

**CLASSROOM ACTION RESEARCH AND LESSON STUDY:
HOW DO THEY WORK FOR LECTURERS AND HIGH SCHOOL ENGLISH
TEACHERS**

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Abstract

Classroom Action Research (CAR) has become the main policy of education in Indonesia. It has been a subject at some higher learning institutions, no matter public or private one. Universitas Terbuka, or Open University has also put it as a compulsory subject for its students. It has been trained to education practitioners at all levels of education in Indonesia. The outcome has been used to help practitioners to get promotion in their careers. In line with that, Lesson Study (LS) has become more popular in Indonesia right now. It helps the teacher improve the learning process without having to end with a report. CAR has four steps, Planning, Action, Observation, and Reflection while LS has only three, namely, Plan, Do, and See. When the teachers are not interested in writing research report, LS can be the choice even though it may also be ended with research report.

Key Words: CAR, LS, lecturers, teachers, high schools, universities, researchers

A. INTRODUCTION

Law No. 14, 2005 on lecturer and teachers states that teachers are required to have some competences, namely, pedagogical competence, personality competence, professional competence, and social competence. One of the efforts done by government to help the lecturers and teachers is by providing them with the competence in conducting classroom action research and lesson study.

Classroom Action Research (CAR) has been trained, educated, and implemented for a long time in Indonesia. Some universities have put the classroom action research as one of compulsory subjects for their students and some of them put it into parts of research subjects. Universitas Negeri Padang, for example, includes some topics of classroom action research into a subject called Research in Education. *Universitas Terbuka* (Open University) states it as a compulsory subject for S1 degree students of Primary Education Teacher Education (PGSD). It means that the CAR is found to be important for teachers.

The CAR is intended to improve the teaching and learning process leading to the improvement of learning outcomes. Stringer (2008:1) states that action research is an appropriate approach for teaching and learning process and it is useful for teachers to improve their teaching and students' learning. If the CAR is implemented appropriately, it is believed the teachers will have better performance in their class. As the results, the students will be more motivated in learning.

Currently, *lesson study* (LS) is booming in Indonesia. Some lecturers, especial, of Faculty of Mathematics and Natural Science of some universities which produce teachers, have been sent to Japan to have better understanding on the LS. As the results, some universities have practiced the LS at some departments. Even some universities have expanded the implementation of LS to some schools in collaboration with provincial office of Ministry of Education and Culture.

This paper is intended to provide teachers and or lecturers with a brief insight about classroom action research and lesson study because both of them are good for improving the

quality of education. It is hoped that they will be able to choose the appropriate one for them to be implemented at the institutions (high schools or universities).

B. DISCUSSION

Classroom Action Research (Car)

Classroom action research (CAR) actually is not new. It has been developed since World War II and it is rapidly developed in developed countries, such as, British, United States of America, Australia, and Candada (read more on <http://www.m-edukasi.web.id/2012/04/pengertian-penelitian-tindakan-kelas.html>). In addition, McKernan in Burns (1999) states that the action research has been developed since nineteenth century in the Science in Education movement and a variety of other social reform initiatives. In Indonesia, CAR has been very well-known at any levels of education. Many teachers have been trained on that even though very few of them conduct the research in their classroom. Some of them have been trained for more than one time because various institutions have done the training with teachers as participants. It is also found that some teachers are very happy to take part in the training. Unfortunately, it is very difficult to encourage them to do the research even though they understand the benefit of conducting it in their class.

Classroom action research is a kind of intervention done to teaching and learning process based on real problems found and faced by the teachers in their classroom (Madya, 2013). It is a distinctive approach to inquiry related to teaching and learning process and it is a good media for teachers to improve their teaching and students learning (Stringer, 2008; Muslich, 2009). The CAR is done by teachers/lecturers in their classroom to their students because they know more about their class and students. The teachers work collaboratively with other teachers (commonly those teaching the same subject) to improve the learning outcome. Gay, Mills, and Airasian (2009) state that CAR is a systematic inquiry done by teachers and other practitioners in teaching and learning process to collect data on ways teachers teach and students learn. The purpose of the research is to provide the researchers with method of solving problems encountered in teaching and learning process. It enables teachers to investigate their own classrooms, such as, their method of teaching, students learning, assessment used, etc., intended for improve their teaching and learning process (Martler, 2009).

CAR benefits both teachers and students. Stringer (2008) states that CAR will be the means for teachers to improve their teaching and learning process. In addition to that, Creswell (2008) states that CAR provides the teachers with a means to improve their practices by taking action and by participating in the research. In CAR, teachers are required to be creative to implement certain action related to the problems they found in teaching. The students will be more interested in learning because the teachers come out with better teaching. Finally, both are happy because the learning outcome will be improved.

CAR has been believed to be very effective in improving the quality of teaching and learning process. Therefore, some policy makers in education have done their best to train teachers and lecturers with the expectation that they will do the research at the schools or universities they go to. Lots of budgets have been allocated for trainers and trainees as well as for supporting the implementation of the research. Since they were assigned to conduct the research as the requirement of the training, most of them conducted it because they had to do it not because they wanted to do it. As the result, when the project was over, almost none of them conducted it.

CAR is well known for its cycle, namely, planning, action, observation, and reflection. The cycle can be two or three and it usually ends when the researchers have are satisfied or happy with the results. The cycle of CAR can be described as follows:

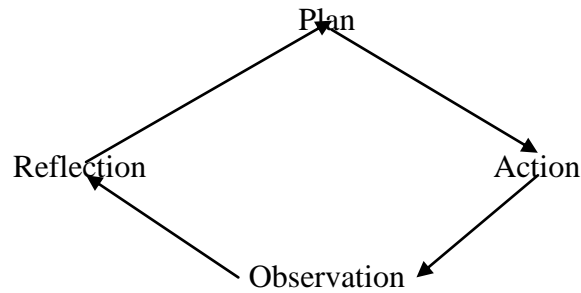


Figure 1
CAR Cycle in the Implementation

In planning, lecturers or teachers work collaboratively on the problems and what is best to do to solve the problem. At this step, they meet to decide everything dealing with the implementation of teaching and learning process. They decide who will teach what, where, when, and how. They also decide who will do the observation, what instruments to use, and how the observation is done.

After having good plan, the teachers then do the action, meaning that one teacher does the action (the teaching and learning process) while the collaborative one(s) is (are) doing the observation using the instruments determined in the planning step. The action should be in accordance with the plan. The observation is intended to collect data determined in the planning session. The observation is usually focused on the teachers' teaching, the students' learning, and the interaction between the teachers and the students.

After teaching and learning process, the teacher and the observer conduct discussion (reflection) based on the data collected during the implementation of teaching and learning process. The data should cover all agreed components of teaching and learning process. They will discuss about how the teacher teaches, how the students learn, and how the teachers handle the class. The result of the reflection will determine whether the next cycle should use the same action with some revisions or new action must be done to replace the previous cycle.

At the end of certain cycles, it is time to write report of the research. It means that the researchers must end the research with the research report. The research report can be used for their promotion. When the researchers are able to write articles from the research report and send them to journals or present them in seminars, they will have more values. In short, CAR not only helps the teachers and lecturers improve their teaching and learning process but also their careers.

CAR is believed to be appropriate for teachers because it help teachers improve their teaching quality without breaking the available rules and regulation at the schools they teach. CAR is implemented in the classroom in time scheduled. So there is no reason for teacher researcher to be away from class because of CAR. In addition, CAR is used to teach the materials supposed to be mastered by students within certain time frame.

Why are only a few teachers or lecturers interested in conducting CAR? Some English teachers state that they don't do the CAR for some reasons. First, the trainings they had were so theoretical that they could not practice it when they were at schools. The training materials provided them with lots of things but only small portion of them were about what to do in conducting the CAR in classroom. They want the training to be focused more on what to do in the research.

Second, they have so much teaching load that they don't have time for conducting research. Every teacher must teach 24 x 45 minutes a week. They feel that this teaching load make them too so busy that they don't have time to think and to do the CAR.

Third, they don't have enough competence and interest in research report. This is found to be the biggest problem for the teachers. The teachers are said to have insufficient competence in writing research report, not to mention the article for journal. They need more training on writing the research report and article.

Fourth, the school principals do not push them to do the research. The principals are expected to keep pushing the teachers to do the CAR with some financial supports of course. It is true that some teachers will work when they are pushed to do so.

The teachers/lecturers should feel in need for CAR because they need promotion in their careers and lives. They may invite resource persons to discuss intensively about CAR, starting from making plan up to writing the report of the research. This is believed to be more effective instead of waiting for attending the activities conducted by certain institutions for the CAR.

Lesson Study

Lesson study (LS) is originally from Japan, called *jogyokenkyu*. It refers to a systematic process done by Japanese teachers to improve the outcome of their teaching and learning process (Garfield in Direktorat Ketenagaan, Dirjen Dikti, 2010). Furthermore it is stated that the systematic process means that the teachers work collaboratively to develop the plan and instructional devices, to do observation, reflection, and revision of the plan continuously. In addition, Lewis (in Direktorat Ketenagaan, Dirjen Dikti, 2010) states that lesson study is quite simple when a teacher wants to improve their teaching and learning process. The main characteristic of lesson study is the collaboration of teachers in planning, observing, and reflecting the teaching and learning process. In short it can be stated that lesson study is a model for improving the teachers profession using the study of instruction collaboratively and continuously, based on the collegiality principles intended to develop learning community in teaching. LS is a form of long-term professional development in which teams of teachers collaboratively plan, research, and study their lesson instruction as a way to determine how students learn best (<http://www.devstu.org/lesson-study>).

The previous paragraph indicates that the key ideas of lesson study are professional improvement, instructional analysis, collaborative, continuity, collegiality, mutual learning, and learning community (Ditnaga, Dirjen Dikti, 2010). It means that lesson study is intended to conduct professional improvement of teachers continuously in order to improve the learning outcome. The activity is done by analyzing the instruction collaboratively and continuously among teachers and they learn each other leading to learning community. The learning community will keep working on improving the learning process throughout times.

Koji Sato, expert team leader of PELITA JICA states that lesson study mainly consists of three steps, namely, *Plan*, *Do*, and *See*. *Plan* is the preparation step, *Do* is the Instructional implementation and observation, and *See* is the reflection step of what have been done in the *Do* step. By doing the steps again and again, the teachers will improve their teaching and learning quality. As the result, the teaching and learning quality will be improved.

The cycle of lesson study can be described as follows:

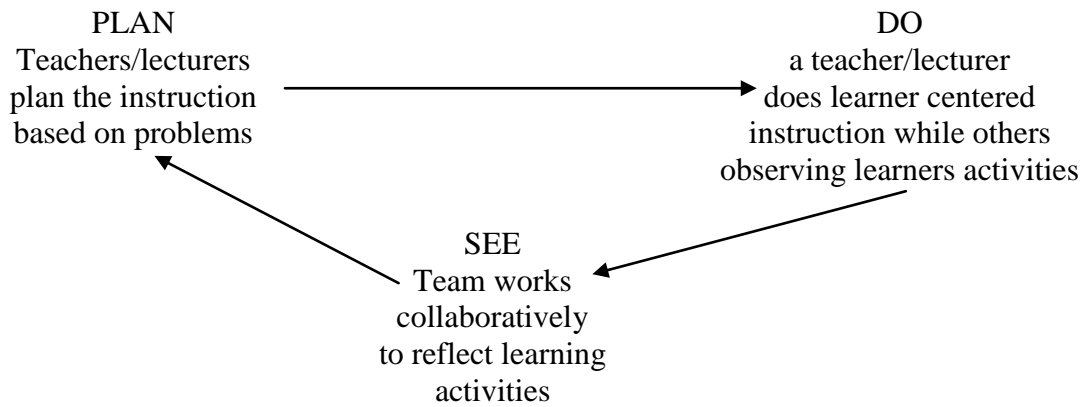


Figure 2
LS steps in the Implementation

Like CAR, LS also starts from *plan*. At this step, teachers/lecturers work collaboratively to come out with the best solution to the problems they face in the classroom. Lois Brown Easton states that LS requires educators to work collaboratively to improve their class and about how well the lesson works.

After having good plan, one teacher is implementing the plan in the classroom while other(s) are observing. The implementation and observation are called *do*. Different from CAR, observation in LS is focused on how the students learn during the teaching and learning process. It means that the observer(s) collects data the participation of learners in the class. The observers are not required to find out how the teachers teach but more on how the students learn. In some case, this lesson study is also said to be learner-centered activity.

After conducting teaching and learning process, the teacher and observer(s) come to the next step, namely, *see*. At this step, the observer(s) provide the teacher with data on how the students learn. During the *see* step, the observer may say that student X and student Y often talks during the class, or two students at the corners do not show their interest in studying, and so on and so forth. The teacher is then given the opportunity to evaluate themselves. It must be kept in mind that teacher and observer are in equal position. They work collaboratively to improve the class resulted in the improvement of the learning outcome. The *see* step is intended for finding out ideas for improving the next teaching and learning process.

How long does LS take place? Lesson study needs a very long time and it should be done several times. Koji Sato furthermore states that Japanese teachers say that when the teachers do the lesson study for 50 times, they will see the improvement even though a little. When they do it for 100 times, they will see much improvement in their teaching and learning process.

LS study is found to be simple because it does not have to end with reports. It will be very effective to improve the quality of education because the teachers/lecturers work collaboratively as partners to find the best activities to do in class. If this is done seriously, it is believed that the quality of teaching and learning process is improved leading to the improvement of learning outcome. The main requirement for LS is the commitment of teachers/lecturers to work together as professionals to improve the quality of their teaching and students learning.

The previous brief discussion on classroom action research and lesson study indicates that Classroom Action Research and Lesson Study are quite similar. Judging from the steps, it is found that all the steps of CAR are also found in the LS. However, the elements of what

to do in each step may be different. The comparisons of CAR and LS can be described in the following table.

Table 1
Comparisons of Steps Classroom Action Research and Lesson Study

Classroom Action Research	Lesson Study
1. Plan Teachers/lecturers work collaboratively to find the best solution for the problems faced in class.	1. Plan Teachers/lecturers work collaboratively to find the best solution for the problems faced in class
2. Action Teacher/lecturer is doing the planning in the teaching and learning process.	2. Do Teacher/lecturer is doing the planning in the teaching and learning process and the observer(s) is/are doing observation to collect data more on how the students learn. This step consists of two activities, namely, doing the teaching and observation.
3. Observation Observer(s) is/are collection data on how the teacher/lecturer teaches and how the students learn, but the focus is more on the teacher/lecturer teaches.	
4. Reflection Teacher/lecturer and observer sit together to discuss the implementation of the actions in the teaching and learning process. The observer(s) show(s) the data on how the teacher/lecturer teach(es) and how the students learn.	3. See Teacher/lecturer and observer sit together to discuss the implementation of the actions in the teaching and learning process. The observer(s) shows data on how the students learn.
5. At the end of the CAR, the researcher writes report. The report can be used for the career development.	4. The teacher/researcher is not obliged to write report. The result of <i>see</i> is used for revising the teaching and learning process in the next activities. However, they are free to write the result of the activities and it can be used for career development too.

The table indicates that CAR has 4 steps in one the cycle but LS only has 3 steps. However, the four steps in CAR are also available in LS. The step of action and observation in CAR is called Do in LS. The focus of observation in CAR is more on how the teacher/lecturer teaches while the focus of observation in LS is more on how the students learn.

Both CAR and LS are good and intended for teachers/lecturers because they have been found to be effective to improve the quality of education. They are really appropriate for those who have great concerns on improving themselves in teaching and students in learning. It is true that CAR must be ended with reports because it is a research but the report is needed by researchers for career development. If they are not able to write research reports, they may do LS for it does not have to end with reports writing. Teachers/lecturers may begin to work collaboratively to do LS because it will be very interesting. When they want to have scientific work for their promotion, they can write article from their work of LS activities. Professional teachers/lecturers are always in need to think and discuss about their teaching and it is believed that they are happy to do so.

C. CONCLUSION

Classroom Action Research and Lesson Study are intended to improve the teaching and learning process expected to come up with the improvement of learning outcome. Classroom action research is a research consisting of 4 steps, namely, *planning*, *action*, *observation*, and *reflection*. As the name indicates, classroom action research requires the researcher to write the reports of the research. The report will be the scientific work of the researcher and can be used for career development. On the other hand, lesson study has 3 steps, namely, *plan*, *do*, and *see*. The *action* and *observation* steps in classroom action research are called *do* in lesson study. The focus of observation in classroom action research is on how the teacher/lecturer teaching, students learning, and the interaction between the teachers and the students while the focus of observation in lesson study is on how the students learn. When the teachers/lecturers are interested in doing certain action in improving the quality of teaching and learning process and is in need of research report for career development, classroom action research may be the best choice. But when the teachers/lecturers are interested in improving the quality of teaching without caring much on the report, lesson study may be appropriate.

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