

THE EFFECT OF GAME THROUGH SMALL GROUPS IN TEACHING READING COMPREHENSION

Rusmiati¹

Abstract

This article describes about the effect of game through small groups in teaching reading comprehension. Generally, teachers used to be active then their students, Yet, in some ways it has been changed, students now tend to avoid the passivity in the class. Teachers role in this phase is the fasilitator from whom students run for guidance during their lesson. Students are also encouraged to be well spirited in using their skills in English conversationally by giving and sharing ideas. Therefore, learning through games is one of the most interesting technique to reach this great atmosphere of the class.

Key Words: *Game, Small Group Reading Comprehension*

¹ Rusmiati, Dosen Prodi Pendidikan Bahasa Inggris, STKIP Bina Bangsa Getsempena, Banda Aceh

I. Introduction

Reading as one of the four language skills is very important to be learned. There are some general opinions about reading. According to Nuttal (1996), reading is defined as a process to get meaning from a text. Furthermore, Richard (1998) states that reading is the exercise dominated by the eyes and the brain. The eyes receive messages and the brain then has to work out the significance of these messages. On the other hand, reading is an activity of getting meaning from written text whose aim is to understand the information in it.

Gamrell and Dromsky in Westwood (2001) define that reading is a process in which readers actively search for and make meaning in what they read. In addition, Gillet and Temple (1994) explain that reading is language ability which influences to other of language abilities, including speaking, listening and writing. It means that reading cannot be separated freely, but it is influenced by other skills.

Moreover, reading comprehension ability is taught to be a set of generalize knowledge acquisition skills that permits people to acquire and exhibit information gained as a consequences of reading printed page. (Harris and Sipay, 1980). This statement is supported by Snow (2002) who states that reading comprehension as the process of simultaneously extracting and constructing meaning through interaction and involvement with written language. In this phase, readers do not only use grammar and vocabulary knowledge to understand reading, but also use

previous knowledge to understand it.

Especially in teaching learning process, teachers need to get better understanding of the nature of reading comprehension which is effective to help students developing their reading comprehension. The more teachers know about the processes involved in reading comprehension, the better they can prepare good reading lesson for their class.

Briefly, I conclude that reading comprehension is a complex process and an important skill that is used to extract meaning and information from text. Furthermore, reading comprehension is the process of transferring the information conveyed within a certain text into our mind by which it is processed to be our experience.

II. Discussion

Games in Teaching Reading

Comprehension

When reading comprehension is taught with games, it is expected to have different atmosphere in the teaching learning process. Games are expected to provide a better atmosphere and a lot of fun while learning in the classroom. Implementing games will put the students in a situation where the students will have a good time in learning reading comprehension. Therefore, teachers should be more active and creative in designing appropriate games to be applied in teaching reading comprehension.

There are some other examples of games that can be used in teaching reading comprehension beside the games used in this

research. The games are taken from any sources from internet. They are:

1. Missing Headlines

Aim: Reading silently, reading for specific information, speaking (discussing in pairs)

Notes: Cut out news items and their headlines from a newspaper. Paste the news and headlines on separate sheets of paper. Photocopy them. Ask students to work in pairs. Give each pair the photocopies of the news and headlines. Ask them to match the headlines with the news items.

2. Reading Roundup

Give your students a small writing excerpt. Ensure that you match the difficulty of the excerpt to the level of your class. Set a time limit for reading, one that's suitable for the length of the passage. Take the excerpt away from the students after the time expires. Have each student write down as many questions about the passage as possible. Then have them ask their questions to the rest of the class. Award one point for each question and one point for each correct answer. The student with the most points wins. Do this activity in pairs if you have enough students.

3. Question and Answer Game Activity

Level: Any Level

Usually students answer comprehension questions after reading. Why not have students create their own comprehension questions? I have and it works well, especially if this activity is turned into a game. I do this by having students in small group work together to write questions

about the text are allowed. Opinion questions are not allowed. After groups finish writing their questions, they ask their questions to another group which must answer within a specified amount of time (the teacher decides the time according to the class level). If the answer is correct and given within the time period, the answering team receives a point. If the answer is incorrect or not found within the time period, the questioning group receives a point, but they must inform the other group of the answer. Each group takes turn asking and answering questions.

Those above games can be used as an additional technique that can be applied in teaching reading comprehension. Teachers can create and design more games to add variety in teaching reading comprehension by looking at the other sources such as the internet or book. If this is done by the teacher, it is expected that students are not only feel fun with the material being taught in class but also feel pleased with their teacher because their teacher has given the knowledge without make them stressful and fear in learning English. As the result, both students and teacher are successful in creating a good atmosphere in class which leads them to gain the teaching goal easily as it expected.

The Advantages of Implementing Games

Implementing games in language teaching can help students develop their reading comprehension. The followings are some opinions of game advantages proposed by some other experts:

Brewster (2002) proposes ten advantages of using games in language learning, five of which will be mentioned here:

1. Games add variety to the range of learning situation.
2. Games provide 'hidden' practice of specific language pattern, vocabulary and pronunciation.
3. Games can help to improve attention span, concentration, memory, listening skills, and reading skills.
4. Games increase communication among students, which provide fluency, practice and reduce the domination the class by the teacher.
5. Games create fun atmosphere and reduce the distance between teacher and students.

Based on the above information, it is clear that games make the students feel the atmosphere "play while learning". The learning process provides less-pressured atmosphere for the teacher and the students, but certainly it is still serious because of the skills in the English are still taught effectively.

In addition, Carrier (1985) summarizes that there are some advantages of using games. They are:

1. Games add variety to range of learning situations.
2. Games can maintain motivation.
3. Games can refresh learners during formal learning.
4. Games can encourage an interest of those students whose feel intimidated by formal classroom situations.

5. Games can make a teacher-student distance less marginal.
6. Games give an opportunity for student-student communication and can reduce more usual student-teacher communication,
7. Games can act as a testing mechanism, in the sense that they will expose areas of weakness.

Based on the information above, it is clear that games provide motivation on the development of the students' ability to learn English skills. Furthermore, student-centered adopted in the implementation of these games provides many advantages. Nunan (1999) says that learner-centered instruction is an approach to instruction that uses information about and from learners in selecting learning content and procedures. The phrase is also used to describe a classroom in which learners are required to learn actively, through doing, rather than through focusing on the teacher.

The important of small group

Small groups encourage students to think deeply and express their own ideas to others. The relationship among the students in the group will closer in the group will likely give chance as well as challenge in discussing the problems they are faced during lesson then finally lead them to find the solution. Furthermore, according to Brown (2007), group work is a generic term covering a multiplicity of techniques in which two or more students are assigned a task that involves collaboration and self-initiated language.

In addition, Harmer (1991) explains that group work seems to be an extremely

attractive idea for a number of reasons. In this phase, Interaction among the teacher and the students in small group focuses on producing a good result in teaching learning process in which everyone has a voice to explore their ideas to each other.

Implementing small groups

Teaching is an activity carried on by a person called a teacher who helps another person called a student or pupil to get knowledge or to learn something. Brown (2000) mentions that there are several characteristics of effective teaching. The six of which will be mentioned here. Firstly, instruction is clear and focused. Then, learning progress is monitored closely. Next, class time is used for learning instructional groups formed in the classroom fit instructional needs. Finally, personal interaction between teachers and students are positive, incentives and rewards for students are used to promote excellence.

It can be inferred that effective teaching will determine the teacher and students to perform better in learning process. The characteristics of effective teaching should be applied by the teacher in approach to teach. In addition, the teaching learning process must be based on the goals of curriculum. Teacher gives students the target to reach the goals of the subject. Besides, teacher must focus in giving the comprehension about the materials. The teacher may not tell a lot of unimportant stories that is not related to the materials. When the students still do not understand the materials, the teacher has to keep patient and

spirit to reteach them. Finally, when the students successful in learning the materials, the teacher should give them a praise and good comment. Brophy in Harris and Sipay (1990) mentions that there are twelve suggestions for effective teaching of group. The five of which will be explained here, they are:

Firstly, use a standard and predictable signal to obtain the group's attention. Then, teach the students to move immediately into their reading group. Next, bring the appropriate materials, and make quick, orderly transitions between activities. Furthermore, seat the pupils in the group with their backs to the rest of the class; the teacher should face all of the class members. Moreover, introduce the lesson with an overview of what is to come; this prepares the students for the presentation. Lastly, demonstrate or explain any new activity before asking the children to do it.

It shows that the teacher has to work actively in managing the students in teaching learning process. It includes managing the students to form the groups. The teacher has to make sure that all of the activities run orderly. The most important thing is that the teacher has to explain the objectives and the things that should be done by the students in their groups clearly, in order to minimally the noise made by them.

Implementing Games through small groups

There are some small groups tasks that teacher can be implemented in teaching

learning process. Brown (2007) selects the appropriate group task into some categorizes. They are games, drama, projects, interview, information gap, jigsaw, and problem solving.

In this research, I choose to implement games through small groups in teaching reading comprehension. Generally feature of many games have the connection with competition among players. Eventhough there are some games also use games cooperatively. In other cases, there is both cooperation and competition are applied in the process of playing the games. Games in this research apply both the cooperation and competitive element in which the students discuss together with their friends in the same groups cooperatively and then compete with the another group.

Additionally, in language teaching, games can play competitively and cooperatively. Hadfield (2004) says that there are two kinds of game: competitive games and cooperative games. Competitive games are games in which players or teams race to be the first to reach the goal. Yet, co-operative games are games in which players or teams work together towards a common goal. The theory is supported by Agoestyowaty (2007) who says that games allow students to work co-operatively, compete with each other, to think in a different way, share knowledge, learn from others, learn from mistakes, work in a less stressful and more productive environment, and allow people to have fun. Besides, according to Greenall (1990), the

term 'game' is used whenever there is an element of competition between individual students or teams in a language activity. In this phase, when an element of competition is appeared, it is important to encourage and develop students' solidarity in teamwork. The students in their group have to give their best to do the tasks which are given by their teacher. All students will be well motivated to learn in their group to compete with other group and expected to be the winner in playing the games.

III. Conclusion

The explanation above also can be used as the information for the teacher in planning small groups for students in the classroom. The teacher must provide clear information about the activities to be carried out by the students. Activities must be in accordance with the syllabus and curriculum. In this phase, all students must be active in completing the tasks that is given by the teacher. Every student should have input feedback to share with his group, so that they are successful in the learning process.

By implementing small groups, the teacher may not leave the students in their groups. The function of the teacher is the most important thing in implementing this activity. In this phase, the teacher is the one who monitors the students. Besides, the teacher is responsible as a facilitator. Hence, It is hopefully that teaching learning process will run well if the teacher and the students complete their tasks based on the rules given.

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