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THE INFLUENCE OF GROUP DISCUSSION TOWARDS THE STUDENTS' READING ABILITY

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Abstract: The aim of this research was to determine whether the Group Discussion strategy has an influence towards students' reading ability. In this research, the researcher used the Quasi-experimental method. The population was 224 students from 7 classes. The sample was taken by used Cluster Random Sampling Technique. There were two classes for the sample. The first class was VIII E as an experiment class and the second was VIII Das a control class. The experiment class consisted of 30 students and the control class consisted of 32 students. The main technique in measuring students' reading comprehension was multiple choices which consisted of 40 items with 4 options a, b, c, and d. The score of each item is 2,5 for the correct answer. In analyzing data, the researcher used ttest formula. Based on the data analysis, H_0 was accepted. It was obtained that $t_{test} = 4.76$ and $t_{table} 0,05 = 1,67$ and $0,01 = 2,39$ ($4.76 > 1,67 < 2,39$). It was also proved by the average score of the experimental class was higher than in the control class ($72.37 > 60.28$). It means that there was a significant influence of group discussion towards students' reading ability at the eighth grade of SMP Negeri 15 Bandar Lampung in 2022/2023.

Keywords: Experimental Research, Group Discussion, Reading Ability

INTRODUCTION

Reading is the process of representing specific ideas or meanings about the message intended by the author. Reading is more than reciting printed material or following every line of a written page. However, it also includes activities to identify and go beyond the words in a sentence that consists of all the assessment information. According to (Harmer, 2007: 99), reading is beneficial for language acquisition. Reading without understanding is a futile activity, just like learning to read (Agnescia et al., 2022).

Reading means trying to digest reading or interacting with reading texts by utilizing one's vision, brain and mind (Andeska et al., 2021). Reading is very important for building other skills. Reading is one of the skills that students must learn. Students should pay more attention to this skill because reading requires students to interact with the text to understand its meaning. However, it is not easy for students to master reading skills. Many students need help understanding the text they read. So that researchers feel this problem is important for research to find solutions that can improve students' reading skills (Dari et al., 2021).

Based on preliminary research at SMP Negeri 15 Bandar Lampung, the

researcher found that students' reading skills needed to be improved. Students experience difficulties understanding and identifying words' meanings in English texts. The students have difficulties identifying the text's main idea. And also the students have difficulties in understanding the reference and making inferences from the text. Therefore, students need the right strategy to improve their reading skills (Fatmala et al., 2020). Based on the background of the problems above, the researcher is interested in improving students' reading skills by applying the Group Discussion technique in learning to read.

According to Brown (1988) in (Durriyah, 2017: 16), small group provides opportunities for students' initiation, for face to face, give and take, for practice in negotiation of meaning for extended conversation exchanges. This strategy will make teaching and learning activities more effective because it allows students to freely share their opinions and ideas (Hastomo & Aminatun, 2023). Group discussions are very important because they provide opportunities for students to interact and learn from one another. Students can also respect each other and be more tolerant because, in discussions, there will be differences of opinion. Researchers are interested in doing this research because the problem is very important. Learning English, especially reading, must be done with the right strategy (Hastomo & Zulianty, 2022).

Based on the problems above, the researcher hopes to apply this strategy to improve students' reading skills. Therefore, the researcher wants to implement this strategy and proposes a study entitled: "The Influence of group discussion towards the Students' Reading Ability".

METHOD

In this research, the researcher used quantitative research with a quasi-experimental design. According to Creswell (2012: 309), "an experimental design is the traditional approach to conducting quantitative research." In other words, an experimental design is required to complete a quantitative study (Indah, Jaya & Wiratno, 2022). The population of this research was the eighth grade at SMP Negeri 15 Bandar Lampung as many as 224 students consisting of 7 classes. The researcher will take two classes to investigate research results. They are the experimental class at VIII E and the control class at VIII D. In the experimental class, the researcher taught reading used group discussion strategies, and in the control class, the researcher taught reading through direct methods. In determining the sample of the research, the researcher used random cluster sampling and used a test to collect the data. The kind of test used in this research is a multiple-choice test that consist of 40 questions with 4 options (A, B, C, and D).

FINDING AND DISCUSSION

Finding

After the calculation was obtained the result of the experimental class is $\chi^2_{\text{ratio}} 6.29$ and 1.4 for the control class at significant level of 0.05 is 7.81 and also 0.01 is 11.3 that $\chi^2_{\text{ratio}} < \chi^2_{\text{table}}$. So, H_0 was accepted which means the data had normal distribution. Based on the data, F_{ratio} was 1.34 F_{table} at the significance level of 0.05 was 1.90 and 0.01 were 2.49 . Therefore, H_a was accepted and H_0 was rejected ($1.34 < 1.90 < 2.49$). It means that the variance of the data in experiment class and control class were homogenous. Based on the calculation significance level 5% ($\alpha = 0.05$) and 1% ($\alpha = 0.01$) the value t-test (4.76) was bigger than the t-table (1.67 and 2.39).

According to data analysis by using t-test and testing of the hypothesis, the researcher got $t_{\text{test}} = 4.76$ and $t_{\text{table } 0.05} = 1.67$ and $0.01 = 2.39$ which means that t_{test} was higher than t_{table} with significant level 5% and 1% ($4.76 > 1.67 > 2.39$). Therefore, H_0 is rejected and H_a is accepted. It can be concluded that there was significant influence of group discussion strategy towards students' reading ability at the eighth grade of SMP Negeri 15 Bandar Lampung in 2022/2023.

Discussion

Based on the data analysis and testing of the hypothesis the researcher got the result that H_a was accepted. It showed by ttest that was higher than ttable with significance level of 5% and 1% ($4.76 > 1.67 < 2.39$). Therefore, it means that there was a significant effect of using Group Discussion on students' reading ability at the eighth grade of SMP Negeri 15 Bandar Lampung in 2022/2023. It was also proved by the average score of experimental class was higher than in control class ($72.37 > 60.28$).

Based on the results above, the researcher assumes that Group Discussion can be used as a tool in tracking reading ability and Group Discussion to make students interested and can also improve students' motivation in learning English. Then by looking at the advantages it offers in which students will be encouraged to be more active, it's not easy to get bored and enjoy the teaching and learning process, so that it will get a good effect in the teaching and learning process. The statement is supported by Parameswara et al. (2022) that "the use of group strategy in Group Discussion really helped the students. The students could share their knowledge and opinions in doing the exercise and discussing the answers to the exercise (Putri et al., 2023). The purpose of the research has been reached. It can be seen that the score in the experimental class is higher than the score in the control class.

In teaching reading, the teacher needs something different to make students interested and needs appropriate strategies, so that students will not be hard in receiving the material (Supriyati et al., 2020). Teaching reading is necessary, because in any kind of text, there are many unfamiliar words. Therefore, not all students can comprehend the reading text well. Before the researcher was taught by using group discussion, the students got difficulties comprehending reading text.

They got difficulties in getting information from the text, finding the details, and finding the main ideas, students showed a lack of interest in learning to read. It is caused by the students' lack of enthusiasm in learning English. Therefore, to improve students' reading ability, the teacher must choose the right strategy to make easier the process of capturing meaning. Strategy becomes important to achieve the purpose of reading (Sutiyono & Hastomo, 2022).

Group discussion was used by the researcher as treatment in the class in order to solve the problem above. According to Wu (2008), small group discussion could stimulate students to be involved in the active process of constructing knowledge. It means, small group helps students more easily build knowledge and understand a topic in the text, students can share their knowledge and opinions in doing the exercises and discuss the answers to the exercises. Group discussions are one of the most effective ways to involve students in class discussions. also allows students to practice their communication skills. Teachers can use this approach to promote student learning while developing interpersonal and team skills (Yulistiani et al., 2020).

The first teaching-learning activity started with the teachers providing a topic, the teacher as a facilitator for student to prepare the material that will be discussed and given to students before the class begins. Second, teacher help students choose the members of the group. Third, teacher gives the materials, teacher not only provide the material, but also help students to explain what they should do such as after getting the material each students in group have to prediction by looking at the title o the text first to know what the text about. After they got what the text about, they can discuss their information or knowledge that related with the text. Fourth, the students discuss a topic in their group and teacher move around the class. In this activity the students have opportunity to communicate each other in order to make the group be more active and comprehending the text (Maximilian, 2021).

Fifth, each group discusses about their discussion result to another group. After getting the discussion between members of their own group and got the information of the text, the representative of each group discuss the result of their discussion to another group. The other members in the group may debate, clarify, give opinion, and critic the result of discussion from another group. Sixth, explaining the material that was learnt. Teacher help students to explain in details what they have learned and the teacher may give correction if any. And the last, answering a question which was prepared. After discussion between groups and teacher, each student tries to answer the question individually based on the tasks that have been provided by the teacher (Maximilian, 2020).

A series of activities from the group discussion helps students to improve their reading abilities and makes it easier for students to identify the main ideas, supporting ideas, vocabulary, references and inferences from a text. The first is in identifying the main idea through discussion, helping students develop the thinking

power, knowledge, and experience of students so that students can exchange ideas and shorten the time to determine a theme and main idea of a text.

Furthermore, students can also easily find supporting ideas after making predictions and confirming them. Predictions make them more memorable and can highlight information in the text. That's because students' predictions are students' initial assumptions based on the student's prior knowledge, and then the clarification process becomes the answer to what is predicted is right or wrong, it improves students' ability to think by giving their point of view. So that this process helps students remember the contents of the text they have predicted. It makes it easier for students to understand the supporting ideas of a text or story.

Then, the teacher presents varied and interesting themes/topics that can increase students' interest in reading. This reading habit can affect students' vocabulary. Students who are used to reading will have or master new vocabulary, making it easier for them to understand reading. Discussion activities also help them share and find a new meaning of words they don't understand together.

After that, group discussions also help students to understand the references of a text, and students can discuss the meaning of the pronouns used by the author. Discussion groups train students to think critically in understanding and interpreting the signs made by the author through words or phrases. Finally, referring to the activity, "After getting the discussion between members of their own group and got the information of the text, the representatives of each group discussed the results of their discussion to another group". This activity requires students to conclude the contents of the text that students have read. This trains students to process information from the process of discussion and understand what they have done to get a conclusion. The discussion process also makes it easier for students to equate the outline of the conclusions that students make are the same or not and are appropriate or not with the context of the contents of the text.

Group Discussions create an active and interactive learning environment. Through the application of this Group Discussions, students will be able to share their difficulties in understanding the text. Group Discussions are effective for teaching reading ability, making students enjoy, more active and helping students not only able to improve their intellectual skills but also to increase their social relationships, because they lead in groups and discuss to understand the text to get the right answer.

From the results above, it can be concluded that the Group Discussion was successfully applied in taking the sample of the 8th class. It means that teaching reading by using Group Discussions can influence students' reading ability than teaching without the strategy. This strategy decreased student laziness and improved student activity. It is easier for students who were active in receiving material, and based on the results, the researcher would like to inform once again to the readers and to all of the teachers, students, etc. That Group Discussion was one of the good strategies in increasing students' reading ability.

CONCLUSION

Based on the result of the data analysis, the researcher concluded that, there was a significant influence of using group discussion towards students' reading ability of the eight class at SMP Negeri 15 Bandar Lampung in the academic year of 2022/2023. It can be seen that the result: ttest was higher than ttable at significance level 5% and 1% ($4.76 > 1.67 > 2.39$). It was also proved by the average score of experimental class was higher than in control class ($72.37 > 60.28$). The Group Discussion is a learning strategy that can improve students' reading skills, problem-solving, and activeness. Group Discussion provides an opportunity for students to exchange ideas, and the teacher also has the opportunity to ask several questions to each group from the results of their collaboration. This can make students understand the text well.

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