

“HOOK, BOOK, LOOK, TOOK”: EVALUATION AND REFLECTION

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ABSTRACT

Tedjaatmadja and Renandya (2012) recently offer an alternative four-step lesson structure that can be implemented for teaching English to young learners, namely the Hook Book Look Took (HBLT). HBLT itself was originally developed by Richards and Bredfeldt (1998). To see how it would work out, this lesson structure was tried out in real TEYL classrooms. Afterwards, the implementation was evaluated as a part of classroom-based research and reflective teaching. This article focuses on our evaluation and reflection on the implementation of HBLT in classrooms. The aspects discussed are teachers' instructional strategies as well as problems encountered and observed in classrooms.

Keywords: Hook Book Look Took, English for Young Learners, Reflective Teaching

All teachers for young learners understand the complexities of young learners (especially those of age 5-12). Perhaps of most concern is the fact that they have very short attention span. In that case, it is important to keep the children engaged so that they can reach their full linguistic potentials. In light of this, Tedjaatmadja and Renandya (2012) come up with an alternative four-step lesson structure, namely The Hook Book Look Took (HBLT), which was originally developed by Lawrence O Richards and Gary J Bredfeldt (1998).

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HOOK, BOOK, LOOK, TOOK (HBLT)

- **Hook**

At this stage, teachers introduce and prepare the students for the main part of the lesson. Especially with young children, this part should be fun and enjoyable. A large assortment of fun activities such as singing, playing games, drawing, or other activities that involve bodily movement is welcome. Due to their short attention span, teachers might need to prepare two or three Hook activities. In short, the Hook should serve as the bridge between the aim of the lesson and the Book.

- **Book**

As the main part of the lesson and the source of comprehensible input, the Book should be interesting, enjoyable and comprehensible to these young learners. Teachers can use a variety of teaching techniques, e.g. Read and Predict, Tell and Check, Listen and Draw. Others might prefer student read-aloud and ask them to do choral reading. Whichever technique the teachers use, the key point is to let the children enjoy the books and other benefits (e.g. gaining more vocabulary and exposure to correct grammar) will follow naturally.

- **Look**

At this stage, teachers invite the students to look more closely at the language features of the stories in the Book stage. This reflects Nation's (1996) second strand, language focused learning, that deliberate attention to language features enhances learning. These features can be vocabulary, pronunciation of words used in the story, certain grammatical structures, etc. It is very important not to overdo this phase; thus, it is crucial to select one or two language features that are most important and relevant in the context of the lesson.

- **Took**

This is the take-away activity, which aims to increase the retention of the key points of the lesson. It is expected that students will be able to transfer the language items they've learnt to a new context.

METHODS

In order to see how the HBLT idea could be implemented in real TEYL classrooms, a pilot project was conducted in the following three learning contexts:

Context 1: It was conducted by the regular teacher in a national-plus primary school in Surabaya. There are fourteen primary 2 students. English is the medium of instruction.

Contexts 2 & 3: They were conducted by the substitute teacher (i.e. Herwindy, the second author of this article) in an English course (Children classes) in Surabaya. There were six and nine students respectively, ranging from Primary 2 to Primary 6. Bahasa Indonesia and English are the medium of instruction.

Each class lasted for 60 minutes. By the end of the class, it was hoped that the students would be able to talk about the objects and colors around them using the right form (Adjective + Noun) and pronounce the sound of /th/ as in /there/, /the/, /this/ and of /əʊ/ as in /rainbow/, /go/, /yellow/.

For the teaching materials, a video clip, the “Rainbow Song” (<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=uTDJiPd3L0>) and self-made colorful flags in the “Hook” part and an animated audio-video (“Our Colorful World” with the English subtitles: <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=lxfaVWsHQEM>) for the “Book” part were used.

FINDINGS I: EVALUATION

The following sections explore the evaluation of HBLT Pilot Project in the three contexts. The evaluation itself addresses such aspects as teachers’ implementation of HBLT lesson structures in their classrooms and the instructional strategies they used.

HBLT Lesson Structure and Instructional Strategies in Context 1

This part will discuss how Teacher 1 in Context 1 implemented the “Hook Book Look Took” (HBLT) lesson structure and her instructional strategies during the teaching and learning process. In

general, Teacher 1 seemed to have followed the step-by-step HBLT lesson structure as prescribed by Tedjaatmadja & Renandya (2012).

Hook

The lesson started with the “Hook” part, in which teachers are recommended to introduce and prepare students affectively, cognitively and linguistically by doing fun activities such as singing, playing games, dancing and drawing (Tedjaatmadja & Renandya, 2012). Teacher 1 spent around 15 minutes in this “Hook” part. She began by firstly asking relevant questions related to the topic which was going to be learned, i.e. colors, as exemplified by the following excerpt.

Excerpt 1:

T: “(Student’s Name), what is your favorite color?”

After getting students’ responses, Teacher 1 gave feedbacks in forms of ‘wh-prompts/questions’, completion prompts and personal comments. Below are examples of the teacher’s feedbacks.

Excerpt 2:

T: “Why is it green?”

“Why do you like green?”

“Pink? Whoa, it’s a girl’s color, right? Pink”

“Just like a cloud... it’s white, right? Sometimes it’s...”

Some of these feedback questions were already higher order thinking questions (i.e. “why” questions). However, the teacher did not really spend time to ask follow-up questions after getting series of responses from the students with whom she were having interactions. Rather, she continued asking the same introductory questions to some other students and quite immediately stopped after getting one response she would like to hear from the students.

After she has finished asking a number of students about their favorite color, Teacher 1 eventually informed the students about the topic they were going to learn. Then, Teacher 1 played

the song and asked the students to sing along. Following the singing activity, Teacher 1 asked the students to play the flag game, in which the students had to raise flags whose colors were being mentioned by the song they were listening. The singing activities & flag games were indeed interesting as a strategy to “hook” the students’ attention to the lesson and get them ready to learn more.

Book

The “Book” part in this study used an animated audio-video material instead of conventional printed materials (e.g. storybook or picture book). There were a number of different activities done by Teacher 1 in this part. First, she asked the students to merely watch and listen to story narrated in the video. Then, she integrated the flag game idea previously done in the “Hook” Part by instructing the students to raise the colored flags based on the colors they saw and heard from the video. Afterwards, they did the read aloud activity together while watching the video. The total duration for implementing this “Book” part was approximately 15 minutes. Read aloud techniques in the “Book” part as originally conceptualized by Tedjaatmadja & Renandya (2012) include four particular procedures, namely “read and predict”, “tell and check”, “listen and draw” and “expressive reading”. Teacher 1 seemed to focus heavily on “choral reading” and unfortunately did not continue to make much use of a higher level strategy such as “predicting”.

Look

The “Look” part, according to Tedjaatmadja & Renandya (2012), aims at “getting the students to look more closely at the language features of the story”. In other words, it addresses such aspects as vocabulary (meanings, forms) and grammatical features. Teacher 1 in this case directly asked some language- related questions based on the video that the students watched, as shown by the following excerpt.

Excerpt 3.

T: “From the video that we have watched, do you still remember what is noun?*

She also quoted some lines narrated in the story to help her explain the language features to the students.

Excerpt 4.

T: “The writer said like this: Slodge sees a blue planet”

Teacher 1 spent the rest of the time in the “Look” part by mostly discussing grammar, particularly the concept of nouns and adjectives and how these parts of speech were used in sentences. The teacher also asked some grammar-related questions to the students, prompted them and was observed to give direct correction on the students’ performance. While the original idea of the “Look” part suggests that teachers not spend too much time on explaining grammar (Tedjaatmadja & Renandya, 2012), Teacher 1’s activities and strategies in this case seemed to focus rather heavily on this particular aspect.

Took

Unfortunately the “Took” part was not included. However, based on the concept formulated by Tedjaatmadja & Renandya (2012), the last step, namely “Took”, was supposed to be done to conclude the whole lesson, enabling the students to “apply or transfer learning to a new situation”.

HBLT Lesson Structure and Instructional Strategies in Contexts 2 & 3

This part will explore further Teacher 2’s implementation of the “Hook, Book, Look, Took” concept, including the instructional strategies she used in Context 2 and Context 3. Quite similar to Teacher 1, in general Teacher 2 followed each step of HBLT lesson structure. Still, there were some particular, interesting differences between the implementations of HBLT by these two teachers, which would be worth-discussed.

Hook

Teacher 2 started the “Hook” part by stating the topic of the lesson. Then she started asking some relevant questions. Different from Teacher 1 who spoke mostly in English, Teacher 2 was observed to do code switching between English and Bahasa Indonesia rather frequently. This was done presumably due to the different contexts the two had. As explained previously, in Context 1, the lesson took place in a national-plus primary school in which English is the medium of instruction, whereas in Contexts 2 & 3, the lessons took place in an English Course with both English and Bahasa Indonesia as the medium of instruction. The examples below will illustrate how Teacher 2 asked the introductory questions.

Excerpt 5:

T: “*Warna kesukaanmu apa?*”

(What’s your favorite color?)

In Context 2, when she realized that the students seemed to be rather quiet and shy, Teacher 2 prompted them by offering some alternatives to the desirable answers. In Context 3, on the other hand, the students seemed to be more active and they responded to the teacher’s questions rather more directly. After the introductory questions, Teacher 2 introduced the first ‘main activity’ i.e. listening to the song & singing. Then, Teacher 2 assisted the students to do the flag game and prompted the students to mention the color. The activities done in this “Hook” part were not so much different from the ones done by Teacher 1. Furthermore, the aim of ‘hooking’ the students to the topic by doing fun activities in this part seemed to be achieved as well. Teacher 2 spent 8- 10 minutes on this part in Context 2 and Context 3 respectively.

Book

In the “Book” part, both in Contexts 2 & 3, Teacher 2 played a video material and asked the students to listen and watch first. Afterwards, Teacher 2 asked the students about the story. This

was not done by Teacher 1. Teacher 2 also prompted the students to talk about the theme of the story, as seen in the following excerpts.

Excerpt 6:

T: “Warna... *Selain tentang warna, tentang apa lagi?*”

(Colors... Besides colors, what is it (the story) about?)

The excerpt above also showed how Teacher 2 instructed the students to recall the topic of the story while at the same time expanding the students’ answer. This was an evidence of implementing to some extent particular interactive/ dialogic oriented book reading strategies (cf. Morrow, 1990; Zevenbergen & Whitehurst, 2003, and Ping, 2012). Then, Teacher 2 and the students did the read aloud/ choral reading activity. The time spent by Teacher 2 to do this part was 10-12 minutes.

Look

In the “Look” part, Teacher 2 reviewed the grammatical features (adjective, noun phrase), referring back to the story the students had watched and listened previously in the “Book” part. Teacher 2 also instructed the students to practice composing sentences which were supposed to be modeled on the previous structures they learned from the story. Afterwards, she asked the students to construct sentences based on the real life context, using the things they had in the classrooms. Furthermore, Teacher 2 gave feedback in terms of “confirmation” by repeating the students’ answers and also provided corrections.

Teacher 2 spent 13- 20 minutes in this part. She was observed to give direct grammar related explanation, however if compared to Teacher 1, the strategies used by Teacher 2 were rather less explicit.

Took

Teacher 2 closed the session in Context 2 by asking the students if they still had questions related to the lesson. Probably due to the limited time, however, she did not review the lesson. In Context 3, on the other hand, she improved her strategies by playing the song used previously in the “Hook” part and asked the students to sing again. This was done instead of formally reviewing the lesson and might have been a more interesting way for the students to remember or keep what they had learned that day.

DISCUSSION OF THE FINDINGS

Both teachers followed the same lesson structures, however their implementation of “Hook Book Look Took” was observed to differ from one another. Teacher 1 was found to be more direct, both in her explanation and feedbacks, and focused more on the language features such as discussing sentence patterns. Teacher 2, on the other hand, provided more chances for contextual learning by engaging the students with the examples of sentences they could construct based on the real life situation. The concept of “Hook Book Look Took” itself indeed allows the flexibility and possibility for teachers to materialize the steps based on their own preferences (Tedjaatmadja & Renandya, 2012).

Regarding the complexity of teachers’ instructional strategies, both teachers used mostly lower cognitive level strategies (i.e. mostly asking the students to mention), with a few portions of higher level strategies (i.e. reasoning, evaluating and expanding). This finding voiced the findings of previous studies, which stated that teachers of young learners rarely made use of higher cognitive level instructional strategies, including in a book reading activity in which facilitation of cognitive and language development could be well supported by such strategies (cf. Dickinson et al, 2003; Higham, 2008 and Ping, 2012). While it might have given an impression of being simple and flexible, the “Hook Book Look Took” concept was actually built on such a rich theoretical background, which also included some cognitive-related learning theories. Therefore, teachers who

would like to implement this concept should also be well aware of the complexity of strategies they incorporate in this lesson structure.

FINDINGS II: REFLECTION

Teacher' Reflection of the HBLT Project: Contexts 2 & 3

Recently, reflective teaching has been taken more seriously by teachers and institutions. A well-conducted reflective teaching will help teachers maintain ongoing growth and development as educators. Many teachers often think about their teaching and perhaps have an idea that "My lesson went quite well" or "My students didn't seem to understand what I said." However, unless we spend more time focusing on what has actually taken place, we may tend to jump to a conclusion about how things happened and why they happened that way, probably based on the responses from some students only. Reflective teaching implies a more systematic process of collecting data about teaching, examining attitudes, beliefs, assumptions, and teaching practices for the betterment of the teaching learning process (Richards and Lockhart, 1994). The following is my (Herwindy's) own reflection about what went on in my classrooms.

Hook

The regular teachers were not present in the classroom so I had to introduce myself and greeted the students. In Context 2, the students barely knew each other (as mentioned by the administrative staff) so the group dynamic was not established yet. There were few minutes of awkward moments in Context 2, (but not in Context 3) although this seemed to lessen as I began asking them to name their favorite colors. When the video clip was played, they did not seem to be enthusiastic about it. They got more excited when I asked them to help me distribute the colorful flags. They were more focused on raising the right flags than singing the "Rainbow Song." After Context 2; however, I

learnt it was necessary to prepare them for the game. For that reason, probably, I received more positive responses in the “Hook” part in Context 3.

Book

In this part, I played an animated audio-video material and asked the students to listen and watch first. In Context 2, at first the students seemed not to be interested in the video although later on they seemed to enjoy it. In Context 3; the students were more excited about the video. Afterwards, I turned off the volume and asked them to read aloud to work on their pronunciation while being exposed to the vocabulary and grammar (Adjective + Noun word order).

Look

At this stage, I explained the Adj + Noun structure and gave some examples by comparing the different word order between English (L2) and Bahasa Indonesia (L1). I also used this opportunity to check their background knowledge by involving them, as shown in the following excerpt.

Excerpt 7:

T : *misalnya mobil merah, kalau dalam bahasa Inggris berarti..*

(For example “*mobil (car) merah (red)*”, in English it will be...)

Ss : Red car

T : Red car... a red car

I also introduced more than one sentence structure to give them more exposure to English, as exemplified in the following excerpt:

Excerpt 8:

T : *Jadi kalau kalian mau bilang ini ada mobil merah bisa “oh, look at the red car” atau “there is a red car” atau “the car is red”*

(So, if you see a red car, you can say “oh, look at the red car” or “there is a red car” or “the car is

red”)

Took

In the “Took” part, I asked them to make sentences with the Adjective+Noun word order as explained in the Look part. In Context 2, I asked them to write down their answers on the whiteboard; whereas in Context 3, I asked them to do a bring-and-tell activity. I did so because I noticed that most students were kinaesthetic. Since I ran out of time, I did not review the lesson in Context 2. I had better time management in Context 3, so to end the class, I asked them to sing the Rainbow Song (from the “Hook” part) one more time before going home. This strategy seemed to work well since some students were humming the song even after the class was over.

DISCUSSION OF THE FINDINGS

After reviewing the video recording of my own teaching, I pondered what worked well, what did not, and what I should have done differently. We are also aware that the presence of an observer and the absence of the regular teacher (Context 2 & 3) may influence the nature of the class. However, I can learn a lot from my own professional experiences in this practice-based professional learning setting. They have changed my perspectives in teaching and I hope I will keep evolving and progressing as an educator.

- **Wait-time and pacing**

“Wait-time” as an instructional variable was invented by Mary Budd Rowe (1972, cited in Stahl, 1994). It is the length of time following teachers’ questions and students’ responses. Giving enough wait time may increase the quality and length of their responses. Some students learn faster than the others. In Context 3, for instance, while other students understood my instruction, one student asked me about how to perform the task, indicating that I might need to slow down, increasing the wait-

time for him. Another solution is I could help the class by writing the instructions down so time can be used more productively. The following excerpt illustrates the situation.

Excerpt 9:

T : *Jadi misalnya* I have a (wait-time)

(So for example, I have a ...).

S1 & 2 : Purple flag

T : Purple flag

.....(teachers told them to look for things around them)

T : *Jadi satu anak tiga barang*

(So, each student will talk about three objects)

S3 : *Jadinya gimana buatnya?*

(So, how to make the sentences?)

Pacing is another significant feature of a lesson which deals with deciding how much time we allocate to each part of the lesson (Richards and Lockhart, 1994). After teaching in Context 2, I realized that I proceeded to the game before the students fully understood the rules. I improved this by giving a simulation before the game in Context 3, resulting in a more enjoyable learning atmosphere.

- **Rapport**

One of the biggest challenges of teaching is building rapport with the students. I am aware that I am quite terrible at names; so the lesson learnt is to review my students' names several times before the first class, trying to memorize as many as I can. In addition, I tried my best to treat each student with care and to show interest in them. So I smiled quite a lot, said thank you when they helped me out and gave applauses for their efforts. When a little girl was too shy to present alone, for example, I reached out to her and accompanied her when she came forward.

- **Teacher-student interaction**

In both contexts, I think I did the right thing by involving the student to distribute the flags and lead the flag game. In the “Book” part; however, I did not spend enough time to interact with the students while I could have asked more questions e.g. predicting what happens next. In the “Took” part; however, I tried to interact more with the students (while checking their understanding) by eliciting answers from them. The excerpt below describes how this interaction took place.

Excerpt 10:

T: *Jadi misalnya ehm..* (walking around, looking for a particular object)

(So, for example ehm...)

S: A yellow bag

T: A yellow.... bag. Ehm (indicating a correct answer)

S: A blue pencil

T: Yeah. A blue pencil.

- **Feedback**

A number of issues are involved in error feedback. I believe that not all errors are to be corrected; so I focused only on some basic sentence structures (e.g. the use of article “a/an”) and provided the correct answers afterwards. This process can be seen in the following excerpt.

Excerpt 11:

S : I have a orange book*)

T: An orange book.

As for pronunciation, I highlighted only the pronunciation of the words used in the lesson, as indicated in the following excerpt.

Excerpt 12:

S : Purple flag (/’pärpəl/) *)

T : Purple flag (/ˈpɜːpəl/)

CONCLUSIONS & SUGGESTIONS

“Hook Book Look Took” is a well-built concept which can be an alternative lesson structure for teaching English for young learners. It includes four particular steps which offer various opportunities for teachers to engage their students to meaningful and joyful learning activities. However, before implementing HBLT in real classrooms, teachers should plan their lessons really carefully. Based on the evaluation of the HBLT Pilot Project, teachers who would like to adopt this particular lesson structure idea are recommended to plan the activities carefully, including how much time they should spend on each step. Moreover, they should be able to make use of appropriate instructional strategies to optimize students’ learning. In addition, after the implementation of the HBLT lesson, it would also be necessary for teachers to reflect on their own teaching, just like what Herwindy as one of the teachers observed in this case did, in order to see what worked out well, what not and what could be improved in the future.

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