

U-shape and Cluster Seating Arrangement in Teaching English as Foreign Language in Yayasan Dana Punia

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Abstract

The current problem focused on seating arrangement. The data were collected through observation, video recording, and interview. Data were analyzed by using Interactive Data Analysis. After the observation done, there were differences on students' responses in U-shape and Cluster seating arrangements. When U-shape seating arrangement implemented, the students become hesitated in participating in the classroom activities. Meanwhile Cluster seating arrangement promoted more students' participations. It was suggested to decide what types of response the teacher want their students give to the lesson before implementing those seating arrangements.

Keywords: English, Seating-Arrangement, Teaching

Introduction

Students' participation or activeness is an important thing in a lesson. It is the key of effective learning. If the students are actively participating in the lesson, it will make every student in the classroom has the chance to learn. The learning become more conducive and the process of material mastery will become less difficult if the students actively participating in the lesson (Sofyani et al., 2018). Nurhayati (2014) adds students activeness include; students' attention, discussion, asking, etc. In order to achieve this, classroom management is the thing that needed by the teacher. Classroom management is a process of ensuring the teaching and learning process run smoothly and reducing the students' negative behavior (Soares, 2015). Teacher has to utilize all of the aspects in classroom management to ensure the learning process runs smoothly. The aspects covered by classroom management are; teacher's role, students grouping, discipline, classroom atmosphere, feedback, monitoring, dynamic classroom and seating arrangement.

The seating arrangement of a classroom has a quite critical role in the learning process. Seating arrangement is one of classroom management sub topics. It deals with how teacher arranges the desks and the chairs in order to support the learning process. Teacher can utilize seating arrangement to control the students' behavior, amount of communication, learning, interaction and activeness. Wannarka and Ruhl (2008) argues that physical arrangement of the classroom (i.e., seating arrangement) has the possibility to promote preferred behavior and

contribute to students' misbehavior. Furthermore, students' attentiveness increases if the seating arrangement of the classroom support the teacher's aim based on several researchers (Haghighi & Jusan, 2012). If the seating arranged in effective way, the teacher will be able to focused on the learning more than the behavior issue (Rogers, 2020). Nowadays, many teachers still apply a single type of seating arrangement only. Traditional row is the most used seating arrangement that is used in the class (Simmons & Hinton, 2015). But sometimes the students feel bored with this type of seating arrangement. Traditional row seating arrangement makes the primary interaction focus on the teacher and minimize students' interactions. This is not suitable to be implemented in nowadays type of learning which known as students centered learning. This may create reluctance of the students in participating in the classroom. When this happens, the lesson will not be engaging. This will make the students' concentration easily distracted by other factors outside of the topic delivered by the teacher.

There are so many kinds of seating arrangements that can be implemented in the classroom. Teacher has to try to implement different kind of seating arrangement, instead of applying a single type of seating arrangement all the time. U-shape (Horseshoe) and Cluster (Modular) seating arrangements can be good to be implemented. Moreover, these two types seating arrangement are believed will enhance student-student interaction in the classroom. Halim and Mustar (2017) have proven that Cluster seating arrangement made the students more actively giving hand-raising. Meanwhile, U-shape can make the students understand the lesson easier since it makes a good eye contact between the students and the teacher.

U-shape (or also known as Horseshoe) seating arrangement is usually used for smaller classes. It is shaped such as its name (U letter) in which the teacher standing between the two ends of the desk arrangement. This type of seating arrangement is usually used for class discussion. In this seating arrangement every student can see each other. Unlike traditional row seating arrangement, U-shape makes a very wide empty space in the middle of the class. This seating arrangement will make the students more active. Hilal (2014) argues that this type of arrangement is suitable to be implemented in order to stimulate the interaction in the class because it will give the students chance to communicate and interact with the teacher and other students. It is reported that this type of seating arrangement will promote good communication, feeling safe, and high number of asking questions (Halim & Mustar, 2017). It can be concluded that U-shape seating arrangement is highly recommended to be implemented in order to make the students become more active in learning.

Hilal (2014) explained Cluster (or also known as Modular) seating arrangement is the seating arrangement formed by group of desks in which the students sit around the desk edges facing each other. This seating arrangement will promote good communication in the classroom. This seating arrangement suitable for exclusive space for the students to interact. This type of seating arrangement is good to be implemented for group work (Simmons & Hinton, 2015). Thus, it can be concluded that cluster seating arrangement also good to be applied in the classroom. There are many studies have been conducted in this field. Falout (2014) found that semicircle arrangements promote a good peer collaborative work, a good communication and higher rates of asking questions. Moreover, students' attention, interest, and social action were encouraged in this seating arrangement. Simmons and Hinton (2015), recommended Cluster and Horseshoe (U-shape) seating arrangement to make the students more active in class discussion and cooperative learning. Suparsih, (2018) found that students preferred cluster seating arrangement since it created a good chance for the students to

collaborate with their friends. Based on the students' responses, U-shape seating arrangement makes them enjoy the learning, have a good communication with the teacher, and have a better motivation and confidence when the learning process take place. Moreover, this type of seating arrangement makes the students not afraid to ask to the teacher if they confused about certain material (Halim & Mustar, 2017).

This research focused on the implementation of two seating arrangements in the classroom. The seating arrangements that implemented were U-shape and Cluster seating arrangements. This research aimed to find out; strategies of teaching are used by the teacher when implementing U-shape and Cluster seating arrangements, the students' responses in classroom, also, problems and solutions faced by the teacher when implementing the U-shape and Cluster seating arrangements.

Method

Research Design

This research belongs to descriptive qualitative research. There are two types of seating arrangement that were implemented namely U-shape and Cluster seating arrangements. Those seating arrangements were implemented for two times for each type. While the seating arrangements were being implemented, observation and video recording on students' responses and participation were conducted.

Research Setting

The study was conducted in Yayasan Dana Punia. It is an orphanage which located in Bayuning, Buleleng Sub-District, Buleleng Regency, Bali. This place was chosen because most of the junior high schools had completed the semester and there no more teaching and learning activities until the new semester begin. There were also many attempts done in order to find the suitable setting to conduct the research before. However, most of the non-governmental educational organizations had finished the teaching and learning activities as well. In contrast, this orphanage still conducted the teaching and learning process. This orphanage had a quite spacious classroom which possible to implement U-shape and Cluster seating arrangements in the learning process. There were 15 students involved in this study. They were in the same ages with the junior high school students. However, they were consisted of different grades if seen from the junior high school context. Most of them were in the same grade with the second grade of junior high school students and some in the first and third grade of junior high schools.

Method of Data Collection

Data were collected through observation, interview and video recording. Observation and video recording were done when U-shape and Cluster seating arrangements implemented in the classroom. Meanwhile interview was done after those seating arrangement implemented.

Research Instrument

There are three instruments used in order to collect the data namely, observation checklist, observation sheet, and interview guide. Observation checklist used in order to find out whether U-shape and cluster seating arrangement make the students more active in the learning process based on the criteria of active learning. There were several criteria that will be included in the checklist. And the researcher only needed to give a check mark (✓) and dash

(-) to the criteria based on what happened in the classroom. Observation sheet used to record the data in the form of note. This completed the data from the observation checklist. This instrument aimed to give more detail information about what happened in the classroom. The data described based on the researcher's observation. And if there were unexpected things which not included in the observation checklist happened this instrument helped the researcher to record them. Interview guide used as the guidance when the researcher conducts the interview. There were several questions in the interview guide. And the researcher must follow the question in it when the interview conducted. This instrument used to observe the problems faced by the teacher while implementing U-shape and Cluster seating arrangements.

Data Analysis

The data gathered were analyzed by using Qualitative Data Analysis proposed Miles et al., (2014). There are three steps in this qualitative data analysis namely data reduction, data display and conclusion drawing/verifying. Data reduction is done in which some of the unnecessary things in the data were removed, so there will be only the relevant data remaining. Data display is the step after the data reduced. In this step the researcher organizes the data comprehensively and gives meaning to the reduced data. The last step is conclusion drawing /verifying is the step where the researcher draws conclusion after the data displayed and verifies the data through triangulation. Data triangulation was used in this research. Data triangulation uses various data sources in strengthening the validity and the reliability of the result.

Findings & Discussions

First finding was about the strategy that was used by the teacher in the teaching and learning process. The teacher taught writing, specifically writing descriptive text to the students. The strategy used was Think-Pair-Share strategy. Think-Pair-Share strategy is a teaching and learning strategy which aimed to promote a collaborative learning. This strategy divided into three stages, the first stage is Think in which the students think independently about what they are going to write, Pair is the stage where the students work in pair to discuss and giving opinion each other about what the students write, and the last stage is Share were the students present their work to the whole class. Table 1 presents the implementation of sitting arrangement and the activities conducted.

Table 1. Result of Observation Checklist

No	Technique	Activities
1.	For the U-shape seating arrangement, out of 20 criteria of activeness there were 13 criteria showed up, and 7 did not happened in the teaching and learning process.	(1) visual activities in the form of observing activities, (2) oral activities in the form of stating, asking, and giving opinion, (3) listening activities in the form of listening to explanation, conversation, and discussion, (4) writing activities in the form of writing draft, and writing paragraph, (5) mental activities in the form of remembering, and decision making, (6) emotional activity in the form of being happy, and being calm.

2.	Cluster seating arrangement, 15 criteria showed up in the classroom, and 5 criteria did not. It can be seen that the number of the criteria activeness showed up in Cluster seating arrangement than in U-shape	(1) visual activities in the form of reading, and observing, (2) oral activities in the form of stating, asking, and giving opinion, (3) listening activities in the form of listening to explanation, conversation, and discussion, (4) writing activities in the form of writing draft, and writing paragraph, (5) mental activities in the form of remembering, and decision making, (6) emotional activities in the form of being happy, being courage, and being calm.
	Based on the interview done to the teacher, there was some information gathered.	It was about the (1) problems the teacher faced in U-shape and Cluster seating arrangements, (2) solutions to the problems faced by the teacher, (3) teacher's opinion on U-shape and Cluster seating arrangements on students' activeness, and (4) teacher's recommendation in implementing U-shape and Cluster seating arrangement during the classroom activities.

Table 3 presents the seating arrangement and the impacts towards students during teaching and learning process.

Table 3. U-shape seating arrangement and Cluster seating arrangement

No	Seating Arrangement	Impacts
1.	U-shape arrangement	1. the teacher observed that the students become passive in the lesson. This happened since there was a direct eye contact from the teacher to the students and this situation made the students a bit hesitated in participating in the classroom activities. 2. Teacher perceived that U-shape will reduce the number of students' participation because of it creates direct eye contact from the instructor to the students which make the students afraid to state their opinion or ask questions.
2.	Cluster seating arrangement	1. the students sometimes become chaotic in the group. In order to solve these problems, there were some ways the teacher found. In order to reduce the students' reluctance in U-shape seating arrangement, the teacher tried to trigger some

		<p>interactions to the students by asking some questions and giving rewards. In contrast, in implementing Cluster seating arrangement, the teacher grouped the students by their cognitive level. Those students with higher intelligence were asked to sit in group with those students with lower intelligence.</p> <p>2. Cluster seating arrangement provides a collaborative learning among students, it makes the students more active in the class activities especially in answering the questions given by the teacher and giving opinions. Since The teacher suggested Cluster seating arrangement to promote more students' participation during the class activities. The teacher added that both of the seating arrangements are good to be implemented. However, teacher has to consider the class conditions as well.</p>
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After all of the result gathered, it can be seen that the strategy of teaching used by the teacher was Think-Pair-Share strategy; a strategy that promote a collaborative learning by, and both seating arrangements also aimed for collaborative or cooperative learning (Simmons & Hinton, 2015). It can be seen that both the strategy and the seating arrangements meant to promote students' centered learning. Meanwhile, comparing the number of students' participation in the classroom activities of both seating arrangements, Cluster seating promote more than U-shape in this research. This can be seen from the result of observation sheet, checklist, as well as the result of interview.

The result from the observation sheet can be elaborated as follows. (1) the students seemed to be anxious during the lesson in U-shape seating arrangement compared to Cluster seating arrangement. Based on the observation, it can be seen that that U-shape seating arrangement created a direct eye contact from the teacher to the students which make all students feel insecure in the learning process. This seating arrangement made every single movement can be seen directly by the teacher as well as the students. As result, the students were hesitated to contribute in the lesson. That is why this seating arrangement is suitable to be used more to control the student's behavior than promote students' participation (Simmons & Hinton, 2015). Meanwhile in the Cluster seating arrangement, the students actively work together. Since Cluster seating arrangement made the students sit in group, the students became more engaged in learning. (2) U-shape seating arrangement made the instruction given by the teacher could be heard clearly. This seating arrangement made the students sat in such a way in which every single one of them could see the instructor without being blocked by other students or turning their back to listen to the instruction like how Cluster would make. (3) Cluster seating arrangement made the students actively discussing in the group. This seating arrangement in fact will make the students sit in the group, and discussion would happen immediately. However, there was a tendency that the students talked about inappropriate issues while the discussion about the topic given should be prioritized. (4) Cluster seating arrangement reduced the students' anxiety. It seemed that collaborative learning that Cluster

seating arrangement promoted made the students felt secured while working in group. Moreover, the students asked more questions while this seating arrangement being used in the learning process. Even their peer tend to encourage the students to ask questions to the teacher. 5) In Cluster seating arrangement the students were more confident in giving opinion. Since the students seen as group, not as individual being, the students were become more confident to state their opinions. The students were supported each other while working in the group. This situation made them feeling secure to tell their point of view to the class.

There were the resemble results found in previous research, Cluster seating arrangement promoted collaborative learning and increase the number of students' participation (Simmons & Hinton, 2015). However, in terms of the number of disruptive behaviors during the implementation of both seating arrangements, U-shape has less record of off-task participations comparing to cluster. But this also can be the negative side in implementing U-shape seating arrangement which can lead the students become passive or anxious since they are getting face to face to the teacher (Sipayung & Benarita, 2021) . This is supported by the result of the interview to the teacher stated that there was a tendency of the students turned chaotic in group while implementing Cluster seating arrangement comparing to the number of disruptive behaviors occurred in U-shape seating arrangement. However, the teacher added that the students' anxiety problem in U-shape seating arrangement can be overcome by triggering the students to interact each other through asking some questions. The teacher also informed that this issue can be solved by giving reinforcement in the form of rewards for those students who want and be active during the lesson.

The result from the observation checklists for U-shape and Cluster seating arrangements were slightly different. There were 13 out of 20 criteria showed up in implementation of U-shape seating arrangement. Meanwhile in cluster seating arrangement 15 out of 20 criteria were found. The difference lies in the non-existence of reading activity and one of the emotional activities that was being courage in the process of the implementation U-shape seating arrangement. As it has been discussed previously, U-shape seating arrangement made the students anxious in the lesson.

The result of the interview can be summed up as follows. In U-shape the students were observed to be passive during the lesson. The direct eye contact caused by this U-shape was the main thing that made this happened. Meanwhile, Cluster seating arrangement made the students become chaotic. The teacher found the solutions to solve those problems. To reduce the students' passiveness in the process of implementing U-shape seating arrangement in the learning process, were able trigger the students' interaction by asking questions, and giving rewards to those students who willing to give contribution to the lesson (Halim & Mustar, 2017). But, in order to minimize the students' inappropriate talking in Cluster seating arrangement, the teacher grouped the students based on their cognitive level. Based on the teacher opinion, U-shape is not recommended to be implemented if the teacher's purpose is to create an active learning. Cluster seating arrangement is good to be implemented to create the students to be actively participating in the classroom. As it was noticed by the teacher, in Cluster seating arrangement the students become more active compared to U-shape seating arrangement. The teacher suggested that teachers need to think about the class condition before implementing those seating arrangements. So, teachers need to consider how they want their classroom to be, as well as the class condition. U-shape will promote less off-task behavior,

meanwhile Cluster will make the students more active in participating in the classroom activities.

Conclusions and Suggestions

This research tried to compare the students' responses in classroom during the implementation of U-shape and Cluster seating arrangements in junior high school students. The major theories showed that both seating arrangements are good to be implemented for students' centered learning. However, in finding the appropriate setting, the researcher found some obstacles. Then, the research conducted in one of the non-governmental organizations in Banyuning, Buleleng Sub-District, Buleleng Regency, Bali. The result showed that there are differences of students' responses on U-shape and Cluster seating arrangements during the teaching and learning process. The students seemed to be anxious during the lesson in U-shape seating arrangement compared to Cluster seating arrangement. U-shape seating arrangement made the instruction given by the teacher can be heard clearly. Cluster seating arrangement made the students actively discussing in the group. Cluster seating arrangement reduce the student's anxiety. Cluster seating arrangement the students were more confident in giving opinion. Teachers are recommended to decide whether they want less off-task behavior or higher number of students' participation in their classrooms before implementing those seating arrangements.

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