

CHAPTER 5

CONCLUSION AND DISCUSSION

The main purpose of this study is to investigate the effect of the peer-assisted learning strategies implementation in order to enhance English reading comprehension for grade eight students. This chapter presents the results of data analysis under the following topics: 1) summary of the findings, which reviews the purposes, the procedures of the study, and results; 2) discussions; 3) pedagogical implications; and 4) suggestions for the future study.

5.1 Summary of the Findings

The main purpose of the research was to investigate the effect of the peer-assisted learning strategies implementation in order to enhance English reading comprehension for grade eight students. Specifically, this study was conducted for the following objectives: 1) to test the efficiency of peer-assisted learning strategies in teaching English reading comprehension to grade eight students to meet the standard criterion set at 75/75; 2) to compare the students' reading comprehension achievement scores before and after learning by using peer-assisted learning strategies; and 3) to evaluate students' satisfaction towards the peer-assisted learning strategies.

The research hypothesis was students who learn English Reading and Writing Course through the PALS reading comprehension lesson plans will have higher learning achievement on the post-test mean scores than the pre-test mean scores with statistically significant difference at .05 level

The samples in this study were 40 of grade eight students who were enrolled in English Reading and Writing Course (E22202) in the second semester of the academic year 2015 at Nonsuwanpittayakom School, Buri Ram province under Secondary Educational Service Area Office 32. Class 2/1 was the sample group selected by cluster random sampling. The research instruments were the PALS reading comprehension lesson plans, reading comprehension achievement test, and the satisfaction questionnaire towards learning English reading comprehension through the PALS lesson plans.

The independent variable of this study was the PALS reading comprehension lesson plans constructed by the researcher. The dependent variable were the effectiveness index of the PALS reading comprehension lesson plans, learners' achievement, and learners' satisfaction towards the lesson plans.

This study was conducted in the second semester of the academic year 2015. There were 16 hours for learning through the PALS reading comprehension lesson plans: 2 hours for orientation, doing pre-test before learning, doing achievement test (post-test) for checking their learning achievement, and the satisfaction questionnaire with the lesson plans.

The statistics used to analyze the data were percentage, mean, standard deviation and dependent samples t-test. The findings of this study were as follows:

1. The efficiency of the PALS reading comprehension lesson plans in teaching English reading comprehension was 76.13/76.33 which was higher than the criterion set at 75/75.

2. The achievement of the students' post-test mean scores were higher than the pre-test mean scores towards the PALS reading comprehension lesson plans with statistically significant difference at .05 level.

3. The students' satisfaction towards the PALS reading comprehension lesson plans was at the most satisfactory level.

5.2 Discussion of the Findings

The researcher discussed the results of the development of the PALS reading comprehension lesson plans of teaching English reading for grade eight students as follows:

5.2.1 Efficiency of the PALS Reading Comprehension Lesson Plans

The findings indicated that the efficiency of the PALS reading comprehension lesson plans in teaching English reading comprehension was 76.13/76.33, which was higher than the criterion set at 75/75. The results illustrated that the second efficiency of outcomes (E_2) was higher than the first efficiency of process (E_1). That means the students got post-test scores more than exercise scores. This is because they have done the exercises with peers who were the stronger readers and comprehend the story they have learned before doing the post-test. Consequently, they stimulated themselves to learn and do activities with their peers. Furthermore, the first efficiency of process was lower than the efficiency of outcomes. It might be that the students were adaptive in doing activities with their peers while learning through the PALS reading comprehension lesson plans.

In addition, the findings of the study could be considered that the researcher reviewed the related literature for example the principles of the Basic Education Core

Curriculum B.E.2551 (A.D.2008), learning theories, reading skill, model of reading, reading comprehension, peer-assisted learning strategies, lesson plans, satisfaction, etc. The researcher conducted the PALS reading comprehension lesson plans correlated to learning theories of many educators such as Li et al. (2007), who created the schema theory that was connected to reading. The readers would understand the letters and sounds of the words, syntax or sentence structure, and the patterns which the information states in the texts. The readers' background knowledge of the topic that they are being read is also important; Vygotsky (1896-1934), who developed the social constructivism and informed the best known concepts: the zone of proximal development (ZPD) which is the child will be able to learn and solve more complex problems when they received assistance from skillful partners; Barchers (1998), created the three models related to reading: 1) bottom-up, 2) top-down, and 3) interactive theory; Pearson and Johnson (1972) and Nuttall (1996) informed six types of comprehension: 1) literal comprehension, 2) reorganization, 3) inference, 4) prediction, 5) evaluation, and 6) personal response; Ruddell (2001) indicated three levels of comprehension: literal level, interpretative level and applied level; and McMaster, Fuchs and Fuchs (2006), they pointed out that peer-assisted learning strategies (PALS) is a research-based, instructional reading program developed by educators at Vanderbilt University in 1996 for Grade 2 through 6 students. It was designed to improve the reading skills of lower level readers, develop critical reading skills such as fluency and reading comprehension (Fuchs et al. 1997; Sporer & Brunstein. 2009). It also was as an element of effective instruction that focuses on working with partners which provides opportunities to respond and receive corrective feedback, increases reading skills, especially opportunities for positive social

interactions (Fuchs, Fuchs, Mathes & Martinez. 2002). Afterwards, the PALS reading comprehension lesson plans were developed appropriately step by step following the three main steps of PALS. Then, the thesis advisors and the experts made suggestions, gave comments, and evaluated the research instruments. Finally, the PALS reading comprehension lesson plans were trial three steps before using with the samples. These factors caused the great effect of the PALS reading comprehension lesson plans.

This could be concluded that the PALS reading comprehension lesson plans were efficient because they were planned systematically and tried out and found the efficiency before using with the samples. The PALS reading comprehension lesson plans provide a chance for the students to work cooperatively and interact with their partners. Learning with the skillful peers encourages the weaker readers to develop their reading skills and increase their attitude toward reading. Moreover, the lesson plans support students to learn and improve their reading comprehension more than they used to be. They supported the students to achieve the higher level in reading.

5.2.2 The Students' Post-test and Pre-test Mean Scores in Learning through the PALS Reading Comprehension Lesson Plans

The result revealed that the achievement of the students' post-test mean scores were higher than the pre-test mean scores towards the PALS reading comprehension lesson plans with statistically significant difference at .05 level. This could be concluded that the PALS reading comprehension lesson plans had the efficiency since it could make the students succeed the higher achievement. It was quite new for the students to learn reading comprehension through the PALS reading comprehension lesson plans. They were motivated to learn and interested in the

contents more than they used to be. This result caused by the PALS reading comprehension lesson plans were tried out and found the efficiency before using with the samples. In addition, the PALS reading comprehension lesson plans consisted of the steps that stimulate the students work cooperatively and interact with their partners. They encouraged themselves to learn and do activities with their peers. Therefore, students who learned through the PALS reading comprehension lesson plans had higher proficiency of learning.

The result confirmed the hypothesis in Chapter 1 and it was in accordance with the previous research works, including, Johnson (2002) who investigated the effect of a peer-assisted learning program on the academic achievement, self-esteem, and perceived educational value of 16 low-achieving ninth grade students at a Delaware High School. The results revealed that the mean grade point averages (GPA) of the treatment group increased by 0.374 points, and the mean GPA of the control group increased by 0.198. Although, the growth for both groups was not statistically significant, the researcher claimed that the treatment group had an average increase almost 0.2 points greater than the control group. Roof (2005) also investigated the immediate effects of a PALS-Based Peer-Tutoring Program on the reading fluency and comprehension of 3 third and fourth grade English language learners (ELLs) who enrolled in monolingual classrooms. The findings showed that students improved their reading fluency and reading comprehension and they developed their reading skill to a higher level of reading while working with native English speaking peers. Likewise, La-onghong (2007) who studied the effect of peer-assisted learning strategies implementation to enhance reading comprehension and retention with grade 8 students. The results found that the post-test scores of the

English reading comprehension achievement were higher than pre-test scores. In addition, the retention scores and the post-test scores of the English reading comprehension achievement of the samples after learning through PALS were not different. It means that the retention of the learners' reading comprehension lasted longer and it was the effect of PALS. Additionally, Sporer and Brunstein (2009) investigated an experimental study of PALS in Germany with 186 of seventh grade students in eight different classes. The result showed that students in PALS classes gained high score on reading comprehension tests.

From the above data, it could be concluded that PALS implementation helps learners improve their reading comprehension and the students who learned English through PALS implementation had higher proficiency in reading.

5.2.3 Level of Students' Satisfactions towards Learning English through the PALS Reading Comprehension Lesson Plans

The findings pointed out that the students' satisfactions towards learning English through the PALS reading comprehension lesson plans were at the most satisfactory level. The results showed that the students were satisfied with learning English through the PALS reading comprehension lesson plans. This could be described that the PALS reading comprehension lesson plans were evaluated the quality by the experts. Subsequently the lesson plans had high quality, appropriate content, and suitable for the student's level. The PALS reading comprehension lesson plans supported cooperative learning. It focused on working with partners in order to increase reading skills and opportunities for positive social interactions (Fuchs, Fuchs, Mathes & Martinez. 2002). Moreover, PALS was an efficient and practical tool to develop students' reading comprehension (Sporer & Brunstein. 2009). For these

reasons, students who learned through the PALS reading comprehension lesson plans had higher achievement in learning. Working with skillful peers stimulated the weaker readers to develop their reading skills and increase their attitude toward reading. It also supported students to interact and work cooperatively with their partners.

The result supported the hypothesis in Chapter 1 and it was consistent with the past research works, namely, Fuchs et al. (1999) who examined the effect of PALS to improve reading comprehension of low-level readers at the secondary level, 39 of 50 students were identified as learning disabled. The finding revealed that students who had experienced PALS expressed that they were more interested in working with their peers, in order to help others to read. Likewise, Pool (2009) investigated the effectiveness of the PALS instructional approach on the decoding, fluency, and comprehension performance levels of elementary students with different disability. The participants were 12 fifth grade students placed in self-contained cross-categorical classroom who were three to four years below grade level in terms of reading performance. The results indicated that students enjoyed PALS overall and perceived a certain level of benefit from the intervention. In addition, Breece (2012) who studied a case study of peer-assisted learning strategies among students in the Eleventh Grade Foundations Language Arts classrooms. The results found that the students increased their desire and interest to read. It also suggested that reading with skillful peer could be a positive experience and effect on students' self-perceptions.

Finally, this could be concluded that after the students learned English reading through the PALS reading comprehension lesson plans, they had higher

achievement in learning and the students were satisfied with learning towards the implementation.

5.3 Pedagogical Implications

According to the findings from the study, the researcher made useful pedagogical implications towards as follows:

5.3.1 The PALS reading comprehension lesson plans support learning achievement of the students. As a result, administrators and teachers who concern with learning management should adjust the peer-assisted learning strategies implementation to develop the students' reading comprehension in other contents or subject areas.

5.3.2 While learning via the PALS reading comprehension lesson, the teacher should encourage students to read, especially the weaker readers in order to avoid the misreading and lost in class.

5.3.3 Persons concerned with learning management should maintain the workshops in conducting educational innovation and administer for solving the instructional obstacles. In addition, they should support teachers to use the peer-assisted learning strategies implementation in development the students' reading comprehension, which make the students achieve in learning.

5.4 Suggestions for Future Research

Based on the findings of the study, some suggestions are made for the future research as follows:

5.4.1 The study on teaching English reading comprehension through the peer-assisted learning strategies implementation should be widely used and adopted to another level of the students such as the upper secondary and undergraduate students.

5.4.2 Learning through the peer-assisted learning strategies implementation should be replicated to include a longer period to show definitely positive benefits in terms of increase students achievement or persistence.

5.4.3 The study through the peer-assisted learning strategies implementation should be applied to other subjects.