



Improving Reading Comprehension Through Small Group Discussion

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Abstract : Teaching technique is needed by every teacher in transferring knowledge to the students. It was a great role for the result of the teaching. This study aimed to find out the significant difference in reading comprehension achievement between the students who were taught by using small group discussion and those who were not. The population was all the eleventh-grade students of SMA Negeri 9 Palembang which consisted of six classes with total number of 232 students. The total sample of the study was 74 students. Purposive sampling technique was used in collecting the sample. This study used experimental method with the type was quasi-experimental. The researcher collected the data through narrative reading test. The writer used the Statistical Package for the Sosial Sciences (SPSS) program to analyze the data to find out the way or the strategy in teaching reading comprehension through small group discussion. The first measurement used pre-test, the second used post-test. The experimental group was given treatment and the control group was not. The result showed that the students in experimental group performed better than the students in control group. It could be stated that improving students' reading comprehension through small group discussion was more significant than conventional way to the eleventh grade students of SMA Negeri 9 Palembang.

Keywords : Reading comprehension, Small group discussion, Narrative text.

INTRODUCTION

Communication is really important for us to interact with others. If we are talking about communication, we have to concern to the language a lot. According to Vygotsky (cited in Tompkins, 1991: 4) Language helps to organize thought, and children use language to learn as well as to communicate and share experiences with others. Surely, Each country in the world needs international language. English language is the one choice as the international language. Brown (1994:122) states that international language is a language that has a large number of native speakers, a language of wider communication both among individuals from one country, in this sense, English is an international language in both a global and local sense, global status, it develops a special role that is recognize in every country, international language is one which used by people of different nation to communicate with one other.

Based on the 2004 curriculum, Teaching English as Foreign Language (TEFL) should cover the four skills of English (speaking, listening, reading, and writing). The four skills should be taught in an integrated way. Reading is as important as other skills. Reading is important because the readers must be created on their own meaning. Many students felt confuse, they did not know what the meaning of text. The students did not have step in understanding a text and the students had very limited in vocabulary. Without reading, students could not gain new knowledge for themselves. Teaching reading was not easy. The writer attempted to communicate ideas, reader tried to get the appropriate meanings. Then reader would find new vocabularies that they did not know yet.

Concept of reading is reading comprehension. Reading comprehension is primarily a matter of developing appropriate, efficient comprehension strategies (Brown, 1994: 291). It was the active process of constructing meaning from text; it involved accesing previous knowledge, understanding vocabulary and concepts, making inferences, and linking key ideas. In addition, generally many teachers taught reading by a monotonous way. Students just read the text then answered some questions based on it. This was not interesting for them if their teacher could not manage the class. To make the students comprehend reading text well, many alternatives of reading teaching technique could be developed. It was important to make students improve their ability and help the students when they learned reading. Students could enjoy learning English especially in reading class if they are taught with interesting ways.

In every teaching and learning activity, teaching technique had a great role for the result of the teaching. One of technique to teach reading was using small group discussion. The teacher might know to implement the technique in the class. It was focus on small group discussion in improving reading comprehension. Fountas and pinnell (1996: 211 cited in Herrel & Jordan 2004) is guided reading. It is a technique for teaching reading in a small group setting. This helps students to understand content reading such as science, language and art studies where the vocabularies are often unfamiliar for students. Within this approach, walking through the reading material, examining illustrations and discussing were very helpful in building comprehension.

Small group discussion was one of the groups works considered as an effective technique in improving students' ability in reading. Several researchers agree that it was truly an affective technique where students are given more responsibilities and motivations to get the highest achievement. In this technique student's work in small group consisted of four to six, discussed by the teacher and do some exercise related to the text. Students' discussing what

they read was a helpful strategy to increase their comprehension. The teaching and learning activities based on social interaction activities includes discussion method, the students would expect to interact primary with each other using English or code switching and the teacher roles were as a question from text. Teacher could teach through discussion by making a small group discussion and let the students discuss about reading text. Based on the problem above, the objectives of the study to find out there was significant difference in reading comprehension achievement between the students who were taught by using small group discussion and those who were not.

RESEARCH METHODS

Method could be said as the way of doing something. This study used experimental method. The type of experimental method was quasi-experimental. In quasi-experimental study design did not use random assignment in selecting the sample. Arikunto (2010: 123) states that, the quasi experiment method is not real investigation, it is not full of condition experimental and does not allow the certain rules.

In this study, the researcher collected the data through reading test. The first measurement used pre-test, the second used post-test. The experimental group was given treatment and the control group was not. In this study, a group of students who would teach reading comprehension through small group discussion called as experimental group and a group of students who would not teach reading comprehension through small group discussion called as control group.

Participants. Arikunto (2010:102) states that the population is all things, people or events that are the subject of investigation. A population refers to the entire pool of possible subject. According to Christensen (in Praty 2006:14), "Population is all things, people or events that can be taken for the objects or item from which the samples are taken for statically measurement". A population is a set (collection) of all elements possessing one or more attributes of interest. In a classroom or other setting where the entire population is relatively small, testing all subjects may be simple. In this study, the population was all the eleventh-grade students of SMA Negeri 9 Palembang which consisted of six classes with total number of 232 students.

Sample is a part of the population will be investigated (Arikunto, 2010:174). In this study, the researcher used purposive sampling method to take the sample from population. Further explains that in purposive sampling, the researcher intentionally selectes individuals

and sites in order to learn or understand the central phenomenon (Creswell, 2005: 204). The population was all of eleventh grade students of SMA Negeri 9 Palembang which consisted of six classes. It was impossible to choose each individual as the sample due to the restriction of the school. The condition made the writer to use her judgment to find the groups which was appropriate for the researcher need. Frankel and Wallen (1990:75) states that researchers assume they can use their knowledge of the population to judge whether or not a particular sample will be representative.

In this study, the purposive sampling technique used two classes that had the same number of students. Those students were placed on the two groups: experimental with 37 students and control group with 37 students. The total sample of the study was 74 students.

Technique for Collecting the Data, In collecting data, a written test was used. The test was used because it would be considered that the most reliable way to get some information. Arikunto (2002: 198) states that a test is any series of questions or exercise or other means of measuring skills, knowledge, intelligence, and capacities of individual group.

There were two kinds of test which were given to the students in order to measure their achievement in learning. They were: (1) pre-test, and (2) post-test. There were thirty items of test, which were divided into two sections, they were: 15 multiple choice questions and 15 true-false questions. 1) The pre-test was given to know the ability in learning reading before teaching reading comprehension through small group discussion. 2) The Post-test was given after the treatment of teaching reading through small group discussion.

The aim of this test would be measuring the students' abilities in reading comprehension after giving the treatment. The result of this post-test would compare with the result of the pre-test in order to know how many students understand about the materials which had been learned.

Validity is one of the characteristics of a good test. According to Brown (2005: 162) validity means that the individual's score from an instrument make sense, are meaningful, and enable you, as the researcher, to draw good conclusion from the sample you are studying to the problem. Validity is the most important idea to consider when preparing or selecting an instrument is the process of collecting evidence to support such inference.

A test is valid if it measures what its purpose to measure (Arikunto, 2006:190). To make the test material has a good, it will be suggested to use content validity in constructing the test materials. By doing this test, writer hopes that the test material really measures the students' ability in reading comprehension with small group discussion.

Table 1. The Table of Test Specification

Objective	Materials	Indicators	Format	Number of the test	Total
To measure the students' ability in reading comprehension	Narrative text entitled The Black Cat	The students are able to answer the question by selecting correct option	Multiple choice questions	1-15	15
		The students determine the statement whether it is true or false	True-false questions	16-30	15
Total					30

The reliability of the test materials is evaluated through the internal consistency of reliability. According to Creswell (2005: 162) Reliability means that scores from an instrument are stable and consistent. It was a goal of research to be measures or observations that were reliable. It measured the degree of the test items of the parts, which were consistency reliability that was estimated by Kuder Richadrson reliability coefficient.

According to Sudijono (2001: 209) cited in Ifkar, the test would be considered reliable if the reliability coefficient is more than 0.7 ($KR_{21} > 0.7$), and if it is less than 0.7 ($KR_{21} < 0.7$), the test would not be considered reliable. Having tried out the test, the writer computed and analyzed the results or scores of the try out test for finding out the reliability coefficient of the test items.

Based on the computation of the reliability, it was estimated for 20 items tested in the try out by using Kuder-Richardson 21 formula (KR_{21}), the reliability coefficient of the test items (research instrument) was 0.85. The result of the computation showed that the reliability estimate of coefficient was higher than 0.70 ($KR_{21} > 0.70$) and it was concluded that the test used in this research was reliable.

The writer used the Statistical Package for the Sosial Sciences (SPSS) program to analyze the data to find out the way or the strategy in teaching reading comprehension through small group discussion.

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

The result of pre-test in experimental group showed the highest score, the lowest score, the average of score, median of the student's score, and mode of the scores.

Table 2. The statistics data of pre-test

	N	Valid	37
		Missing	0
Mean			47.7135
Median			46.6000
Mode			40.00 ^a
Std. Deviation			10.82888
Minimum			30.00
Maximum			76.60
Sum			1765.40

Based on the table, the result of pre-test in experimental showed that the highest score was 76.6 and the lowest score was 30. The average of score was 47.7135, median of the student's score was 46.6, and mode of score was 40.

Table 3. The Result of Post-Test in Experimental Group

	N	Valid	37
		Missing	0
Mean			76.3649
Median			76.6000
Mode			73.30 ^a
Std. Deviation			8.83425
Minimum			60.00
Maximum			93.30
Sum			2825.50

Based on the table above, the result of post-test in the experimental showed that the highest score was 93 and the lowest score was 60. The average of score was 76.3649, median of the student's score was 76.6, mode of score was 73.3, and the sum of the student's was 2825.50.

Table 4. The Comparison between Pre-Test and Post-Test in Experimental Group

		Mean	N	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean
Pair 1	Pretest	47.7135	37	10.82888	1.78026
	posttest	76.3649	37	8.83425	1.45234

The researcher used paired sample test which paired pre-test scores with post-test scores. Based on the paired sample statistics, N was the sample of research. N was 37. In pre-test mean or average was 47.7135, standard deviation was 10.82888, and standard error mean was 1.78026 . In post-test mean was 76.3649, standard deviation was 8.83425 and standard error mean was 1.45234.

After the reporter of research got the analysis of pre-test and post-test in experimental group, then analyzed the paired sample t-test of the post-test and pre-test score of students in experimental group. The table below displayed the score of the degree of freedom (df) and t-obtained in experimental group.

Table 5. Paired Sample Test

		Paired Differences				T	Df	Sig. (2-tailed)
		Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean	95% Confidence Interval of the Difference Lower Upper			
Pair 1	posttest – pretest	28.65135	13.43099	2.20804	24.17324 33.12947	12.976	36	.000

To find out whether or not significant differences in reading comprehension achievement before and after the treatment of the experimental group, the reporter of the research compared the result of the pre-test with those of the post-test in the experimental group by using paired sample t-test. Based on the calculation by using SPSS 17.0 program.

The result of the paired sample t-test showed the differences between pre-test and post-test, the mean post-test and pre-test was 28.65135, the standard deviation 13.43099, the standard error mean was 2.20804. In 95% confidence interval of the difference, the lower was 24.17324, the upper was 33.12947. The value of the t-obtained was 12.976, Df (Degree of Freedom), the formula is $(n-1)$ sample is n, df was 36. At the significant level $p < 0.05$ in 2-tailed tested df 36, the critical value of the t-table is 2.028. In experimental group the value of the t-obtained was higher than the critical value of the t-table, H_0 was rejected and H_a was accepted. It meant that there was a significant differences in achievement before and after the treatment in experimental group. It could be stated that small group discussion was significant in improving students' reading comprehension.

Table 6. The Result of Pre-Test in Control Group

N	Valid	37
	Missing	0
Mean		47.0000
Median		46.6000
Mode		40.00
Std. Deviation		11.98810
Minimum		30.00
Maximum		80.00
Sum		1739.00

Based on the table, the result of pre-test in control group showed that the highest score was 80 and the lowest score was 30. The average of score was 47, median of the student's score was 46.6, and mode of score was 40.

Table 7. The Statistics Data of Post-Test in Control Group

N	Valid	37
	Missing	0
Mean		53.3108
Median		50.0000
Mode		40.00
Std. Deviation		15.22711
Minimum		33.30
Maximum		86.60
Sum		1972.50

Based on the table, the result of post-test in control group showed that the highest score was 86.6 and the lowest score was 33.3. The average of score was 53.3108, median of the student's score was 50, and mode of score was 40.

To compare pre-test and post-test in control group, the researcher used paired sample t-test in SPSS program. The result of the paired sample statistics showed in the table below.

Table 8. Paired Sample Statistics

		Mean	N	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean
Pair 1	Pretest-	47.0000	37	11.98810	1.97083
	Posttest	53.3108	37	15.22711	2.50332

The researcher used paired sample statistics which paired pre-test scores with post-test scores. Based on the paired sample statistic, N was the sample of research. N was 37. In pre-test mean or average was 47, standard deviation was 11.98810, and standard error mean was

1.97083. In post test mean was 53.3108, standard deviation was 15.22711 and standard error mean was 2.50332.

After the reporter of research got the analysis of pre-test and post-test in control group, then analyzed the paired sample t-test of the post-test and pre-test score of students in control group. The table below displayed the score of the degree of freedom (df) and t-obtained in control group.

Table 9. Paired Sample Test

	Paired Differences				t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)	
	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error	95% Confidence Interval of the Difference				
				Lower				Upper
Pair 1 Posttest – Pretest	-6.31081	12.07899	1.98577	2.28347	10.33815	3.178	36 .003	

The result of the paired sample t-test showed the differences between pre-test and post-test, the mean pre-test and post-test was 6.31081 , the standard deviation 12.07899, the standard error mean was 1.98577. In 95% confidence interval of the difference, the lower was 2.28347, the upper was 10.33815. The value of the t-obtained was 3.178, Df (Degree of Freedom), the formula is (n-1) sample is n, df was 36. At the significant level $p < 0.05$ in 2- tailed tested df 36, the critical value of the t-table is 2.028. Chart 2 shows the result of pre-test and post-test in the control group.

The Comparison between Post Test in Experimental Group and Post Test in Control Group. According to the result of the study, the researcher tried to find out the comparison of result score between control group and experimental group. Based on the paired sample t-test, the mean or average of post-test in experimental group was 76.3649, standard deviation was 8.83425, and standard error was 1.45234. Mean of post-test in control group was 53.3108, standard deviation was 15.22711, and standard error was 2.50332.

The comparison of score post-test in control group and experimental group was analyzed by using Independent Sample t-test in the table below.

Table 10. Independent Sample t-test

		Levene's Test for Equality of Variances					t-test for Equality of Means				
		F	Sig.	t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)	Mean Difference	Std. Error Difference	95% Confidence Interval of the Difference		
									Lower	Upper	
Post test	Equal variances assumed	14.082	.000	7.966	72	.000	23.05405	2.89412	17.28474	28.82337	
	Equal variances not assumed			7.966	57.768	.000	23.05405	2.89412	17.26035	28.84775	

The result of the independent sample t-test showed the value of t-obtained was 7.966, at the significant level $p < 0.025$ for 2-tailed and degree of freedom (df) was 72, t-table was 1.9935. Since the value of t-obtained was higher than t-table, so that the null hypotheses (H_0) was rejected and alternative hypotheses (H_a) was accepted. So it was evident that there was different between the students' achievement in learning reading comprehension that was taught through small group discussion and those who were taught through conventional way. It could be stated that improving students' reading comprehension through small group discussion was more significant than conventional way to the eleventh grade students of SMA Negeri 9 Palembang.

CONCLUSION

In general, the use of small group discussion technique to teach reading comprehension especially narrative text in senior high school was quite good. Students appeared more active and cooperative in discussion section using small group. The use of small group discussion technique also could improve the students' score. It could be shown from the average score got by the students. Based on the description in the previous chapters, the researcher concluded in the experimental group, the lowest score of pre-test was 30, the highest score was 76.6 and the

average score was 47.7135, but in the post-test, the highest score was 93, the lowest score was 60 and the average of score was 76.3649.

In the control group, the lowest score of pre-test was 30, the highest score was 80 and the average score was 47, but in the post-test, the highest score was 86.6, the lowest score 33.3 was and the average of score was 53.3108. The data analysis through t-test formula was probability with the value was 0.00, it identified lower or less than alpha ($\alpha=05$). It meant that the null hypotheses was rejected and consequently the alternative hypotheses was accepted. According to the conclusion above, it was significant in improving the students' reading comprehension through small group discussion.

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