

IMPROVING STUDENTS' READING COMPREHENSION OF NARRATIVE TEXT BY ACTIVATING GROUP WORK

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Abstract

This study was designed to improve students' reading comprehension of narrative text by activating group works. This study is categorized as the Classroom Action Research (CAR) method in which to identify and to solve the problem on students' reading comprehension. Reading is the most essential skill for the students' success in learning English. However, there are still many problems faced by students in reading activities. In the Group Work Teaching Strategy activities, the students were trained to make predictions, clarifications, questions, and summaries. In the implementation of the strategies, students worked in small group. This study was conducted in one cycle with fifth meetings. There were 32 students, consisted of 16 males and 16 females. The Grouping Work Teaching Strategy that was implemented in teaching reading covered four strategies: predicting, clarifying, questioning, and summarizing. The finding showed that the students' ability in reading comprehension had improved from individual to grouping. It could be seen that the students' involvement during the discussion in group improved 84%. Furthermore, in the reading test, the students were able to show their progress from 52% to 85%. The result of this study will provide English teachers and alternative strategy.

Keywords

group work; teaching strategy; reading comprehension

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1. INTRODUCTION

Reading is a process of the language skills that is very important to human life. Reading is one of the basic communicative skills which have very complex process. A reader is expected to be able to comprehend what is being discussed, involved the process of acquiring grammatical structures and vocabularies of the language and meaning. Through reading the readers will know about the text, get main idea of the text or get the point of the reading materials. According to Francoise Grellet in his book entitled *Developing Reading Skill*, Reading is a constant process of guessing, and what



one brings to the text is often more important than what one finds in it. Based on the statement from Grellet, reading activity requires the readers to guess and predict about the text is going to be about and the background knowledge had by the reader about mutual thing contained in a text is important.

The main purpose of reading is comprehension. Reading comprehension can be viewed as an umbrella term that is general in its description. To get the root of what reading comprehension is, and how to identify it and teach it, one must analyze the specifics of what it entails (Burke, Roundy, & Danahy, 2021). When students have problems in understanding the text well and do not know what the text is telling, students have to read many books, newspapers, magazine or articles, and other sources related to the subject if they want to gain further knowledge. In this case, when students read text, they must understand what they have read.

According to Snow (2002:11), reading comprehension is defined as the process of simultaneously extracting and constructing meaning through interaction and involvement with written language. Reading comprehension skill increases the pleasure and effectiveness of reading. Reading comprehension involves abilities to recognize words rapidly and efficiently, develop and use a very large recognition vocabulary, process sentences in order to build comprehension, engage a range of strategic processes and underlying cognitive skills (e.g., setting goals, changing goals flexibly, monitoring comprehension), interpret meaning in relation to background knowledge, interpret and evaluate texts in line with reader goals and purposes, and process texts fluently over an extended period of time. These processes and knowledge resources allow the reader to generate text comprehension to the level required (Grabe, 2014).

Narrative text is a kind of text to retell the story that happens in the past. The purpose of the text is so entertaining or to amuse the readers or listeners about the story and deal with actual or sensational experience in different ways. Narrative texts have always been considered as working and insightful sources of materials for language teaching and learning, since they show high potentials in a vast and broad variety of language use in authentic contexts (Ahmadian and Pashangzadeh, 2013). Narratives can be imaginary, factual or a combination of both. They may include fairy stories, mysteries, science fictions, romances, horror stories, adventure stories, fables, myths and legends, historical narratives, ballads, slice of life, personal experience. As stated by (McNeil, 1992) that a key to comprehending narrative text is a sense of plot, theme, characters, events, and how they relate.

The technique of teaching English is important to determine the success of the teaching. As we know, English subject in Junior High School consist of reading, vocabulary, writing, conversation, listening, but this study is focused on only the technique of teaching reading narrative text. From researcher experience, interview with teacher and students, and pre-observation in her class on teaching reading at third year of SMPN 123 Kalipuro, most of the students were facing some problems.

It is important to solve the problems in the classroom with some adjustment and strategy, in order to overcome the problem in the reading class. Therefore, that is important to conduct a study and do an action research to solve the problems. For this reason, grouping work teaching strategy was implemented to solve the students' problem in reading. Teaching process using group work stimulates interaction and communication among students. In teaching reading comprehension, group work activity makes students to discuss and solve about their problem that they face when they have individual time to think about the text. One of them is to ask students to work with a group to read and reread passages. Students can teach each other or learn from each other. They can be a good teacher for their friends. Because they can be communicating well with similar language.

Group work is a method that included working in groups to enhance critical, decision-making, collaborative, and communication skills to increase productivity (Bhasin, 2021). Collaboration is when a group of people come together and contribute their expertise for the benefit of a shared objective, project, or mission (Corey Moseley, 2019). Group work is one of the techniques that used in teaching especially teaching reading. By using group work technique, the students have opportunities to share their idea and interpret the text with their friends in a group. The format of small group teaching activities needed to develop students' knowledge, skill and values needs to be considered in curriculum planning and teaching (van Diggele, Burgess and Mellis, 2020). By having group work, students who have the similar experience as the reading text, can share the other students in the group. As stated by Brown, group work is one of techniques that consist of two or more students are assigned a task that involves collaboration and self-initiated language. This statement means that as a technique, group work gets students to work together in doing their task. Student in group works are more than two or perhaps six.

The concept of grouping teaching was originally developed by Johnson & Smith in 1991. Later, it was refined and operationally by Davisin 2003, describes the concept of group work teaching as follow: Group work can be used to achieve a range of teaching and learning goals. While terminology varies, the literature identifies three

types of group work; informal learning groups, formal learning groups, and study groups. In grouping learning students work with their peers to accomplish a shared or common goal. The goal is reached through interdependence among all group members rather than working alone. Each member is responsible for the outcome of the shared goal. (Watkins, Carnell, & Lodge, 2007) states that effective learning is a core process in many domains of life, and school can play a special part in helping learners develop the approaches and understanding which will be effective across their learning landscape.

2. METHODS

This study was conducted through action research with the aim of improving and changing what goes in the classroom. To do an action research, the researcher should identify the problem, then gather and record the relevant data, propose the practical action that can solve the problem, design a plan of action and implements it, and after that the researcher should monitor and record the results. Action research is a meaningful form of research because it is conducted by the teacher in his or her own classroom. Action research requires a teacher to design a study in an area of interest and conduct it in his/her own classroom.

In this study, the ninth grade of SMP Negeri 123 Kalipuro Banyuwangi was chosen as the subject of the study. For ninth grades there are 6 classes. Consist of class IX-A, IX-B, IX-C, IX-D, IX-E, and IX-F. In this case, the researcher chose IX-D class as the subject of the research. The subject is the third years' students in which there are 32 students; consist of 16 male students and 16 female students. The class was chosen based on the English teachers election, among other classes, IX-D students had the lowest score in English and the researcher agreed to applying the strategy in that class. Also, it will help them to improve their comprehension in reading.

The data that the researcher uses is a student's worksheet, interview and questionnaire. There are two data sources; the primary data and secondary data. Primary data is a document that written by someone who has had first-hand experience with phenomenon under the study, which in this study, researcher uses students as data sources. In this research, the researcher uses three instruments. They are interview, observation, and questionnaire form. Interview is intended to obtain information about aspects or issues analyzed. Observation is intended to get the data to support and supplement the data. The questionnaire is given to know the students' opinion.

Validity of a research instrument assesses the extent to which the instrument measures what it is designed to measure (Robson, 2011). Validity is a measurement

instrument which shows whether the instruments are valid or not. It means that validity is one of the crucial conditions in implementing a research including Classroom Action Research (CAR). By using data validity, there should be no irrelevant points or misleading in reflecting the data. To get the validity of the data the researcher uses triangulation. Triangulation technique is a data validation technique by comparing the data.

3. FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

The researcher conducted the classroom action research by using group works strategy to solve the students' problem as well as improving students' narrative reading comprehension. This research was conducted in one cycle with 5 meetings.

There is 1 individual test and 2 group tests. The result in the individual test there are 22 students or 65% of 32 students who got score <65. This result has not been able to reach the target of the product evaluation, which is at least 80% of students who get >65.

Based on the result in reading test group 1 with 6 groups there are no students or group who got less than 65. So, in this indicator had been improved, because 100% students got score more than 65.

Then the results of the second reading test group, there were 29 students or 91% of students who got score more than or equal 65. However, there were only 3 students who got score less than 65.

It happened because they did not focus on doing the test. They had low motivation in English classroom. The students' ability in reading comprehension had improved from individual test to group test. The results of student scores can be seen in the following table:

Table 1. The Result of Reading Achievement Test in Cycle 1

Data	Individual Test Score	Group Work 1 Score	Group Work 2 Score
Total Score	1.675	2.775	2.689
Mean Score	55,83	86,71	84,03
Increasing of the students mean score	29,54		

Observation was done in the class during teaching learning process in each meeting. The result of observation got from observation checklist. The contents are like they dare to ask or answer questions from the teacher, paying attention, cooperative in group, or active in doing the task. Based on the observation start from first meeting

until fifth meeting, there were 27 students or 84% of 32 students who were actively involved in the teaching learning process.

Based on the results of the observation checklist, it could be seen that students' active participant and discussion were 27 students or 84% of 32 students in the class in cycle 1. It showed that the students could achieve the target of the requirement of process evaluation that is at least 80% of the students' active participant and discussion in the teaching learning process of improving students' reading comprehension.

Based on the result of process and product evaluation in cycle 1 showed that the teaching students' reading comprehension of narrative text by activating group works was successful to improve the reading comprehension achievement. It could be seen from the result of reading test group 1 & 2 of the students were 29 students or 91% of 32 students got >60 and the mean score of reading test was 85%.

From the result of observation, it was found that there were 27 students or 84% of 32 were active in cycle 1. During the discussion in group work teaching strategy, the students looked active. It means that their interest in these activities progress. From the result of the questioner form, it could be inferred that the third indicator of success had been reached because 82% students' like the activities.

Based on the result of the implementation of grouping teaching strategy, the data from the test showed that the students' reading comprehension had indicated that the students were successful.

In conclusion, the research findings of the classroom action research were satisfying. The students' comprehension of narrative text was improved by implementing the teaching strategy. In the teaching learning process, the students were able to map out basic components of the story such as setting, problem, goals, action, and outcomes. The story mapping provides structure and organization so students could comprehend the story more effective, it did not seem that the students read the story only for answering question and getting mark, but more than that, the students showed their interest in reading. The action research hypothesis was accepted.

4. CONCLUSION

Based on the analysis of the students' learning, the researcher described the conclusions as:

- 1) Students' reading comprehension of narrative text was improved by applying the teaching techniques. The mean score increased from 55.83 to 86.71.

- 2) This classroom action research was conducted in one cycle with four stages Planning, acting, observing, and reflecting. The students kept improving in each meeting until they fulfilled the indicator of success.
- 3) Group work teaching strategy were able to make the students active in the teaching learning process.

The result of this study can contribute to the one who need it to solve their problems related to this study. For English teacher, the findings of the grouping teaching strategy provide them with a strategy that can improve their students' reading comprehension. The implementation of grouping teaching strategy is also useful for the principal, because the improvement of the students' reading comprehension will improve the quality of the school.

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