The Effects of Online Small Group Discussion on Students' Reading Comprehension

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Abstract

The present study mainly examines two cases: (1) the effect of online small group discussion on students' reading comprehension and (2) students' perception of the effect of online small group discussion on students' reading comprehension. The purpose of this study was to determine the effect of online small group discussion on students' reading comprehension, and to determine students' perceptions of the effect of online small group discussion on students' reading comprehension. Implementing learning to understand English reading. This research employed a quantitative approach. In this study, the authors used purposive sampling to collect the data. This study was attended by 30 participants and was conducted at the English Department of the Indonesian Muslim University, Makassar. The results of this study indicated that the use of Small Group Discussion method in learning English reading comprehension in the network was quite effective in developing students' reading comprehension. It was observed that the learning process was done through online applications such as Zoom and Whatsapp. Overall, these results can be a reflection for teachers and students to be even more active in learning to understand English writing or scripts, particularly in an online environment.

Keywords: small group discussion, online, Impact, Perception, Implementation

INTRODUCTION

Reading happens when people look at a text and assign meaning to the written symbols in that text. It means that reading is the process of the reader's mind or process of mind activity in trying to interpret the perception of symbols that present language. Besides, reading comprehension is the main goal of reading that refers to understanding what is being read. Readers

usually use background knowledge, vocabulary, grammatical knowledge, experience with text and other strategies to help them understand written text (Rahemi, 2013).

Additionally, students' reading comprehension means how far they can understand what they are reading. Usually, the students use their background knowledge, vocabulary, grammatical knowledge, and experience with the text and strategies to help them understand a text. Based on curriculum 2013 at point 4.14 at the exploration stage for second grade of senior high school as cited in Sundiawan (2013), there are two indicators of successful reading that the students should achieve, and one of them is the students can catch the meaning of the text. Then, the students can write out the text's content with their friends by paying attention to the content and vocabulary.

The students might consider that understanding the meaning of the text is unnecessary as long as they could get good scores in reading tests and they just focused on reading certain paragraphs or sentences that perhaps indicated the answer of the question. In addition, the students frequently face five main problems during the reading comprehension process: vocabulary, sentence problems, reference (rhetorical structure), and background knowledge (Sutarsyah, 2013).

These problems are assumed as the main factors that make the students fail to comprehend the content of text. On the other hand, those problems above require a teacher to find a suitable and appropriate technique in order to solve those reading problems so that the students will comprehend the meaning of the text well and their reading comprehension will increase and to make students become active and get involved in reading activities, it is needed to teach them the various reading strategies because reading with various strategies would create students to be critical and creative readers

Conceptualizing Reading Comprehension in EFL Context

Comprehension is the primary goal of reading that refers to understanding what is being read. Readers usually use background knowledge, vocabulary, grammatical knowledge, experience with text and other strategies to help them understand written text. Similarly, reading comprehension is the interaction among word identification, prior knowledge, comprehension strategies, and engagement. Without all of these skills, one cannot comprehend properly and, therefore, not read correctly.

Besides, comprehension is the ultimate goal of reading. Everyone agrees that reading comprehension is not a simple matter of recognizing individual words or understanding each word as our eyes pass over it. All comprehension models recognize the need for readers to build up a mental representation of text. This process requires integration across a range of information sources, from lexical features to knowledge concerning events in the world. In summary, reading comprehension is the main goal of reading in which readers usually make use of background knowledge, vocabulary, and grammatical knowledge, experience with text and other strategies to help them understand written text and this is a process that requires integration across a range of sources

Most students were confused that the lack of background knowledge of the reading topic became their main reading problem. A complex text contains an unfamiliar topic or at least the topic is not attractive. In other words, a passage can be considered easy or difficult depending on whether or not the topic of text is familiar to a reader. If a reader does not know or has never experienced the topic discussed in the text, he would have a serious problem understanding the text and would be unable to follow the story. Thus, a reader must have enough background

experience on the topic that enables him or her to bring personal meaning to the events and feelings of the story.

Small-Group Discussion as a technique in reading comprehension

Small group discussion is one of the cooperative learning techniques in which students work in groups of three or four. A small group is a small member of human, work together through interaction whose interdependent relationship allows them to achieve a mutual goal (Kenz and Greg, 2000). According to Sagala (2008), group discussion team is more effective if the group consists of 3-4 students, enabling students to give their opinions or ideas to other students easily. So the students are more confident to give opinions in each small group.

In short, small group technique is a small member of human, work together through interaction whose interdependent relationship allow them to achieve a mutual goal. This technique provides opportunities for students' initiation, for face to face, give and take, for practice in negotiation of meaning for extended conversation exchanges.

Teaching Small Group Discussion in Reading Class

The small group learning format can be conceptualized in various ways, and proponents of the technique have assessed only certain types of models. However, when the groups have found out how to plan work together, they may not all agree. The group members know well enough to trust each other, and they still have to determine each other's skills, knowledge, situation, and attitudes. They often feel comfortable and "lost" (Barker, 1986:168). In a class of 30 – 40 students, a teacher may have difficulties when he teaches without knowing whether the students have understood and comprehended the reading passages.

Additionally, teaching small group discussion in reading class here means that the students will be trained to catch the meaning of the text and write out the content of the text together with their friends by paying attention to the content and vocabulary based on curriculum 2013 as cited in Sundiawan (2013). In a small group discussion, the students would be trained to comprehend the meaning of the text by sharing and discussing their ideas with other members' in-group. Small group discussion technique would be conducted after the pretest has been done first and then, in order to check students' reading comprehension after being taught by using small group discussion posttest will be administered. In addition, producing a text in Indonesian language is a test that would be conducted in pretest and posttest where the students should be able to produce a text in Indonesian language based on their understanding of text in English language. This activity is administered to evaluate students' reading comprehension after being taught using small group discussion.

According to Brown and Atkins (2001), the advantages of small group include better communication skills and intellectual and professional development. Gross Davis (2006) adds that the advantages of the small group include increased student participation and deeper and longer-lasting understanding. According to Harmer (2001:117-118) the advantages of small group discussion are:

1) It dramatically increases the amount of talking for individual students.

2) Because there are more than two people in the group, personal relationship are usually less problematic; there is also a greater chance of different opinions and varied contribution.

3) It encourages broader skills of cooperation and negotiation.

4) It promotes student autonomy by allowing students to make their own decision in the group without being told what to do by the teacher.

METHOD

This study was conducted to determine the effect of intensive reading strategy on students¨ reading comprehension. This study was conducted through a quantitative research. In this research the authors used quasi-experimental. According to Sugiyono, quasi-experimental design means that the authors does not have maximum control in experimenting. The design used in this research is quasi-experimental design which uses experimental and control groups. Experimental group receives a treatment, while control group does not receive any treatment.

Quasi-experimental design is divided into non-equivalent control group design and the time series design. According to Hanafi, a non-equivalent control group design means that there are two groups in the study namely; experimental group and control group, in which both of the groups are the same level of knowledge but used different treatments or maybe there will be no treatment used. This type of research has pre-test and post-test, experiment and control groups but no random subject assignment. In other words, the subject in this research had already been grouped when this research was conducted. The software Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS Version 21) was used to answer the study's three research questions. The demographic and attitude data were analyzed using means, standard deviations, frequencies, and percentages. A paired sample t-test was used to determine whether there were significant changes between the pre- and post-tests.

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

The Effect of Online Small Group Discussion on students' reading comprehension

In this part, the authors did quasy exprimental research to know the effect of online small group discussion on students' reading comprehension.

1. The Score Of Pre-Test And Post-Test Of Experiment Class The score they got on these test would be described in following table:

Table 1. The Score of Pre-test and Post-test in Experiment Class

No	Name	Pre-test	Post-test
1	AAN	62	80
2	BE	50	88
3	CJT	64	88
4	CAZZ	48	72
5	DNR	64	80
6	DVM	52	72
7	FS	56	76
8	FNI	56	74

9	HF	68	72
10	IMG	68	92
11	L	64	72
12	MAP	56	76
13	MSS	64	72
14	MR	64	92
15	MIR	44	74
16	MRF	52	74
17	MIZ	48	60
18	NZA	36	64
19	N	60	76
20	NAL	54	80
21	OH	44	68
22	RA	52	60
23	RB	52	74
24	RA	60	84
25	RS	62	72
26	SS	42	74
27	SN	64	84
28	SA	48	76
29	YPP	56	72
30	YNA	62	96
		Σ X = 1672	Σ X = 2294
		$M = 55,73$	$M = 76,46$

After that the authors calculated them based on t-test formula:
1. The average score of experiment class:
X1 = ΣK1 = 2294 = 76, 46
*N*1 30
2. The average score of control class:
X2 = ΣK1 = 1864 = 62, 13
*N*1 30
3. Sum of the squared deviation score of experimental class:
ΣX 2= 2221.468
4. Sum of the squared deviation score of control class:
ΣX 2= 1439.467
5. Determining t-table (tt) by using formula: Df =
N1 + N2 – 2 = 30 = 30 – 2 = 28

Hypotesis Testing (t-test)

Data obtained from pre-test and post-test were analyzed and calculated using the t-test formula. The data obtained from the experiment class and control class are calculated with the assumption as follow: If to < tt : the alternative hypothesis (Ha) is rejected and the null hypothesis (Ho) is accepted. It means there is no significant effect of using online small group discussion on students" reading comprehension. If to > tt : the alternative hypothesis (Ha) is accepted and the null hypothesis (Ho) is rejected. It means there is a significant effect of using online small group discussion on students" reading comprehension.

From the result of the calculation above, it is obtained that the value of to (t observation) is 7, 38 and the degree freedom (df) is 58. There is no degree of freedom for 58, so the authors used the closer df from 58 is 60. In degree of significance 5% from t table is 2, 00. In degree of significance 1% from t table is
2,66.

After the data was collected, the authors compared it with tt (t table) in degree significance 5% and 1%. Therefore, to : tt = 67, 38 > 2, 00 in degree of significance 5% and to : tt = 7, 38 > 2,66 in degree of significance 1%. Since the score obtained from the result of calculating, the alternative hypothesis (Ha) is accepted and the null hypothesis (Ho) is rejected. It means there was a significant effect of using online small group discussion on students" reading comprehension

Students' Perception of The Effect Of Online Small Group Discussion on Students' Reading Comprehension

To answer the second problem statement, the authors used a questionnaire to find the responses of students' perceptions of the effect of small group discussion on students' reading comprehension. The questionnaire consisted of 13 items (close-ended questionnaire). There were seven negative statements and eight positive statements.

Item 1 : Learning English reading comprehension through small group
discussion increase students ability in understand the text

From item 1 above showed that 30 students, seventeen students (61%)
said
that they were strongly agree with the statements, Ten students (39%)
agree
with the statements.

Item 2 : Learning English reading comprehension through small group
discussion is boring

From item 2 above showed that 30 students, one students (4%) said that they were agree with the statements, Two students (7%) doubtful with the statements, Nineteen students (68%) disagree with the statements and eight students (21%) strongly disagree with the statements.

Item 3 : Learning English reading comprehension through small group
discussion increase students spirit.

From item 3 above showed, Twenty one students (74%) said that they were strongly agree with the statements, eight students (19%) agree with the statements, one students (4%) doubtful with the statements.

> Item 4 : Learning English reading comprehension through small group discussion did not motivate the students in understanding the text

From item 4 above showed that 30 students, one students (4%) said that they were agree with the statements, five students (19%) doubtful with the statements, fiveteen students (53%) disagree with the statements, nine students (24%) strongly agree with statement.

> Item 5 : Learning english reading comprehension through small group discussion increase the students' curiosity.

From item 5 above showed, nineteen students (63%) said that they strongly agreed with the statements, ten students (33%) agreed with the statements, one students (4%) was doubtful with the statements.

> Item 6 : Students could understand the text through small group discussion

From item 6 above, there were more than 30 students, seventeen (60%) said they strongly agree with the statements, and thirteen (40%) agree with the statements.

> Item 7 : Learning English reading comprehension through small group discussion was effective and efficient way for students

From item 7 above, twenty one students (66%) said that they strongly agree with the statements, and ten students (34%) agree with the statements.

> Item 8 : Learning English reading comprehension through small groupdiscussion was not efficient because it needed much time

From item 8 above showed, one students (4%) said that they were strongly agree with the statements, three students (11%) doubtful with the statements, sixteen students (50%) disagree with the statementst, ten students 35%) strongly disagree statement.

> Item 9 : Student could think freely in learning English reading comprehension through small group discussion

From item 9 above showed, sixteen students (56%) said that they were strongly agree with the statements, nine students (25%) agree with the statementst, five students (19%) doubtful statements.

Item 10 : Learning English reading comprehension through small group
discussion did not give a chance in understanding the text

From item 10 above showed, three students (11%) said that they were doubtful with the statements, fourteen students (49%) disagree with the statementst, ten students 40%) strongly disagree statement.

Item 11 : I cant less concentration using small group discussion on reading
comprehension class

From item 11 above showed, two students (7%) said that they were strongly agree with the statements, one students (4%) agree with the statementst, five students (19%) doubtful statement, fiveteen students (47%) disagree with the statments, seven students (22%) disagree with the statments,

Item 12 : Student were attracted to understand the text through small group discussion

From item 12 above showed, seventeen students (55%) said that they were strongly agree with the statements, thriteen students (48%) agree with the statements.

Item 13 : Students are interested in learning English reading comprehension through small
group discussion

From item 13 above showe, nineteen students (67%) said that they were strongly agree with the statements, eight students (22%) agree with the statementst, one students (4%) doubtful statement, two students (7%) strongly disagree with the statments.

Discussion
The effect of online small group discussion on students' reading comprehension

In addition, the implementation of intensive reading strategy has given changes toward students reading comprehension, as follows: students' vocabularies mastery was increased, they could look for main idea, understand the main text, understand the grammatical well and they have received a new motivation by intensive reading strategy. It was proved from the result score posttest after intensive reading strategy was implemented. According on the data analysis in the last part, in can be seen in the class A as experimental class, the highest score of pre-test is 68 and the lowest score is 36. The highest score of post-test is 96 and the lowest score is 60. The mean of pre-test score obtained by students in this class is 55,73 and the mean of post-test is 76,46. The mean of pretest and post-test score is good enough improvement; it is 76, 46 > 55, 73. The improvement caused by the experimental class learnt reading comprehension by using online small group discussion that not used yet before.

Students' Perception of Learning English Reading Comprehension Through Small Group Discussion

The questionnaire From item 1 above showed that seventeen students (61%) said they strongly agree with the statements, thirteen students (39%) agree with the statements. Furthermore, item 4 on the statement the learning reading comprehension through small group discussion did not motivate the students in understand the text from item 4 above showed that 30 students, one student (4%) said that they were agree with the statements, five students (19%) doubtful with the statements, fifteen students (53%) disagree with the statements, nine students (24%) strongly agree with statement, This is negative statements. Even though one class had an equally increasing score, the score was increased significantly for the experimental class based on the above findings. It simply illustrates that the students who were taught by using online small group discussion were better and easier to learn English.

CONCLUSION

Based on the analysis of data and hypothesis testing, it can be concluded that the Students' reading comprehension at 5 semester in English education universitas musim Indonesia before using online small group discussion is low at is low. It can be seen from the result of pre- test computation, it indicates that the average of pre- test score in experimental class is 55,73 and in controlled class is 55, 86. So, after the authors gave treatments in experimental class, teaching reading comprehension using intensive reading strategy is effective rather than traditional. It can be seen from the result of analysis in post-test. It indicates that the average score of the experimental group (m) mean is 76, 46 it is higher than the controlled group (m) mean which is 62, 13. The data above show a significant difference between the experimental and controlled classes.

Furthermore, online small group discussion effectively developed students' reading comprehension. It can be seen from the result of post-test was higher than students pre-test. The students'" lowest score of post-test at experimental class was 60 and the highest score was 96. The result of lowest of post-test at control class was 44, the highest was 72. After the date, the result of t observation was 7, 38. Then, authors compared it with tt (t table) in degree significance 5% and 1%. Therefore, to : tt = 7,38 > 2, 00 in degree of significance 5% and to : tt = 7, 38 > 2,66 in degree of significance 1%. it means that the alternative hypothesis (Ha) is accepted and the null hypothesis (Ho) is rejected. It can be concluded that online small group disussion is effective on students' reading comprehension.

Overall, the students' perception of the effect of online small group discussion on students' reading comprehension on the 5th semester in English education at Universitas Muslim Indonesia gave the positive perception of exactly students' perception of the authors' method in teaching English. Most students liked to learn English reading comprehension through small group discussion.

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