The effectiveness of group discussion method in promoting student's reading comprehension

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Abstract

The objective of the study is to find out whether Teaching reading comprehension through the group discussion method is efficacious in improving students' reading ability and to know how significant the effect of the group discussion method is on the students' reading comprehension in the 3rd semester of the English Education Department. The population in this study were all 3rd-semester students majoring in English education, with a total of 26 people. The data collection method is based on pre-tests and post-tests. research data were then analyzed using the t-test to see the increase in students' reading comprehension. the results of the study showed that the average pre-test and post-test increased. This can answer the research question, namely, whether the group discussion method is effective enough in improving students' reading comprehension of narrative texts, as evidenced by the average post-test score in the control class of 69.2. In the experimental class, it has an average value of 73.0. The result of this study indicated that the group discussion method was effective. From this study, the researcher concluded that the Group Discussion method (cooperative learning) is effective in learning reading comprehension of narrative text.

Keywords: group discussion, reading comprehension, narrative text

INTRODUCTION

Reading comprehension plays a crucial role in English language learning. Mastering this skill enables students to gain a deeper understanding of texts (Kennedy, 2023) and access valuable information (Parr, 1992) to enhance their knowledge in fields such as technology, arts, and culture (I. Chen, 2016; Francis, 2006). As a receptive skill, reading involves extracting meaning from written discourse (Baker, 2015). By developing reading comprehension, students

are better equipped to engage with and understand complex materials, facilitating their academic and personal growth.

Small group discussions are implemented as an effective strategy to foster active engagement in reading (Driver, 2014). This approach helps students infer the meaning of unfamiliar words by analyzing their relationships with other words, clauses, sentences, and paragraphs within the text (Putra et al., 2018). Small group discussions, a widely utilized learning technique, aim to address challenges in reading, such as vocabulary, background knowledge, and sentence structure (Seal et al., 1998; Taylor, 1959). Ultimately, this method supports students in achieving two key goals: solving reading-related issues and enhancing their reading comprehension.

Based on the researchers' small observations in 3rd semester from the English education Department of IAIN Sultan Amai Gorontalo, it was discovered that the students had some difficulties with reading comprehension. Understanding the rules of words, sentences, and paragraphs is not enough for students when teaching methods are lacking. Thinking difficulties and comprehension limitations affect other aspects of learning ability. Students have difficulty learning reading, such as the difficulty of understanding the content of the material, the difficulty of understanding the contents of paragraphs, and the difficulty of expressing opinions that they already understand. Teachers have no right to implement methods in the learning process; Teachers should use methods that they believe will better support students' comprehension of learning to read. To finish reading problems such us vocabulary, background knowledge, sentences, phrases, and clauses. Researchers also discovered that the teacher did not use the proper method to teach students during the teaching program by observing the class. Teachers usually discuss the text with other students, so students do not have the opportunity to share and discuss what they have read and cannot develop a deeper understanding of the text. Teachers also ask students to translate only the words, sentences, and paragraphs that they must understand into the text. In order to teach reading, the teacher employs the monotonous method, in which students are asked to read the text and answer questions based on the text.

Teachers' teaching methods make it difficult for students to understand the text and answer questions based on it. In a preliminary study, students did not master the language aspect well. Some of the above factors lead to poor reading comprehension in students lack of understanding of given material, motivation, interest, and how students learn. Additionally, learning without a method can cause students to have difficulty with some key aspects of

reading, such as difficulty finding the main idea, determining the overall structure of the text, and recognizing the purpose of the text. Teachers should use methods that they believe will better support students' comprehension of learning to read. Create active classes so students don't get bored in the learning process. Additionally, giving students the opportunity to tell stories and convey their understanding through discussion can enhance student insight. The teacher should be able to make their reading teaching interesting and fun and help students understand the text easily by using the right method during the teaching and learning process, especially when teaching reading. As a result, in order to employ effective methods, teachers must be creative. The Group Discussion method is one of several methods used to teach reading. Researchers will use the group discussion method to teach reading comprehension and make activities active in class. One method of cooperative learning is small group discussion. Researchers believe the group discussion method could be helpful in teaching reading comprehension.

Previous studies have highlighted the effectiveness of small group discussions as a strategy for enhancing students' reading comprehension. Simorangkir (2019), in her study titled "Improving Students' Reading Comprehension with Small Group Discussion," demonstrated that the group discussion method is one of the most effective and successful approaches for teaching reading comprehension. This method facilitates active student engagement (Maulia, 2018), encouraging them to share their ideas and opinions freely within a supportive group setting (Driver, 2014). Through collaborative discussions, students read the text in groups, discuss their understanding, and present their findings to others (Putra et al., 2018). This process not only ensures that students grasp the text but also promotes critical thinking and problem-solving, as they debate and clarify each other's ideas. Moreover, group discussions foster cooperative learning, where students work together to achieve common goals, thus enhancing their comprehension (Tambuwun et al., 2022). The interdependence among group members creates an environment in which students are motivated to contribute, share their perspectives, and engage in meaningful interactions that improve their overall understanding of the text (C. C.-H. Chen, 2018). These findings align with broader research on cooperative learning strategies, which underscore the value of group discussions in cultivating deeper comprehension and collaborative learning skills. Inspired by these results, this study aims to explore further the role of small group discussions in improving students' reading

comprehension, contributing to a growing body of literature on effective language learning strategies.

This research aims to address two key questions: first, whether the group discussion method is effective in enhancing students' reading comprehension of narrative texts, and second, whether there are significant differences in reading comprehension between the experimental class, which implements group discussions, and the control class, which follows traditional methods. By investigating these aspects, the study seeks to provide insights into the impact of collaborative learning strategies on students' ability to understand and analyze narrative texts.

METHODS

This research used quantitative research (Curry, 2009). The purpose of this study is to find the effectiveness of the group discussion method in promoting students' reading comprehension. This research involved EFL students at the English Education Department of IAIN Sultan Amai Gorontalo in 3rd semester. This study used a quasi-experiment design (Li, 2023) specifically because, in fact, it is difficult to get a homogeneous control group. Quasi-experimental designs lack randomization but employ other strategies to provide some control over extraneous variables. Quasi-experiment is one approach of research that uses two groups: the experimental class and the control class. The researcher implemented group discussion in the experimental class, and the whole class teaching method was delivered in the control class. This study focuses on giving the treatment to the experiment class by applying group discussion in teaching reading narrative text. Then the researcher observes the result of the student's learning process by using a classroom observation test. The two groups received different treatments; where the experimental group used a learning model using group discussions, and the control group used a learning model with the lecture method and ended with a final test for each group.

E	O_1	X_1	O_2
C	O_3	X_2	O_4

Description:

E : Experimental class

C : Control class

O_1 : Preliminary test (before treatment) in the experimental group

O_2: Final test (after treatment) in the experimental group

O₃ : Preliminary test (before treatment) in the control group

O₄ : Final test (before treatment)) in the control group

X₁: Application of Group Discussion learning

X₂: Application of Lecturer Method learning

The technique and data collection in this research used pre-tests and post-tests, which were given to both classes. In this research, the writer gave a pre-test to see students' essential capability in reading before using small group discussions to learn reading. The next test was a post-test, which measured the effectiveness of small group discussion in achieving students' reading achievement over a certain period.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Results

This section outlines the study's findings based on the data collected from both the experimental and control classes, focusing on students' reading comprehension of narrative texts. The data were gathered through pre-test and post-test assessments administered to both groups. The experimental class received the Small Group Discussion technique as an intervention, while the control class followed a conventional approach. A 20-question mixed test was used to assess student's reading comprehension abilities before and after the intervention.

Prerequisite Tests

Prerequisite tests were conducted before testing the hypotheses to ensure that the data met the assumptions required for further statistical analysis.

Normality Test

The normality test was performed using the One-Sample Kolmogorov-Smirnov Test to determine if the data followed a normal distribution, which is a critical assumption for conducting parametric tests such as the t-test.

Pre-test Normality Results

For the control class, the Asymp. Sig. (2-tailed) value was 0.425, which is greater than 0.05, indicating that the pre-test data followed a normal distribution. Similarly, the experimental class showed an Asymp. Sig. (2-tailed) value of 0.380, also higher than 0.05, confirming that the pre-test data were normally distributed for both groups. This suggests that the samples from both classes were suitable for parametric testing.

Post-test Normality Results

The post-test data for both groups also met the assumption of normality. For the control class, the Asymp. Sig. (2-tailed) value was 0.373, and for the experimental class, it was 0.517. Both values were more significant than 0.05, indicating that the post-test data followed a normal distribution in both groups. This assures that the post-test data were appropriate for conducting the subsequent statistical analysis.

Homogeneity Test

The homogeneity of variances was assessed using Levene's Test to determine whether the variances of the two groups were equal. The results of the homogeneity test showed that the significance value based on the mean was 0.486, which is greater than 0.05. This indicates that the variances of the control and experimental classes were homogeneous, fulfilling the assumption of homogeneity required for conducting the t-test.

Hypothesis Testing

After confirming that the assumptions of normality and homogeneity were met, a t-test was conducted to examine the difference in students' reading comprehension before and after the intervention. The t-test was used to compare the pre-test and post-test scores within the experimental and control classes.

T-test Analysis

The t-test results revealed a significant difference in reading comprehension scores between the pre-test and post-test for the experimental class. The t-test value was 3.271, which was greater than the t-table value of 2.157 (at a 5% significance level with 19 degrees of freedom). This suggests that the improvement in reading comprehension in the experimental class was statistically significant. Since the t-test value exceeded the t-table value, the null hypothesis (H0), which posits that there is no significant difference between the pre-test and post-test scores, was rejected. Consequently, the alternative hypothesis (H1), which asserts that there is an important difference, was accepted.

This finding indicates that the Small Group Discussion technique had a positive effect on students' reading comprehension of narrative texts. The experimental group showed a measurable improvement in reading comprehension, demonstrating that the intervention was effective.

Discussion

The results from the normality and homogeneity tests provided a solid foundation for conducting the hypothesis tests. The normality tests confirmed that the data were appropriately distributed for parametric testing, and the homogeneity test ensured that the variances between the two groups were similar. These preliminary checks allowed for a valid comparison of pre-test and post-test scores. The t-test results, which showed a significant difference between the pre-test and post-test scores in the experimental class, suggest that the Small Group Discussion technique is an effective method for improving reading comprehension of narrative texts. The intervention helped students better understand and analyze the texts, as evidenced by the higher post-test scores. In contrast, no significant improvement was expected in the control class, as they did not receive the same treatment.

During this research, the researchers extended the material to students about narrative text with reading as a focused skill. The treatment to experimental class and control class: Small Group Discussion Technique was implemented in the experiment class. While in the control class, the researcher did not use the Group Discussion Technique. After that, the researcher measured students" reading ability by using a test with 20 mixed questions. After six meetings with students, the researcher obtained the scores of each student on the pre-test and post-test. The pre-test on the control class had a min. the score of (55) and the pre-test on the experiment class had a min. score of (55). The post-test on the control class has a max. the score of (80) and the post-test on the experiment class has a max. score of (80). So, the average post-test in the control class is (69.2), and the average post-test in the experiment class is (73.0). That is, the researcher concludes that there is a significant difference between before and after being given treatment.

The findings can be explained that group work activities have a positive impact on the learning process because group work activities can help students complete the tasks given by the teacher quickly, improve student communication, and develop teamwork skills. If students use group work activities in class, they can understand how to express ideas and opinions and help each other to solve problems in learning. This is related to Kondo's theory (Kondo-Brown, 2010), which states that group work activities provide positive responses and are also revealed, such as helping each other, reducing individual workloads, and encouraging students to participate in these activities. Group work is a method of teaching that divides students into several groups. They work together to solve problems or carry out specific tasks and try to

achieve the teaching goals that the teacher has determined. Group work activity is a method of discussing a specific topic by expressing the opinion of each individual to solve a problem through discussion. Group work activities help increase student interest and motivation.

In conclusion, the study provides strong evidence supporting the effectiveness of Small Group Discussions in enhancing students' reading comprehension. The findings suggest that interactive, collaborative learning techniques can play a crucial role in developing students' reading skills, particularly in understanding narrative texts. These results have important implications for English language teaching, as they highlight the potential of group discussions to improve reading comprehension outcomes.

CONCLUSIONS

Based on the result of the analysis of data post-test, there is a significant difference between students" reading achievement in the experiment class and the control class. The results obtained in the control class and experimental class show that the results of the experimental class post-test are greater than the post-test in the control class. then this can answer the research question, namely, the group discussion method is effective enough in improving students' reading comprehension of narrative texts as evidenced by the average post-test score in the control class being 69,2. In the experimental class, it has an average value of 73.0. Based on those results, a conclusion can be drawn that the Ho was rejected, while the Ha was accepted. Furthermore, based on the result of the test formula, which figures out the hypothesis testing, it is shown that observed $(t_o) > t_{table}$. This means that the result of this study indicated that the group discussion method was effective. From this study, the researcher concluded that the Group Discussion method (cooperative learning) is effective in learning reading comprehension of narrative text.

The results showed that students' reading comprehension increased significantly compared to students' reading abilities in the condition. previously, the ability of students to read students in semester 3 majoring in English education has increased. It's related to actions given in class, such as implementing group discussion methods, carrying out online and offline learning processes, giving material leaflets, and giving awards to the best groups in the learning process. Both successful and unsuccessful actions have several implications. They described about The application of the group discussion method can help improve students' reading comprehension. By applying the method, then students become more motivated to learn

together. It encourages students to help other friends by sharing their ideas, imparting knowledge to others, and motivating students to read the text. Students become motivated, confident, and active during reading class because they enjoy learning together. This also helps students learn the material. This implies that teachers can encourage students to work in groups or pairs so that they have friends to discuss learning material. The learning process is quite interesting. Carrying out online and offline classes and various reading assignments makes a significant contribution to the process of teaching and learning English more interesting. with this, students become motivated by the teaching and learning process. Implementation of rewards for the best performance is encouraged so that all students can do their best. They prepared themselves and their duties well. Besides that, their involvement in asking and answering questions increases. They feel they can complete their task when working as a team or in pairs. This implies that the teacher can give gifts to motivate students to be more active in learning.

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