on how students can realize and imply knowledge they have in their real life. It can be

indicated through the result of Program for International Students Assessment (PISA, 2012) showing that practice of teaching and learning in Indonesia is still dominated by transmitting knowledge through lower order thinking level such as remembering and recalling materials given by teachers in classroom activities. This teaching practice considers students as an object of teaching who follow what the teachers ask them to do rather than to be an active meaning maker and decision maker throughout the learning process (Lengkanawati, 2015). Therefore, it is rarely investigated that the students are trained to develop their ideas, opinion, and choices during learning process aimed at improving their thinking capacity (Setyarini, 2018).

Regarding this notion, the government has tried to compose Curriculum 2013 which is expected to be able to accommodate those needs and prepare students achieving success either in their academic or in their social life. Many parties has realized that enabling students to have a good content mastery is not enough to make them to be a successful student in

this millennial era but driving them to have a higher level of thinking as a life style may lead them to be a right decision maker in all aspect of their life (Puchta, 2012; Yen & Halili, 2015). It is then socialized and revealed in revised Curriculum 2013 that put Higher Order Thinking Skills (HOTS) as one of the agendas in educational purposes. An instruction for teachers to integrate HOT in their teaching practices is explicitly written in the curriculum. Furthermore, the administration of HOTS in teaching is also an effort to prepare students becoming a good citizen as people do analyzing, evaluating, synthesizing before deciding one action to do (Awan et al., 2018). As stated by King et al. (2010) that Higher Order Thinking Skills involve a complex judgmental thinking and other skills which are beyond the common thinking that require students to analyze, evaluate, and create.

However, although HOTS has been instructed officially by the government, many teachers are still unfamiliar with ways of implementing it in their teaching practices even the basic concepts of this model. Setyarini (2016) found that teachers cannot implement the model optimally in their classroom due to several reasons including lack of knowledge and experience in using HOTS. Furthermore, HOTS is not yet socialized well by the government through trainings or specific program to help teachers deal with the concept and its implementation in practice. As a result, some teachers tend to rely on traditional teaching in which teaching process dominated by remembering, recalling, and understanding facts rather than activating their thinking ability toward analyzing, evaluating, until decision making and problem solving. Traditional education is characterized by methods of instruction that emphasize memorization and assessment schemes that value students' ability to recall information. The same education system that failed to provide students with depth of understanding, an ability to interpret and apply information—about traditional curricular subjects from chemistry to literature—clearly lacked the capacity to convey to students anything as sophisticated or radical as the idea of a civil society founded upon the goals of openness, tolerance, and respect for the individual (Zaki, 2012).

2 LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Higher Order Thinking Skills

In educational context, Higher Order Thinking Skills involve a complex judgmental thinking and

other skills which are beyond the common thinking that require students to analyze, evaluate, and create. It has been one of the modern issues in 21st century of education around the world and was believed that to train decisive, open-minded individual with fragmental qualities referred as activities for critical thinkers (Elder & Paul, 2008). This notion is supported by King, et al (2012) who claim that Higher Order Thinking Skills are grounded in lower order skills such as discriminations, simple application and analysis, and cognitive strategies which are then linked to the prior knowledge of subject matter contents (vocabulary, procedural knowledge, and reasoning patterns). Appropriate teaching strategies and learning environments facilitate the growth of Higher Order Thinking Skills as do student's persistence, self-monitoring, and open-minded, flexible attitudes. Higher Order Thinking Skills have been defined variously depending on the subjects and contexts these terms are used. Some of them argue that HOTS deal with uncertainties, independencies, and flexibilities related to the context as quoted below:

The challenge of defining “thinking skills, reasoning, critical thought, and problem solving” has been referred to as a conceptual swamp in a study by Cuban (Lewis & Smith, 1993) and as “century old problem” for which there is no well-established taxonomy or typology. In addition, explanation of how learning occurs have been viewed as inadequate, with no single theory adequately explaining “how all learning takes place” (Crowl, Kaminsky & Podell, 1997, p.23)

Moreover, Lai (2011) mentions that HOTS have been identified as one of several skills necessary to prepare students for their secondary education. Higher Order Thinking Skills are also believed as a main tool for encountering education or daily lives. Meanwhile, Crowl et al. (1997) explain Higher Order Thinking Skills as part of the process of evaluating the evidence collected in problem solving or the results produced by thinking creatively. Considering several major concepts related to Higher Order Thinking Skills, overall there are three assumptions about thinking and learning. First, the levels of thinking cannot be unmeshed from the levels of learning; they involve interdependence, multiple components and levels. Second, whether thinking can be learned without subject matter content is only a theoretical point. In real life, students will learn content in both community and school experiences, no matter what theorists conclude, and the concepts and vocabulary they learn in the prior year will help them learn both Higher Order Thinking Skills and

new content in the coming year. Third, Higher Order Thinking Skills involves a variety of thinking processes applied to complex situations and have multiple variables (King et al, 2012, p. 12).

2.2 Character Education in Curriculum 2013

The integration of character education in learning process has been a targeted project in Curriculum 2013. It reveals to response some challenges in 21st century education that expect students to have good social skills especially to deal with problem solving and decision making in their real life (William, 2010). According to Setyarini (2018) the educational process should incorporate experiences that engage students in developing decision making that enhance their ability to make judgments in a proper way. In character education, achieving decision skill needs to involve both cognitive and affective process (William, 2010). Unfortunately, many educators still believe that affective and cognitive are two separated skills that should be taught to students whereas it has a strong relationship that influences each other. It is also defined that successful learners are strong in both cognitive and affective processing (William, 2010). They are equipped to engage in cognitive processing such as analysis, synthesis, and evaluation but they have also refined affective skills such as receiving, responding, valuing, resolving conflict, and applying a value system to a situation (Covey 1989; Goleman 1995).

2.3 Social Awareness in EFL Classroom

Tolerance is commonly believed as an issue in a nation with diversity like Indonesia. It should be underlined that since in a very young age, students are aware of differences such as skin color and language but they just do not put their attention much on it (Masko, 2005). Unfortunately, society around children such as parents and teachers also mostly less concern about this that they may think young students are free to comment on what they see from their own perspective only (Zaki, 2010). This kind of thinking is possibly fossilized in students' mind and reflected in their attitude toward their surroundings. Regarding this, Jones (2004) and Masko (2005) suggest that the earlier the better to introduce students about diversity since they are less likely to internalize unspoken negative messages about differences as they grow older which can culminate in a learned hierarchy that is then enacted throughout their lives (Jones, 2004; Masko, 2005). It will help students to acknowledge

and make sense of diversity so that they can begin to develop empathy for others rather than judging them for being different from themselves (Paley et al., 1998). In this case, school can be one of vital places for students to learn about diversity while their ability to accept difference is dependent on how their environment accepts it particularly from the teachers' attitude (Hollingsworth, Didelot, & Smith, 2003). However, discussion of controversial issues, such as diversity of skin color, is not a common occurrence even in the social studies classroom, an expected site of such exchanges (Nystrand, Gamoran, & Carbonaro, 1998).

Among different definitions of being tolerant, defining tolerance starts with recognition of one self in relation to others which is realized from beliefs, behaviors or characteristics of acceptance the difference and similarity (Vogt, 1983; Zakin, 2012). It means that the students are able to control their disagreement attitude by not judging others merely from their one point of view. To do so, students should be exposed to various and diverse point of views that is integrated in classroom learning. Students get a chance to deliver their opinions and also they have to listen what others say about a particular topic (Zakin, 2012).

3 RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

This research is a qualitative study with an ethnography design that employed some instruments to collect data namely classroom observation and interview with teacher. It was conducted for three months in the first semester of eight grade class in one of junior schools in Bandung. The researcher observed classroom practices done by a teacher who addressed herself using Higher Order thinking skills (HOTS) concept as a basic of her teaching practice. Meanwhile, interview with the teacher was also implemented to see a correlation between teacher's thoughts about teaching and its practice in classroom. To get deeper information about the learning process, the teacher was interviewed using a semi-structured interview so that the questions can be naturally elaborated during conversation and based on teacher's response. Data were then transcribed and coded referred to principles of HOTS that appeared during learning process. Furthermore, it also observed to what extend students are able to deliver their ideas and opinions and how they show their tolerance toward others' response during group discussion.

4 FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

Data obtained from classroom observation and interview show that the teacher used short story entitled "The True Story of the Three Little Pig" and "The ant and The Grasshoppers" to teach English and students' thinking skill. Some strategies were implemented by the teacher such as brainstorming, multiple-intelligences, role playing, guessing game and open-ended questions to exercise students' thinking skill. Each strategy gave students' opportunity to involve actively in learning process while the teacher acted out as a facilitator who stimulated students to think in a higher level. Regarding the use of strategies, teacher acknowledged in the interview that students' active involvement and independency were very important in creating HOTS learning process. Thus, the teacher attempted to select classroom activities that give students a chance to be independent in their thinking. Meanwhile, a spoon-feed method that requires students to remember, recall, or only comprehend the materials were extremely avoided by the teacher. It is in line with the principle of promoting HOTS in young adolescents classroom stated by Yang et al. (2016) that an active learning-environment is a strategic atmosphere to give students an access toward higher order thinking skills. By creating this environment, it stimulates students' engagement in classroom activities and they are encouraged to share their ideas, opinions, and arguments that they have in minds.

After giving the story, the teacher asked students to have a discussion within a group about the story. For students, a group discussion provides several benefits, those are to raise their speaking confidence in a group rather in a class, explore ideas, share opinions and motivate them to speak. The teacher believed that HOTS learning should bring students' prior knowledge and experience to the class and connect it with the materials, thus a grouping work will help them to explore their personal experience easier rather than in a big classroom. The teacher said:

It is important to connect what students' have including their personal experiences and knowledge with the material in classroom. However, some students may feel uncomfortable to speak in front of other students in classroom that's why I prefer students to work in group so they can get a closer engagement with their friends in a group and share what they have.

The short story was delivered through storytelling combined with role-playing by the teacher. As recorded from the observation, teacher involved some students to act out as characters in the story

meanwhile the teacher functioned as a narrator. In addition, several pictures were also served on screen to improve students' understanding toward the story. By giving modeling through these techniques, students can understand the story better from some clues given in multiple modes such as teacher's mimic expression, their friends' gestures, and pictures. Students try to observe, analyze, and guess language meaning since the teacher fully used English in delivering the story. These activities were contradictive with traditional teaching in which teacher literally deliver all material to the students and ask them to remember or recall it (Lengkanawati, 2016).

In discussion time, students were asked about their opinion related to the story they were learning in the classroom. As many people thoughts, students put their positive judgment to the ant as a protagonist actor and negative judgments to the grasshopper based on their characteristics. When the students were asked about the ant's characterization most students agreed that the little ant was diligent, smart, kind, and hard worker. Meanwhile, in their point of view, the grasshopper was quite lazy, arrogant, and childish. To change this stereotype, the teacher used HOTS principle that allowed students to re-question any facts delivered in the story through analyzing, evaluating, comparing, and contrasting (Collin, 2014). In this case, the teacher applied some open-ended question to discuss more deeply about the text so that the students could think in different way. Some questions given by the teacher were why, how, why if, how if, what if. These questions provide students with the opportunity to express opinions, arguments, comments, reasonable reasons related to the story discussed.

Another set of questions were also distributed to observe the story from different perspectives. The teacher invited students to re-question some decisions made by the characters in the story either the ant or the grasshopper. It was done to uncover reasons for their action and decision that may have never been discussed before through traditional teaching. The teacher's questions can be seen in the following extracts:

- Why does the grasshopper play the music?
- How do people feel when listening to the music? Are they happy?
- Do people know what happens before the grasshopper plays his music?
- What would you do if you were grasshopper?

The purpose of using that kind of questions is to make students' aware related to another perspective of someone's decision before they judged people

from their one point of view and categorize others to be in good or bad side. It is in line with, Setyarini (2018) who cited that open-ended questions can enhance various alternative and relative answers which are more encouraged and rewarded than single fixed answer. From the questions, the students could respond freely. It had created a space for them to see connections across their personal experiences, and explore the meaning of the text more deeply. In fact, they tried to leave the stereotype of the grasshopper and see the grasshopper from another positive side. They guessed some possibly answers that might be the reasons for the grasshopper to do his action. The students also learned how to give a solution for problems appeared without forcing their answer to be completely accepted.

The small group discussion also benefits students from being confident to share their opinion although they found it different with their friends. Negation process among students also can be found when the group had to come to one decision. They listened to their friends' answer and reasons behind that. Generally, students displayed an increase in being tolerant, particularly when they came to give negative judgment to others. Through HOTS strategies applied in classroom, students are encouraged to observe, analyze, evaluate before they come a decision making and problem solving.

5 CONCLUSION

Considering the findings above, integrating HOTS in EFL classroom may promote students' awareness of being tolerant, particularly using short stories. The result revealed that delivering stories through using several strategies namely brainstorming, role playing, and giving open-ended questions is effective to exercise students' thinking process. by doing so, students also learn to re-question stereotype by analyzing, comparing, and evaluating before making a comment or judge to others. In addition, the analysis result of the interview clearly referred that the students gained some exposures of becoming a tolerant, respectful, and appreciative person in their real life. Besides, they enjoyed their learning because they got good opportunity from the teacher to present their ideas think critically and not only one. It can be concluded that teaching students to be tolerant can be done through integrating HOTS in English learning.

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